

## At a Glance

- **Community Convening:** StartupBREW held 4 events with 363 total attendees, including a Plains Art Museum takeover day and speakers from across the creative, tech, and agriculture sectors.
- **Field Operations:** 95%+ of 2026 field trials planted and established on schedule, with the first National Proving Grounds planting underway at both the North Dakota and Georgia sites.
- **Ecosystem Engagement:** Ecosystem team logged 3,343 touchpoints with partners, startups, investors, and stakeholders tracked through HubSpot CRM.
- **Policy & Visibility:** Grand Farm hosted a roundtable with Deputy Secretary of the Interior Andrea Travenack and a separate roundtable with FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce, both focused on technology opportunities in agriculture policy.
- **Grand Farm Partnerships:** Titan Machinery joined as a new partner; Thales, Frontier Precision, and Sentra renewed their partnerships.
- **Communications:** Launched the 'What's New at the Farm' weekly email series and the 'Grand Farm Feed' real-time campus update webpage.
- **Research & Grants:** Anheuser-Busch awarded an \$80,000 grant to Grand Farm to support agriculture innovation for American farmers.
- **UGA Grand Farm:** UGA Grand Farm attended the inaugural Southeast Specialty Crop Technology Conference and hosted a post-conference open house at the Perry site.
- **Peer-Reviewed Research:** Grand Farm co-authored a peer-reviewed publication in Smart Agricultural Technology on hyperspectral imagery for soil moisture classification.

---

## Experiences & Convenings

### StartupBREW

May's four StartupBREW events featured a diverse mix of creative, technology, and agriculture speakers, along with a special Plains Art Museum takeover day that brought a new creative energy to the weekly gathering.



MAY 2026

# IMPACT INSIGHTS

## Speakers:

- Community Collage
- Studio FSR
- Bushel
- Rising Dawn Ceramics
- Alicia Hauff Studio

**Attendance:** 363 community members

**Special Events:** Plains Art Museum Takeover Day

---

## Grand Farm Partnerships

### New Partnership

- [Titan Machinery](#)

### Renewed Partnerships

- [Thales](#)
  - [Frontier Precision](#)
  - [Sentera](#)
- 

## Field Operations

Planting season is in full swing at the Innovation Campus. Trials have been precisely mapped and flagged, fertilizers applied, and soil samples pulled and sent to labs for analysis. The field operations team has planted and sprayed pre-emergents on small grains, sugar beets, corn, and soybeans. Field trial partners have been on-site flying drones and deploying robots, and the team has been training on sensors for data assessment.



- Completed planting and early-season field activities for 95%+ of trials, on par with expectations, including partner trials, rotational acres, and the first NPC planting.
  - Readied the campus for visitor and tour traffic, including the USDA Ancient Grains trial showcase and ongoing site maintenance.
  - Launched a new project called Ancient Grains in partnership with USDA ARS.
- 

## **Program Management Office (PMO)**

### **Autonomous Ag State Grant**

- Hosted weekly committee meetings in May to analyze project progress and field funding requests.
- Submitted proposals for autonomous mowers, a visitor drone fleet, an interactive IoT and drone data workstation, an IoT sensor network, and a 30-inch precision planter evaluated against an 8-criteria weighted framework.
- Advanced BenchBot installation readiness toward a late-July target in partnership with USDA ARS / DASH; filed network utilities and infrastructure procurement.
- Selected JLG as design firm for the new Big Shed construction and initiated the CMAR (construction-manager-at-risk) search.
- Finalized engineering and design on the Everest Section 8 drainage work; RFP to issue in June.
- Carried Operation Hot Mic — the equipment-shop AV/HVAC modernization — through active construction with Magnum Electric.

