

Meridian Ag Foundation Exceeds \$1,000,000

The Meridian Ag Foundation was formed as an official 501(c)(3) in 2019 with the goal of building an AgTech classroom, shop, and greenhouse facility to support the vision of the new Meridian High School Ag Department and FFA Chapter.

It is a great pleasure to report, through the generous support of 293 donors over the past two and a half years, our fundraising now totals \$1.33 million committed to this project. The total to date is represented by \$850,000 in cash, \$83,000 in pledges, plus \$400,000 in federal ARPA funds, graciously allocated by the Meridian school board.

The timeline:

Since our first announcement of this project in 2019, COVID has continued to have an impact on our timelines and total fundraising goal. We feel confident in the support we have received and are excited to be moving forward.

Contractor bid packets are being developed and those will go out for request in June. Once bids are reviewed and approved, our goal is to break ground in the fall of 2022.

It is possible that due to the increase in material costs we may have to continue our fundraising efforts to make up the difference from our original budgets vs. current costs - but rest assured this will not prevent us from seeing this project to completion.

Most of all - it is important to note that the Ag Department and FFA chapter at Meridian is alive and growing. Because of the support of the many individuals, farms, businesses, and foundations throughout the community, we have not only been able to raise money that will bring this facility to completion, but we have also helped support the excitement and growth of the new ag program. In less than three years, the program has flourished, with over 30% of the high school student body now being enrolled in the ag program. In the 2021-2022 school year alone, the MHS FFA had students recognized for 1-State FFA Degree, 3- Section 16 Proficiency Winners and multiple members winning contests throughout the year.

We look forward to the months ahead when these students can reap the benefits of our brand-new ag facility where they will be exposed to modern agriculture techniques, skilled trades and the industries that will help our local economy continue to grow. We thank all those who have continued to support this effort and look forward to coming together to break ground soon.

If you would be willing to continue to support the program with monetary gifts, please forward those contributions to the Meridian Ag Foundation at 728 S. Wall St. Macon, IL 62544

Sincerely,

Meridian Ag Foundation