



working together, always learning

the Practical Farmer

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On the cover



Field day attendees inspect grass-fed cattle at Bruce Carney's (far right) farm. These cattle were assessed by ultrasound to help determine the optimal harvest window.

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the Practical Farmer

the Practical Farmer is published quarterly as a benefit of membership, and helps keep farmers and friends of farmers in touch with one another through informative articles on relevant farming topics, current on-farm research, upcoming events and other news of interest.

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An Agriculture of "Ands"

Recently, I attended a talk where Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack spoke about the complementary roles international trade and local food systems play in U.S. agriculture. Afterward, I talked with Iowa Environmental Council's Ann Robinson and the Center for Rural Affairs' Anna Johnson about how Secretary Vilsack encouraged respect for multiple farming systems. During our conversation, Anna described this respect as "seeing the world in 'ands,' not 'ors.'"

Practical Farmers is abundant with examples of an agriculture of "ands," not "ors." One of our organizational values is welcoming everyone. We welcome the participation and viewpoints of those selling into local and international markets. Those who farm less than an acre to thousands. PFI members acknowledge that multiple viewpoints help them explore how to best reach farm goals. A farmer who attended the Bakehouse family's field day in July wrote: "[This field day] made me look at things from a different perspective." As a result, this farmer is considering planting a companion crop with his cash crop. Wes Jarrell says his family joined Practical Farmers "because it's an exceptional place to hear what other farmers are doing – all sizes, management styles, production systems – in a constructive way. Lots of perspectives aired."

An agriculture of "ands" fosters acceptance. Communication is vital. The further away you are from something, the less you understand it. You risk creating false assumptions. Hearing other farmers explain why they choose to farm a certain way provides context and leads to understanding. One cover crops workshop attendee noted: "Each farm is different and each farmer has different reasons as to why they are growing cover crops." Beginning farmer Amber Mohr, after attending the Book family field day in August, said: "It's so great to see all this and hear an honest portrayal of a beginning farmer."

An agriculture of "ands" also promotes a triple bottom line. Sarah Carlson and I heard a compelling speech from PFI



Left to right: Rick Juchems, Sally Worley, Paul Ackley, Frederick Martens and Clare Lindahl.

Conservation Districts of Iowa executive director Clare Lindahl asked Practical Farmers to moderate a myth-busting panel at its annual meeting in August. During the panel presentation, three PFI members – Rick Juchems, Paul Ackley and Frederick Martens – busted common myths about conservation practices. They shared examples of an agriculture that embraces the word "and" instead of "or" by showing how conservation is penciling out positively within their working landscapes. Rick talked about incorporating cover crops, Paul about small grains and Frederick about wetlands.

member Matt Russell at Drake University earlier this year. Matt, a Roman Catholic, cited Pope Francis' first encyclical, in which he addressed the issue of climate change. "Technology can't fix what is essentially a moral problem," Matt said. He went on to say that it is possible to care about both conservation and productivity, and to contribute to farming that provides benefits to the local community while also making a profit. Matt argued that morality is not exclusive of successful farming, but rather a necessary component of a food and farming system that sustains itself. "Ag has to be more than about yields and

production," he said. "It has to be about production and morality. Regardless of the details of production, it all boils down to: "Are you a moral farmer?"

There will be many examples of an agriculture of "ands" at PFI's annual conference, Jan. 19 – 21 in Ames, Iowa. I hope you have your calendars marked – this amazing confluence of farmers and supporters is the highlight of January in Iowa! Read more about our conference on pages 10 – 11.

Here's to "and,"

Sally Worley

How do you support an agriculture of "ands"? Are you a moral farmer? I would love to hear your reflections! Please call me at (515) 232-5661 or email sally@practicalfarmers.org.

Practical Farmers Values:

- Welcoming everyone
- Creativity, collaboration and community
- Viable farms now and for future generations
- Stewardship and ecology

Grazing Cover Crops

Practical tips for fall, winter and spring grazing

by Meghan Filbert

Green growth peeking through ready-to-harvest corn and beans is becoming more commonplace in Iowa, as farmers recognize the benefits of cover crops. Not only does that cover protect our soil and water, it can be a forage source for ruminant livestock during the time of the year when we would normally be feeding hay. But when can you let cattle start grazing cover crops? What about compaction issues? Read on for tips on these and other questions, along with experiences Nathan Anderson. Nathan, a cattle and crop farmer in Aurelia, has been grazing cover crops since 2011.

How Early Can Cattle be Turned Out in the Fall?