### **Innovation & Technology**

- Stood up a LoRaWAN backbone (ChirpStack on Azure VM, ThingsBoard integration, and an MCP server connecting on-farm data with AI capabilities), with gateway and sensor integration ongoing.
- Advanced the USDA ARS IoT Sensor Catalog (web app, Azure hosting, categorization, UX, and domain), installed on-farm soil moisture and precipitation sensors, and built an interactive indoor sensor display for education.
- Completed the season's first UAS flights with landowners, validated height and resolution, and launched a storytelling video with Grand Farm Marketing.
- Closed out the current ND DOT autonomous mowing contract (final report in preparation), secured a new pooled-fund contract award, and assessed renewal options with ND DOT.
- Concluded the Analog Devices engagement; final report delivered and invoiced.
- Continued narrowing the candidate technology field for Black Gold Farms nitrogen scouting toward a pilot shortlist.

---

## Startup Engagement

- Deploying sensors from more than 10 companies measuring 20+ metrics, with a major focus on a LoRaWAN-based sensing network to provide plot-level data.
- A Barn Owl Precision Agriculture ANT (Autonomous Nano Tractor) has arrived on the farm, set up for autonomous mechanical weed control. Delivered by Juan Cantu from BOPA, it will be deployed in dry beans, soybeans, and sugarbeet plots — with a full demonstration planned for Field Day on July 28.
- The team completed training on the Leaftech Ag tissue scanner, which will be used to assess nitrogen uptake in partner plots throughout the growing season.
- An increase in farm management and agronomy AI platforms entering the market is being closely tracked, with Grand Farm positioned to evaluate the most promising tools through the AI AgriBench Consortium.



---

## USDA National Proving Grounds Network™ for AgTech

- Began field execution at both the North Dakota and Georgia sites, establishing the first planting of sugarbeets and soybeans under the equal-footprint protocol.
- Hosted onboarding calls with technology companies participating in NPG and analyzed technology-specific evaluation requirements.
- Advanced the NPG data-collection and measurement-design protocol with USDA ARS scientific lead Dr. Steven Mirsky.
- Coordinated the UGA Grand Farm partner site (Perry/Tifton) with the UGA and Grand Farm teams to stand up parallel field execution in Georgia.

The USDA National Proving Grounds Network™ for AgTech was also highlighted during the April 28 USDA Livestream from Washington, D.C., with remarks from Secretary Brooke Rollins, Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, Senator John Hoeven, and Senator John Boozman underscoring the national significance of the program.

---

## Ecosystem Engagement

- Ecosystem team logged 3,343 touchpoints with partners, startups, investors, and stakeholders in May, tracked through HubSpot CRM.
- Hosted a roundtable with Deputy Secretary of the Interior Andrea Travenack at Grand Farm to discuss opportunities for technology to support water and energy policy and regulation, preceded by a stakeholder dinner the night before.
- Senator Hoeven hosted a roundtable with FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce, who also attended the dinner with Deputy Secretary Travenack; William Aderholdt served on the panel.
- Hosted GDM and The Traits Company at Grand Farm to discuss potential collaboration and partnership opportunities.
- Grand Farm joined the AI AgriBench Consortium, led by University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign, with Blaine Booher taking the internal lead to establish a consistent testing process for emerging AI agronomy tools.



## Upper Midwest Region

- Hosted the FMCVB board meeting at Grand Farm.
- Hosted GreenSeam from Mankato, MN, to discuss the Grand Farm ecosystem and explore opportunities for regional involvement.

## Southeast Region

- Attended and participated in the Southeastern Specialty Crop Technology Conference and Show; Dr. Steven Mirsky also attended, deepening collaboration between NPG and UGA Grand Farm.

---

## UGA Grand Farm

### Planting Season Activity

May was a flurry of activity at UGA Grand Farm. Corn is beginning to emerge, cotton is being planted, and peanuts, soybeans, and the peach orchard are next as the season continues to

MAY 2026

# IMPACT INSIGHTS

take shape across the farm.

