



HR1551

LRB099 24317 MST 52065 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to recognize the 140th anniversary of the
4 Morrow Plots at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The Morrow Plots were established in 1876 and are
7 located in the heart of the Urbana-Champaign campus of the
8 University of Illinois; they are the oldest continuous
9 agricultural research fields in the United States and are
10 predated only by the Rothamsted Field in England, which were
11 established in 1843; the site was designated a National
12 Historical Landmark by the federal government on September 12,
13 1968; and

14 WHEREAS, George E. Morrow, the first dean of the College of
15 Agriculture, and Manley Miles, a professor of agriculture, were
16 the visionaries behind the Morrow Plots; they planned to
17 conduct experiments that would yield results suggestive to the
18 practical farmer; and

19 WHEREAS, When the Morrow Plots were established, the United
20 States was celebrating its centennial; farm wage rates in
21 Illinois were \$15 a month and corn sold for 30 cents a bushel;
22 and

1 WHEREAS, In 1876, the average corn yield in Illinois was 30
2 bushels an acre, about one seventh of what corn yields are
3 today, when fewer than 40 million people lived in the United
4 States, over two-thirds of them on farms; and

5 WHEREAS, Only three of the original 10 plots remain in
6 place today; however, the physical size and configuration of
7 the three main plots have not changed since 1903; and

8 WHEREAS, Plot three has grown continuous corn since the
9 original establishment of the Morrow Plots in 1876; and

10 WHEREAS, The two-year crop sequence study that started in
11 1876 continues today in plot four, with soybeans having
12 replaced oats in rotation with corn during 1976; this rotation
13 better reflected the change in farming practices taking place
14 across the State of Illinois during that period; and

15 WHEREAS, Plot five was planted in a three-year rotation of
16 corn, oats with alfalfa seeding, and a forage crop of alfalfa
17 hay starting in 1904; and

18 WHEREAS, Data from the Morrow Plots represents more than
19 100 years of accumulated knowledge on the effect of both sound
20 and unsound crop management practices on corn yield; and

1 WHEREAS, Most importantly, the plots have helped to
2 establish the importance of crop rotation and fertilizer
3 treatments in the modern agricultural system that has allowed
4 increases in yields to feed an ever-increasing world
5 population; and

6 WHEREAS, Important practices and the invaluable knowledge
7 discovered at the Morrow Plots concerning crop rotation, good
8 soil fertility, weed control, and much more have impacted
9 agriculture across not only the State, but the country, and the
10 entire world; and

11 WHEREAS, Respect for the historical significance of the
12 Morrow Plots and their importance for future research was shown
13 in 1966 by the University when the new undergraduate library
14 was built underground to prevent the negative impact of a large
15 shadow on the plots from a multilevel aboveground library
16 building - "You can't throw shade on the corn"; and

17 WHEREAS, Future generations will benefit from the lessons
18 learned at Morrow Plots and from the continuation of new,
19 updated, and improved long-term experiments that the Morrow
20 Plots have inspired; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

1 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
2 commend the Morrow Plots for 140 years of continuous operation,
3 and we look forward to the next 140 years; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
5 presented to the Morrow Plots at the University of Illinois as
6 a symbol of our esteem and respect.