

MEMPHIS, Tenn. and SALEM, Ore. (December 6, 2022) — A new Pacific Northwest Regional Innovation Cluster (RIC) funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will focus on growing small businesses and catalyzing innovation and technologies in the agriculture and food sectors. Formation of the new RIC was announced by managing partners AgLaunch Engine, a for profit ag innovation consultancy and SEDCOR, an economic development organization focused on the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

“We are excited to expand our partnership with AgLaunch and build on our work with the Economic Development Administration and local funders into this opportunity with SBA,” said Erik Andersson, President of SEDCOR. “Agriculture is the foundation of a Willamette Valley economy which includes a variety of industries like food and beverage processing, logistics, and machinery and equipment manufacturing. The RIC funding will allow us to continue and expand resources targeting our diverse agricultural supply chain.”

“The SBA funding will allow us to expand AgLaunch’s farmer-led, open innovation model in a way that leverages the unique attributes of food and ag production in Oregon and across the Pacific Northwest,” said Pete Nelson, President of AgLaunch.

RICs are geographically-concentrated networks of small businesses, suppliers, service providers, and related institutions that work together to maximize efficiencies, drive innovation and create jobs. The new Pacific Northwest RIC is comprised primarily of Marion, Polk, and Yamhill in Oregon’s Willamette Valley, but will also serve as the primary point of contact for pilot projects, and connectivity with additional Oregon counties and across the Pacific Northwest.

SBA funding of \$1.6 million over five years will be used to provide technical assistance, business development programming and other resources to support ag innovation in the Pacific Northwest. The funding will also help support and expand AgLaunch’s farmer network, where participating farmers field-test new technologies in exchange for equity ownership in ag tech startup companies.

Food and ag related small businesses, entrepreneurs and organizations interested in connecting with the new Pacific Northwest Regional Innovation Cluster should contact SEDCOR at info@sedcor.com or (503)588-6225.

In addition to the Pacific Northwest, AgLaunch operates SBA recognized RICs in the Mid-South and Southern Appalachia as well as regional initiatives in the Mid-West and Southern Plains. For more information about AgLaunch visit www.aglaunch.com.

About SEDCOR

SEDCOR is a Salem, Oregon based 501(c)(6) and is the primary regional economic development organization serving Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties. In its 40-year history, staff at SEDCOR have built strong relationships with regional processors, manufacturers, accelerators, incubators, and the tech industry while delivering economic development programs throughout the region. Business Retention and Expansion Program is the heart of SEDCOR’s work plan, which also includes business recruitment and entrepreneurial development. For the past two years, SEDCOR has worked on the “Northwest Ag Innovation Hub” through a Build to Scale grant from the US Economic Development Administration, which aligns local and regional economic development initiatives and assets to create widespread collective benefits to the regional economy, prioritizing the “three dimensional” agriculture supply chain that differentiates the Willamette Valley from other regions of the state.

About AgLaunch

AgLaunch is revolutionizing the way that innovations in agriculture and food are brought to market by bridging the present and future to grow a more diverse and sustainable farm economy and provide healthy food for all. AgLaunch leverages its distributed network of farm incubators, entrepreneurial farmers, aligned capital partners, research consortia, technical consulting, and best-in-class accelerator programming to effectively challenge the status quo and thoughtfully create value for farmers and the communities they serve. The AgLaunch vision is a transformed regional agriculture and food economy centered around farmers, innovation, and prosperity.