Cereal rye and other small grains can be grazed when their roots act as anchors. A simple “pluck test” can help determine readiness. Grab the plant at the height cattle would graze, then pull and twist. If the plant snaps off, it’s ready to graze. If it pulls out of the ground, roots and all, it’s not ready. Be sure to do this in several areas of each field you plan to graze. “I turn my cattle into corn stover when the cover crop is still hidden under the stover,” Nathan says. “Because I don’t have a very large herd (72 cows), my fields are understocked, which allows the cover crop to grow faster than my cows eat it.”

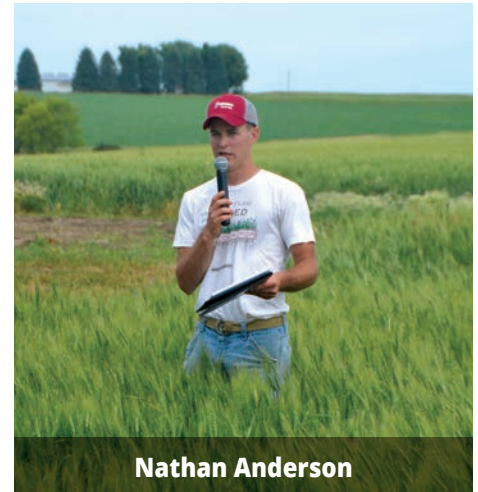
Fall grazing management also depends on what cover crop species are planted. Depending on the species mix, grazing pressure should differ. “In fields planted with cool-season annuals that winter-kill, like oats and spring barley, I put more grazing pressure on the field, sooner, because those plants aren’t going to grow back in the spring and they grow aggressively in the fall,” Nathan says. “In fields planted with cereal rye, a winter-hardy crop that grows best in the spring, I’m careful not to overgraze it in the fall, to ensure a nice stand in the spring.”

How is Stocking Rate Determined on Cover Crops?

Stocking rate is determined the same way you would determine how to stock perennial pastures. First, estimate the amount of dry matter (DM) growing. To do this, use a grazing stick or take biomass samples by clipping above-ground growth

within a certain area, then dry and weigh it. Always take biomass samples the day cattle are turned into a field, in order to get an accurate estimate of what is available to the herd. Beef cows will consume about 3 percent of their body weight per day as forage dry matter. Assuming cattle eat half and leave half of the forage available, grazing days per acre can be estimated.

Nathan doesn’t pay much attention to fall stocking rates when cattle are grazing species that winter-kill, because when the forage is gone, it’s gone. But during the spring, he wants to get as much forage as he can and provide space for cows to calve on rye pasture. “In spring 2016, I had 64 cows on 140 acres of rye. When I first turned cows out, they grazed the whole field like a lawn mower, nipping off almost all the available green growth,” he explains. “But as temperatures increased, the rye grew quickly and the cows couldn’t keep



Nathan Anderson

up with it.” The rye also provided plenty of clean pasture for calving in mid-April.

In the spring, cereal rye is the first to green up: it begins to grow again at 38 degrees. Wheat is slower-growing than rye, but can produce more biomass if allowed to grow two to three weeks longer.

How Much Compaction Does Grazing Cause, and Will It Affect Crop Yields?

Farmers worry about compaction, especially in the spring, but research shows cattle can graze without negative effects. Two case studies evaluating impacts of grazing corn stalk residue with and without cover crops showed little to no effect on the following soybean and corn yields – even when increases in soil compaction were measured (to learn more, visit the link listed at the end of this article). Crop residue on the soil surface cushions the effects of treading hooves, acting like a sponge to absorb weight and water, while cover crops and their extensive roots systems build soil organic matter and help to prevent compaction.

Nathan can see – and hear – cover crops at work on his farm: “It’s neat to go out in a field after a rain. I stand still, listen to my cows walk and can hear air bubble up 5 to 6 feet away from where they are grazing.

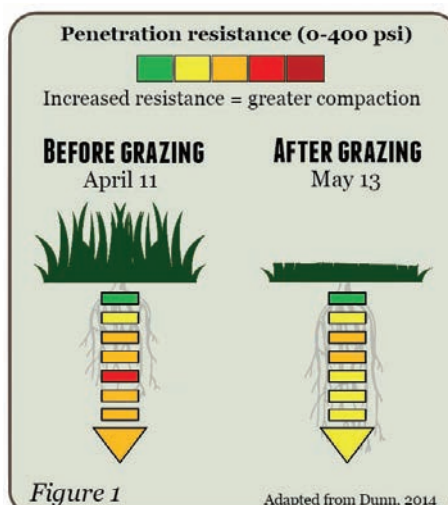


Figure 1 Adapted from Dunn, 2014
 ↑ Figure 1 – Penetrometer results found less compaction after grazing at deeper soil levels.

