



BAHRAINI AMBASSADOR VISITS IOWA TO EXPLORE FOOD SECURITY PARTNERSHIPS

H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, First Bahraini Ambassador to Tour Iowa, Meets with Government Officials, Commodity Groups, Business Leaders, and Academics

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in partnership with the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC), has just concluded a high-level food security tour in the State of Iowa. The two-day visit engaged senior state government officials, leaders of commodity groups, traders, university officials, and business executives representing companies involved in high technology and precision agriculture.

The delegation was led by H.E. Shaikh Abdulla Bin Rashid AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain's Ambassador to the United States, and organized by NUSACC. In Iowa, Shaikh Abdulla met with the following government officials: Hon. Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa; Hon. Adam Gregg, Lieutenant Governor of Iowa; Hon. Michael Naig, Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture; and Hon. Paul Pate, Iowa's Secretary of State. This was the first visit by a Bahraini Ambassador to the State of Iowa.

Partners included the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa State University, and the U.S. Commercial Service. The Bahraini Ambassador was also the first foreign dignitary to meet with Hon. Terry Branstad, the newly-appointed President of the World Food Prize, based in Des Moines. (Branstad is a former Governor of Iowa, twice, and a former U.S. Ambassador to China.)



NUSACC, in cooperation with the Iowa Farm Bureau, hosted H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain's Ambassador to the United States. Participants included Hon. Michael Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Brent Johnson, President of the Iowa Farm Bureau, and other dignitaries from leading Iowa commodity groups.

“The people of Iowa were as engaging and dynamic as they were warm. The handle that Iowans have on agriculture and agricultural technology is astounding and something that Bahrain, and the world, can truly benefit from,” noted H.E. Shaikh Abdulla Bin Rashid AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain's Ambassador to the United States.




“Iowa rolled out the red carpet for the Kingdom of Bahrain,” noted David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC. “The Ambassador gained a solid understanding of what Iowa has to offer – as the breadbasket of America – including potential partnerships that promise to strengthen commercial ties between Bahrain and Iowa.”

Iowa: Food, Feed, and Fuel for the World

Iowa has long been known as the heart of the Heartland. The state produces over eight percent of America’s food, second only to California. Iowa alone produces more than \$40 billion in agricultural receipts per year.

Iowa is a national leader in the production of food, feed, and fuel:

-  Corn (2.48 billion bushels in 2022)
-  Eggs (16 billion eggs per year)
-  Soybeans (587 million bushels in 2022)
-  Turkeys (12 million per year)
-  Chickens (60 million in 2021)
-  Ethanol (4.5 billion gallons in 2022)
-  Commercial red meat (9 billion pounds)

Iowa is a prolific agricultural producer because of the extraordinary natural resources of the Midwest. But the Hawkeye State has also distinguished itself for its cutting-edge agricultural innovation, including world-renowned hybrid plants, animal husbandry, grain storage facilities, and precision agriculture, which enables farmers to carefully manage the region’s natural resources (especially water).

Iowa’s role in supporting food security has grown in importance in recent years. COVID and the war in Ukraine have strained food availability and supply chains around the world, adding urgency to the mission of Iowa farmers to provide food and feed to the world.

Reliable and timely access to agricultural products is vital to a country like Bahrain, which is working toward self-sufficiency but still imports a high percentage of its food. The Kingdom has an “arid to extremely arid” climate, averaging about three inches of rain per year. As such, Bahrain is limited in the amount of variety that farmers can grow there.

H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States

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World Food Prize Foundation.

The World Food Prize Foundation (WFP) presents a \$250,000 annual award for agricultural sustainability that is akin to a Nobel Prize. Engraved in the elegant headquarters of the World Food Prize in Des Moines is this message: “Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world.”

The Honorable Terry Branstad, former Governor of Iowa and former U.S. Ambassador to China, was appointed President of the WFP in late January, 2023.

