

## *Our Mission*

Accelerate the agricultural economy by empowering expanded uses and markets of agriculturally derived products

### ***AURI X Target UnTapped* event showcases MN as premier place to scale food businesses**



As a Minnesota nonprofit that assists several hundred food businesses and entrepreneurs each year, AURI teamed up with Minnesota-based national retailer, Target, to host a key industry event: *AURI X Target UnTapped: Finding Your Shelf: Igniting Food & Beverage Momentum*. The goal of *AURI X Target UnTapped* was to showcase the state as a premier place to scale food and beverage businesses.

The inaugural event also launched AURI's new UnTapped annual discussion series, dedicated to accelerating innovation and investment in value-added food and agriculture. Each UnTapped conference will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions, networking, and a spotlight on Minnesota entrepreneurs.

Held on May 11th, *AURI X Target UnTapped* highlighted the partnerships, innovation, and resources fueling the state's

vibrant food ecosystem. A couple hundred people attended the gathering, including up-and-coming food and beverage business owners, seasoned industry professionals who have scaled their enterprises, and many industry experts and ecosystem partners.

“We have both a legacy and an emerging entrepreneurial food and beverage industry in Minnesota with unparalleled opportunities and access to expertise. AURI knows there is power in connecting as a community to share insights and support early-stage entrepreneurs to keep this ecosystem thriving,” says Shannon Schlecht, AURI executive director.

“That’s why we are thrilled to have been able to collaborate with Target for this event and why we will continue to help businesses in our state grow and expand into new market opportunities.”

[Watch the highlights](#)

## AURI experts advance on-farm biogas in Minnesota



AURI is helping advance Minnesota’s on-farm biogas conversation through a series of industry events and producer-focused learning opportunities. AURI's Business

Development Director of Biomass Feedstocks Brad Matuska and dairy farmer Todd Malecha recently spoke at the 2026 Partner Ag Innovation Conference in Willmar, Minnesota, highlighting the anaerobic digester installed at Malecha Dairy. In May, Matuska and Jimmy Gosse, Senior Scientist of Biobased & Renewable Energy, represented AURI at BIOGAS AMERICAS in Detroit. Matuska will also present on the on-farm biogas opportunity at Penn State's On-Farm Anaerobic Digestion Conference, June 9-11, before AURI hosts a June 23 biogas facility field day and tour at Malecha Dairy in Villard, Minnesota.

## **AURI to partner with Swedish firm on anaerobic digestion experimentation**



AURI is partnering with Swedish technology company BPC Instruments to strengthen anaerobic digestion research, testing, and training in the United States. Through the three-year collaboration, AURI and BPC will support industrial decision-making and help expand biogas market opportunities, focusing on agricultural and bioindustrial applications.

BPC develops analytical instruments for biogas, biodegradability, animal nutrition, and wastewater studies to help users produce more accurate and consistent testing results. The teams will work together at AURI's Bioindustrial

Innovation Center in Waseca, Minnesota, on method development, professional services, and hands-on equipment training. The partnership supports AURI's ongoing work to advance renewable energy opportunities from agricultural residues and organic waste streams.

"We're excited to leverage BPC's technical expertise through its highly regarded equipment offerings and analysis to strengthen anaerobic digestion decision making and the expansion of biogas opportunities in Minnesota and the United States," says Shannon Schlecht, AURI executive director. "This collaboration will further help us uncover the potential of tapping into agricultural residues and organic waste streams for renewable energy in Minnesota and across the country."

[Read more](#)

## Food innovator leader and long-serving legislator join AURI board



AURI recently welcomed two new members to its board of directors: Brian Hansen of Scoular and Rep. Paul Anderson, R-Starbuck, District 12A.

Hansen, general manager of Scoular's Food Innovation business, brings nearly two decades of food and pharmaceutical industry experience, including work developing ingredient solutions for food companies.

"Minnesota's agricultural ecosystem is uniquely positioned to lead in food and bioindustrial innovation," Hansen said.

Anderson, a fourth-generation farmer and co-chair of the Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee, adds firsthand farm and legislative experience.

"I am also a farmer, so I have firsthand knowledge of the impact state policies have on Minnesota agriculture," Anderson said.

Together, they will help guide AURI's work to expand agricultural markets and support Minnesota's rural economy across the state and beyond.

[Read more](#)

## Register for Minnesota industrial energy workshop



In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy Onsite Energy Technical Assistance Partnerships, University of Illinois Chicago Energy Resource Center, and the Minnesota Chamber Environmental Sustainability Foundation, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will be hosting a Minnesota Industrial Energy Workshop on June 10, 2026 at the Cowles Auditorium - Hubert H. Humphrey Conference Center (301 19th Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55455).

The Minnesota Industrial Energy Workshop brings together industrial leaders, energy professionals, utilities, and public-sector partners to advance energy efficiency and onsite energy solutions. The goal is to showcase the available technical and financial assistance that will help Minnesota industries cut costs, improve performance, and strengthen long-term competitiveness statewide, with an industrial sector focus on food and beverage manufacturers and organic waste processors.

This event is free, with breakfast and lunch provided. Space is limited and registration is required.

[Register today](#)

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## AURI in the News

[Brownfield](#) | [Morning Ag Clips](#) | [Agriculture of America](#)

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### *Upcoming* **AURI Events**

**June 17, 2026**  
**12 p.m.-1 p.m.**



*Did you miss an event?*  
**We have you covered.**

Visit and [Subscribe to AURI's YouTube channel](#) to view more on-demand videos from AURI's Fields of Innovation events, UnTapped, Minnesota Renewable Energy Roundtable, and more!

[Check out our most recent Fields of Innovation Webinar – Beyond Forage: Expanding Alfalfa's Potential for Feed & Fertilizer.](#)

[Watch Past Webinars](#)



## *Ag Innovation News*

The newspaper is designed to make research and technical information easy to read and enjoyable for the average user. From an initial subscription list of 4,000, it has grown to reach more than 12,000 print and online readers every quarter, covering AURI's work in the development of new food products, renewable energy, biobased products and new uses for agricultural coproducts.

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