

DAILY CHRONICLE

Syngenta Seeds breaks ground in Malta

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July 01, 2021 at 5:30 am CDT



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MALTA - On Wednesday, Syngenta Seeds, LLC put down roots in DeKalb County during a ground-breaking ceremony in Malta.

The event celebrated the building of a new 96,000-square-foot Research and Development (R&D) Innovation Center, located at 2125 Illinois State Route 38. The center will bring with it more than 100 jobs and is planned to be completed by late summer 2022.

Syngenta, based in Switzerland, is a global agriculture company that produces crop protection and seed products and employs more than 28,000 people, according to city of DeKalb documents. Syngenta’s global and North American seeds headquarters is located in Downers Grove. They also have a digital and technology hub in downtown Chicago.



A ground-breaking ceremony was held Wednesday in Malta as Syngenta Seeds, LLC begins construction on its new Research and Development (R&D) Innovation Center. The 96,000-square-foot center, shown in this computer rendering, is expected to be completed by late summer 2022.

The new center is located on 88 acres of land that was previously owned by Jamie Willrett, a fifth generation Malta farmer.

“The center is going to be important to all of agriculture, especially locally and to local farmers,” Willrett said. “We will be able to have firsthand discussions with the scientists and researchers. We’ll be able to talk with them directly, they can understand our concerns and we can mesh our ideas together, allowing us to better do what we do: farm and continue to feed the ever-growing population around the world.”

Judd Maxwell, the North America corn product placement head for Syngenta, said that “he couldn’t be happier” that the new R&D Innovation Center is located in Malta. Maxwell and his family live in Sycamore.

“DeKalb County is the innovation corridor for agriculture,” he said. “The soil is good, the ground is fertile and the weather is predictive. The soil here is really representative of other growers in the corn belt. It’s a central place to bring people in, it has proximity to Chicago and our global headquarters in Downers Grove.”

Maxwell described the future innovation center as “a place where farmers can come in, form a focus group and discuss seeds and the future of agriculture with scientists and researchers.”

“They can walk outside and see the seed growing on the property in test fields and our greenhouse,” he said. “It is going to be a very modern facility with new technology, a collaboration space, genotyping and molecular work: selecting certain traits with DNA markers. It’s going to be a way for Syngenta to contribute to the future of science and agriculture, and a way for the community to be a part of that.”



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Steve Bemis, the DeKalb County Farm Bureau president, said that the new innovation center is “a great investment and development for the county.”

“The products and research that will be done here will benefit not only DeKalb County, but potentially the entire world,” he said. “As a farmer, knowing that the product works well here locally is very important. I’ve grown Syngenta seeds in the past, and it’s definitely something I’ll be following closely in the future.”

John Frieders, a grain and livestock farmer in the Sandwich area and DeKalb County Board Chairman, said that having the innovation center in Malta is “fantastic.”

“It shows how important DeKalb County is to agriculture, that Syngenta would want to have a presence here,” Frieders said. “We’re excited that they’re putting down roots here, and we’re looking forward to having the new facility right here in our backyard.”