Enter Iowa. The Hawkeye State is a national leader in the production of corn (2.48 billion bushels in 2022), eggs (averaging around 16 billion eggs per year), soybeans (587 million bushels in 2022), commercial red meat (9 billion pounds), turkeys (12 million per year), chickens (60 million in 2021), and ethanol (4.5 billion gallons in 2022). Over fifty percent of the state’s corn is utilized to create nearly 30 percent of America’s total ethanol production.

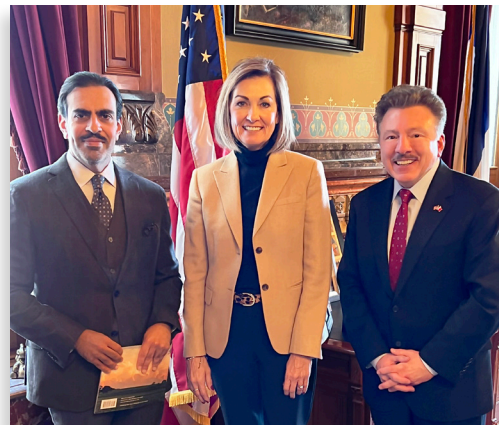
Iowa’s success in prodigious production is due, in part, to the partnerships that have been formed among farmers, colleges & universities, industry, and

state government offices. These partnerships have created remarkable ecosystems that support innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector and beyond.

Meeting with the Governor of Iowa

The Honorable Kim Reynolds, Governor of the State of Iowa, received Ambassador AlKhalifa and his delegation in the Governor’s Formal Office in the Iowa Statehouse. The capitol building in Des Moines is the only one of its kind in the United States.

Discussion focused on ways in which to grow the relationship between the State of Iowa and the Kingdom of Bahrain. “Iowa is a leader in agricultural products that feed and fuel the world,” Reynolds said, but she noted that the State of Iowa has much to offer beyond agriculture.



The Honorable Kim Reynolds (center), Governor of the State of Iowa, welcomed Ambassador AlKhalifa, David Hamod, and the delegation in the Governor’s Formal Office in the Iowa Statehouse.

Iowa’s economy still depends heavily on agriculture, but the state is increasingly diversified. In the last five years, according to the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), the state has experienced GDP growth of 45 percent in the insurance and financial services sectors alone. By attracting some of the largest companies in those industries, Iowa is positioning itself as one of the nation’s top insurance and finance hubs.

Hon. Kim Reynolds, Governor of the State of Iowa

“Iowans have made us a world leader in food and energy production through their strength, resilience, and innovative spirit. The State of Iowa looks forward to our future relationship with Bahrain.”



Reynolds pointed out that Iowa is also a national leader in renewable energy. According to the Iowa Area Development Group, the state's strong agricultural foundation and its legacy of manufacturing excellence has positioned Iowa to excel in wind energy, ethanol, biodiesel, biomass, and next generation technologies. Iowa ranks #1 in the USA in the production of ethanol and biodiesel and #2 in the USA in wind generation output.

Reynolds concluded, "Iowans have made us a world leader in food and energy production through their strength, resilience, and innovative spirit. The State of Iowa looks forward to our future relationship with Bahrain."

Importance of Trade to Iowa

The **Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP)**, in collaboration with the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce, hosted a business roundtable entitled "Bahrain: Gateway to the Arabian Gulf." The event, which drew over 40 participants, was supported by the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the U.S. Commercial Service.

Speakers included: Hon. Terry Branstad, President of the World Food Prize; Hon. Paul Pate, Iowa's Secretary of State; Jay Byers, President & CEO of the GDMP; and David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC. Keynote remarks were delivered by H.E. Abdulla AlKhalifa, Bahrain's Ambassador to the United States.



NUSACC and the Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP) co-hosted "Bahrain: Gateway to the Arabian Gulf." Numerous dignitaries attended the event, including the Hon. Paul Pate, Iowa's Secretary of State, and Hon. Terry Branstad, former Governor of Iowa and newly-appointed President of the World Food Prize Foundation.