## **Southeast Specialty Crop Technology Conference**

Several members of the Grand Farm team attended the inaugural Southeast Specialty Crop Technology Conference, hosted by the University of Georgia Precision Horticulture Lab and organized by Dr. Luan Oliveira. The team shared updates from UGA Grand Farm and connected with researchers, growers, startups, corporations, and industry leaders from across the specialty crop ecosystem, while also observing leading technologies in action.

## **Open House at Perry Site**

Following the conference, UGA Grand Farm hosted an open house at the Perry site, welcoming conference attendees, partners, and guests for farm tours and conversations

around future collaboration. The event generated strong interest in the farm's vision and near-term opportunities for partnership.

---

## **Marketing, Communications & Storytelling**

### **New Communications Platforms**

- Launched 'What's New at the Farm,' a weekly Monday email series providing behind-the-scenes updates on planting progress, technology deployments, field trials, NPG-Ag development, and partner activity at the Innovation Campus.
- Launched the 'Grand Farm Feed,' a new webpage featuring real-time updates and photos from the Innovation Campus to keep stakeholders connected to on-farm activity.
- Finalized the NPG-Ag Communications Roadmap.

### **Photography**

- GreenSeam Visit - [Album](#)
- Grand Farm Planting 2026 - [Album](#)
- Grand Farm Innovation Campus Phase II Construction 2026 - [Album](#)
- USDA ARS DASH - ModCam Installation 2026 - [Album](#)
- Roundtable with U.S. Department of the Interior - [Album](#)
- StartupBREW Fargo x4 - [Album](#)

### **Video**

MAY 2026

# IMPACT INSIGHTS

- US Senate Agriculture Committee Hearing for Perspectives on Fertilizer Industry featuring Grand Farm - [Link](#)
  - Featuring remarks on NPG and Grand Farm from Senator Hoeven
- YouTube Short: "How does farming at Grand Farm differ from a traditional farm?"
  - Our first YouTube short on Grand Farm YouTube channel. Performed well at 637 views.

## Written Content

- [Fargo INC! - TEDxFargo: A Staple Event Since 2012](#)
    - Featuring behind-the-scenes info, advisory board, and core team
  - [Future Farmer Magazine - AgTech Week 2026 + Innovation Campus Phase II Update](#)
- 

## Public Relations & Media Coverage

- Webwire  
[Anheuser-Busch Awards \\$80,000 Grant to Grand Farm to Support Agriculture Innovation for American Farmers](#)
- American Ag Network  
[Grand Farm's Cultivate Conference Returns During AgTech Week 2026](#)
- Red River Farm Network  
[Hoeven: Precision Ag Helps Reduce Fertilizer Bill](#)
- InForum  
[With Lawn Mower Blades and Scrap Metal, 88-Year-Old Artist Putting Town of Vining on the World Map](#)
- Fargo INC!  
[TEDxFargo 2026](#)
- KFYR TV  
[North Dakota Becomes Test Site for Agricultural Technology](#)

## Peer-Reviewed Research

- Dr. Rex Sun & Dr. William Aderholdt — [Systematic comparison of band selection strategies and sensor configurations for soil moisture classification using UGV-mounted hyperspectral imagery](#) — Smart Agricultural Technology



MAY 2026

# IMPACT INSIGHTS

---

## **In Summary**

May 2026 marked the full transition into an active growing season for Grand Farm and its partners. With 95%+ of field trials planted on schedule, the National Proving Grounds executing in both North Dakota and Georgia, and a Barn Owl autonomous weeding robot arriving on campus, the Innovation Campus was firing on all cylinders. High-level policy roundtables with Deputy Secretary Travenack and FSA Administrator Fordyce reinforced Grand Farm's role at the intersection of agriculture, technology, and federal policy. New communications platforms deepened stakeholder connection to the farm, a peer-reviewed publication added to the research portfolio, and an \$80,000 Anheuser-Busch grant expanded the resource base for innovation. Across field operations, ecosystem engagement, and program delivery, May demonstrated what a fully activated Grand Farm season looks like.