This tells me my saturated soil has air in it, meaning roots are creating air space and supporting healthy soil life, which is providing resiliency from compaction."

In a spring 2014 Practical Farmers trial on cover crop grazing, cattle grazed for eight days on cereal rye planted following corn harvest. Using a penetrometer (a device that helps measure compaction), resistance was measured before and after the cattle grazed. As figure 1 shows, compaction decreases following grazing. This may be due to the fact that grazing stimulates cover crop roots to grow. When cows (or other grazers) nibble on the cover crop above ground, the plants respond by growing more roots. These, in turn, give off exudates that help to build soil organic matter, which helps to relieve compaction (one of the many benefits of increased soil organic matter is that it improves soil structure, porosity and water-holding capacity – all of which can combat compaction).

Best Management Practices to Avoid Compaction

While farmers need not fear creating a compaction problem simply by letting animals graze crop residues and cover crops, it's important to remember that field conditions must be suitable – and other management practices also matter – or compaction is still a risk. To avoid causing soil compaction:

- Don't graze during wet and muddy conditions – unless there is a large amount (more than 2 tons per acre) of mature vegetation.
- Move water and supplemental feeds sites on a regular basis.
- Consider rotational or strip grazing, which increase forage use while reducing the impact of compaction. Moving on a daily basis is best, but even a field divided into quarters will help.
- As part of your cover crop grazing plan, have a place in mind to move livestock when fields are too wet and muddy.



One of Nathan Anderson's cows grazes cover crops growing through corn stubble on his farm near Cherokee.

During wet conditions, Nathan purposely understocks his fields so the cattle have room to spread out, which minimizes heavy traffic that can cause compaction. Another factor Nathan takes into consideration is his cover crop stand density. "I get a more consistent stand when covers are drilled than if I aerially apply," he says. "In a drilled stand, I feel more comfortable leaving the herd out in wetter conditions, knowing I have a plant growing every 7.5 inches."

When and How Should Cover Crops be Terminated in the Spring?

Keep in mind that heavy grazing in the spring is not an effective form of termination, as plants will likely grow back. If you don't want to worry about spring termination, consider planting cover crops that will winter-kill, like oats and radish. Most farmers use an herbicide (usually glyphosate) to terminate. Adequate cover crop regrowth is needed after grazing in order for contact herbicides to work (these herbicides must be absorbed to kill the plant). To effectively terminate with herbicides, Nathan advises paying attention to the temperature and conditions outside. "Temperature can be an issue in the spring," he says. "Also, be sure to spray on a nice, sunny day with highs in the mid-60s or warmer, and lows in the mid-40s. The

other issue I've seen is not using the right adjuvants. Pay attention to the labels; with proper adjuvants applied at the proper rates, you'll get a good, effective kill."

Organic methods of terminating a cover crop that has been grazed are tricky, because there isn't enough above-ground growth to roll and crimp. Tillage is the best bet, but even then, some cereal rye may grow back. ■

Questions on fencing, watering, manure application, mechanical harvesting of cover crops, herbicides that restrict cover crop grazing – or other issues not addressed in this article? Contact Meghan Filbert at (515) 232-5661 or meghan@practicalfarmers.org

Much of the information in this article can be found in fact sheets by Iowa Learning Farms, Practical Farmers, ISU Extension and Outreach and Iowa Beef Center. Visit:

>> iowalearningfarms.org/content/cover-crop-resources

>> practicalfarmers.org/member-priorities/cover-crops/

Keeping the Family Farming Providing land for your heirs to farm

by Teresa Opheim

How do you keep a family farm going generation after generation? After all, only 30 percent of family businesses survive into the second generation, 12 percent are still viable into the third generation and only about 3 percent of all family businesses operate into the fourth generation or beyond, according to The Family Firm Institute.

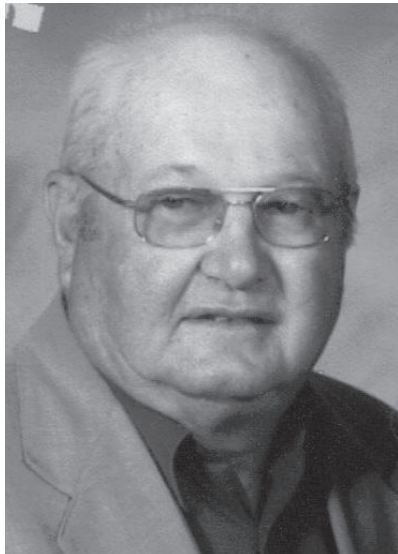
Farm families are often proactive about their financial and legal farm transfer strategies, but spend far less time identifying personal and farm goals – important first steps!