Secretary of State Pate noted, "Iowa exports approximately \$16 billion dollars of Made-in-America goods to the world. Hundreds of thousands of Iowa jobs are supported by international trade, and exports sustain thousands of Iowa businesses. Iowa has long been the heart of America's food production, and our state continues to grow its role as a producer for the world."

Pate went on to say, "It's important that not only the United States, but Iowa specifically, continue to improve trade relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain. This event is about creating business opportunities for Iowa companies, and I'm very excited to learn more about how we can continue to grow this mutually beneficial relationship for the people of Bahrain and the workers and businesses that call Iowa home."

Hon. Paul Pate, Iowa's Secretary of State

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Jay Byers, President & CEO of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, noted, “DSM USA is a global region, and we are continuously seeking new opportunities for international engagement and partnerships that are mutually beneficial.”

Byers concluded, “We look forward to continuing our efforts to cultivate the relationship between Iowa and the Kingdom of Bahrain through opportunities in trade, foreign direct investment, academia, and more.”



Jay Byers (left), President & CEO of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States.

NUSACC’s David Hamod contrasted the differences between Bahrain, a seafaring archipelago, and Iowa, landlocked in the center of America’s breadbasket. As it happens, Hamod said, the two complement one other: Bahrain is looking to diversify its food supply chains, and Iowa is a top supplier of food, feed, and fuel to the world. “Both benefit from being at the center: Iowa is in the heart of the Heartland, and Bahrain – as a trading hub – is at the crossroads of the world . . . just a hop, skip, and a jump from billions of consumers in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Asia.”



Hon. Terry Branstad (left), the newly-appointed President of the World Food Prize, and H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States.

Hamod touted the 60 universities and colleges in Iowa, a number of which have achieved national recognition in the United States. He expressed hope that more Bahrainis might go to college in Iowa, one of the safest states in America and a state that boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the country. “Bahrain’s future will be shaped by its youth,” Hamod said, “who make up two-thirds of that nation’s population. Iowa schools are well situated to help Bahrainis undergo the transition from a hydrocarbons-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.”

Bahrain as a Regional Hub for U.S. Companies

In his keynote remarks at the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Ambassador AlKhalifa highlighted the special relationship between the USA and Bahrain. Because of innovative and business-friendly initiatives implemented between the two nations, Shaikh Abdulla noted, annual trade now exceeds \$2 billion and the United States has become the Kingdom’s largest trading partner beyond the Gulf Cooperation Council region. Supported by the [Bahrain – U.S. Free Trade Agreement](#), he said, U.S. exports to Bahrain have tripled and Bahraini exports to the USA have doubled.



Because of the strong alignment between the two nations, the Ambassador stated, Bahrain provides a unique opportunity for Iowa companies to “de-risk and diversify” their offerings and build on the advanced technology base that the Kingdom has to offer. Bahrain is in a good position to support precision agriculture, he suggested, and to take advantage of the logistics and warehousing expertise that Iowa has to offer. He highlighted the fact that the Kingdom is a regional leader when it comes to transit times – moving goods from airports to ports in less than two hours – but that Iowa technologies could lead to even greater efficiencies.



Hon. Adam Gregg (left), Iowa’s Lieutenant Governor, welcomed H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States.

Ambassador AlKhalifa stated that Bahrain is working to make its regulations even more business-friendly, citing such examples as:

☞ *Extending Global Sea-Air Hub Status to the USA.* In 2021, Bahrain launched the fastest regional multi-modal logistics hub in the Middle East. In March 2022, the USA was granted “Official Partner Status” in Bahrain’s Global Sea-to-Air Hub.

☞ *Establishing a U.S. Trade Zone (USTZ) in Bahrain.* Now under construction, the new USTZ will create a regional trade, manufacturing, logistics, and distribution hub for U.S. companies doing business in Bahrain.

☞ *Creating Business-Friendly Visas.* Last year, Bahrain introduced a permanent residency visa intended to attract fresh talent and investment, including that from the USA. This “Golden Residency” visa will be renewed indefinitely, including the right to work in Bahrain, unlimited entry and exit, and residency for close family members. This development comes on the heels of Bahrain’s new ten-year multiple entry visa, established in 2020, which is offered exclusively to U.S. passport holders.

☞ *Extending Global Entry to Bahrain.* Global Entry is one of four branches of America’s Trusted Traveler Programs, which allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival at U.S. airports. In January 2022, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) launched a full Global Entry partnership with Bahrain, the first agreement of its kind in the MENA region.

☞ *Adopting a Cloud-First Policy.* Amazon Web Services (AWS) opened a hub in Bahrain in 2019, the first of its kind in the MENA region, to provide cloud computing services. This step has enhanced investment in ICT in Bahrain, a critical sector for capacity-building among Bahraini young professionals. In 2022, consistent with the country’s Cloud Computing Services Law, Bahrain granted U.S. sovereignty over data – stored in Bahrain-based data centers – of U.S. beneficiaries.



☞ Promoting Freedom of Navigation. Bahrain was the first country in the Gulf region to announce that it had joined the U.S.-led International Maritime Security Construct. The goal of the Construct is to promote freedom of navigation in the region, which is integral to maintaining free-flowing global trade. Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, serves as a lynchpin in this Construct.

With increasingly business-friendly regulations like these, the Kingdom hopes that even more U.S. companies will consider Bahrain for their regional headquarters.

Roundtable at the Iowa Farm Bureau

The **Iowa Farm Bureau** hosted a roundtable discussion led by the Hon. Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, and Brent Johnson, President of the Farm Bureau. Also participating in the discussion was the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, the Hon. Grant Menke, as well as leaders from such commodity associations as the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Soybeans Association, Iowa State Dairy Association, Iowa Turkey Federation, and the Soy Transportation Coalition.

“Trade matters to Iowa. As a leading exporter of food and agriculture products, we value our relationships with trading partners all over the globe, including the Kingdom of Bahrain,” said Secretary Naig. “We certainly appreciate the robust economic connections with our trading allies, but we also place a high value on the friendships and shared interests between us.”




From left to right: H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States; Hon. Michael Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture; Mr. Brent Johnson, President of the Iowa Farm Bureau.

Naig noted that Iowa is a prolific producer for the United States and the world. Iowa produces eight percent of America’s food (based on receipts), behind only California, which produces 11 percent of America’s food. But Iowa (56,272 square miles) is only one-third the size of California (163,695 square miles), which highlights the efficiency of farming and food production in Iowa.

Hon. Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture

“Trade matters to Iowa. As a leading exporter of food and agriculture products, we value our relationships with trading partners all over the globe, including the Kingdom of Bahrain.”





Iowa prides itself on the quality and quantity of its agricultural yields, but also on sustainability: Farming’s impact on soil, water, and other natural resources. “Our state’s farmers and agriculturalists are constantly innovating, driving Iowa agriculture to be even more sustainable and efficient through the improvement of technology, products, equipment and practices,” Naig added. “We balance the need to keep Iowa’s agriculture productive while also protecting our valuable shared natural resources.”

The COVID pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and recent inflation in the USA have highlighted the vital role that Iowa plays in food chains worldwide. Concluded Brent Johnson, President of the Iowa Farm Bureau, “The State of Iowa is a consistent, reliable, quality supplier for the world, and we look forward to doing even more business with the Kingdom of Bahrain.”

Iowa State University

Over 160 years ago, following passage of America’s federal land-grant law in 1862, Iowa was the first state legislature in the nation to accept the provisions of the trailblazing Morrill Act. Iowa subsequently designated the State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University) as Iowa’s land-grant college on March 29, 1864.



Dr. Wendy Wintersteen, President of ISU, welcomed H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, the Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States.

(Photo credit: Chris Gannon, Iowa State University)

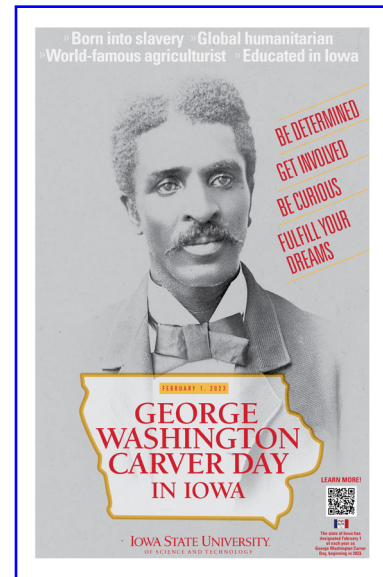
Today, the **Iowa State University of Science and Technology** is one of the nation’s premier land-grant institutions. Over 30,000 students attend ISU, and over eight percent of these come from abroad.

Dr. Wendy Wintersteen, President of ISU, highlighted the university’s traditional expertise in agriculture, as well as ways in which ISU is elevating that expertise to a new level. One example of this is ISU’s “Start Something Network,” which is one of America’s foremost programs for developing agricultural entrepreneurs. This initiative is part of ISU’s broader commitment to entrepreneurship: “Innovate at Iowa State.”

The university’s emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship has earned national attention. The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) honored ISU with its 2020 Innovation and Economic Prosperity Innovation Award, and ISU’s undergraduate entrepreneurship program is currently ranked 11th in the nation by the *Princeton Review*.

At ISU, H.E. Shaikh Abdulla toured the **Seed Science Center**, a focal point of excellence in seed research, education, technology transfer, and global seed programs. The Center provides teaching, research, and extension programs to introduce science into policy to eradicate hunger and benefit the world seed trade.

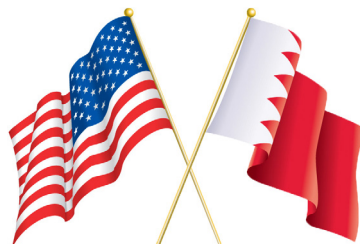
The Bahraini Ambassador also participated in an inaugural **“George Washington Carver Day”** ceremony that honored one of Iowa’s most famous scientists and inventors. Born into slavery in Missouri in 1864, George Washington Carver became world-renowned for his innovative approaches to agriculture. He showed farmers how alternative crops and practices could benefit society, taking practical scientific knowledge and delivering it to those working in the fields and rural areas. Against extraordinary odds, Carver went on to become Iowa State University’s first Black student, earning Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. After graduation, he became ISU’s first Black faculty member.



Noted President Wintersteen, ““We were pleased to have Ambassador AlKhalifa visit Iowa State University and attend the inaugural Day of Recognition for George Washington Carver. This was a wonderful opportunity to expand international exposure to Dr. Carver’s legacy as an Iowa State alumnus who became one of the world’s greatest agriculturalists and humanitarians.” She concluded, “We look forward to establishing even more robust relations between Bahrain and ISU, which is keen to share its expertise in agriculture and other subjects.”

H.E. Shaikh Abdulla AlKhalifa, Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ambassador to the United States

“The intuitive knowledge of Bahrain’s requirements, and the attentiveness of the NUSACC team, assured that the time spent in Iowa was as effective as it was fruitful.”



For five decades, the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has served as a commercial bridge between the United States and the Arab world. Widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Chamber serves over 50,000 members and stakeholders in the USA and across the Arab world. Awarded the E-Award for export excellence by the President of the United States, NUSACC is the only business entity in the USA that is recognized by the League of Arab States and the Union of Arab Chambers.

nusacc.org