For the Fickses, who have farmed near Pleasant Dale, Nebraska, since 1869, the top goal is clear: Family, says Del Ficke. Del's father "was always putting himself aside so we would have a better life. His secret was simple – a life-long commitment to clearly communicating to all of us that we were the most essential part of keeping the farm going. We were his legacy, not the land and the livestock, but rather the family he loved so much."

When you do set your personal and farm transfer goals – and a top one is to keep your farming heir farming – experts from the University of Minnesota suggest a variety of strategies that can help:

+ Use your estate plan to transfer farm assets to the farming heirs, and cash and other non-farm assets to the non-farming heirs.

+ Consider life insurance as part of your strategy. You could carry enough life insurance on yourself to provide adequate dollars at death to pass onto your non-farm heirs and leave the farm assets to the farming heirs. For example, Tom and Irene Frantzen, who farm near New Hampton, carry life insurance on Irene, and the beneficiaries are their daughters, who do not farm. They then sold their feed business



† The late Kenneth Ficke had a life-long commitment to clearly communicating that his children (not the land) were most important.



† The late Stanton Klinge in his younger days. Stanton successfully established three sons on the farm, including PFI members Jeff and Jason.

to their son, who does farm with them. Or you could gift some money that the farm heir uses to purchase life insurance on you.

Tips from Fellow Farmland Owners:

- Decide which is more important: Treating all heirs financially equally or keeping your farming heir on the land
- Consider valuing the "sweat equity" that the farming heir has provided
- Use non-farm assets to compensate non-farming heirs

+ Offer buyout provisions through a buy-sell agreement. The Farm Journal Legacy Project says this agreement "may be the most important tool for maintaining the integrity of the business entity in a succession planning engagement." This agreement gives your farming heir the right (but not the obligation) to buy farm property at a later date. The agreement is binding on your spouse and non-farm heirs, and it gives your farming heir a definite and reasonable purchase price and terms for buying farm

assets. The buy-sell agreement can be a separate document, included in your will, or as part of a Revocable Living Trust.

According to Jeff Klinge, who farms near Farmersburg in northeast Iowa, "Back in the early 1980s, my dad started gifting us four boys stock in the farming corporation he set up for our 750-acre farm. That lowered our debt when we bought the farmland. My dad also set a sale price on the farmland about as low as he could allow without running into the gift tax."

Jeff adds: "My parents also bought long-term health care insurance in their late-'50s. As they got older, they used these policies and didn't have to dip into any of the net worth of their estate. When my dad and mother passed away, we boys were beneficiaries on their life insurance, which we used to pay off our loans on the farms. My dad was so thoughtful about this. People say life insurance isn't a good investment, but it sure paid off for this family. Between the life insurance, the gifting of stock and pricing the farm low, that made it easy for us boys."

Is it feasible that the farming child can buy out the non-farming heirs, especially

ON TRANSITIONING THE FAMILY FARM

“People say life insurance isn't a good investment, but it sure paid off for this family. Between the life insurance, gifting of stock and pricing the farm low, that made it easy for us boys.”

– JEFF KLINGE

ON THE QUESTION OF FAIRNESS

“Equal is not necessarily fair. Off-farm heirs' expectations should be in line with the contributions they've made . . . Just being a son or daughter shouldn't automatically entitle you to an equal share.”

– JOHN GILBERT

in a lump sum? Usually not, which is why the buy-sell agreement is so important. In setting the price for the farming heir, consider if including “sweat equity” compensation would be fair. As Dave Goeller at the University of Nebraska Extension explains, if you divide the farming business equally between all the children, will it create such small pieces that the farming heir cannot make a living operating the family farm? If one child is required to buy out his or her siblings, does the business generate enough income to make this feasible?

William and Mary Gilbert, of central Iowa, had six children and only the youngest, John, came back to farm. William Gilbert formed a corporation in the 1980s, and then another one in the 1990s, to lower taxes and make it easier to transfer assets.

“The assets in the corporation were divided depending on the son's involvement in the farm,” John says. “My parents visited informally with all of us about who would get what, and everyone was okay with that. There was always a place on the farm if the sons wanted it, but if you had a career elsewhere, what can you expect? Equal is not necessarily fair.”

“Off-farm heirs' expectations should be in line with the contributions they've made,” John adds. “These can include assisting with elderly parents' care, providing services to the farm operation – marketing, legal, accounting, for example – and farm labor and management. Just being a son or daughter shouldn't automatically entitle you to an equal share.”

Now John and Bev, who are in their late 60s, are transferring shares from the farm corporation to their son John C., who farms with them, and his wife, Sarah. John and Bev have two children who don't farm with them, including PFI member Kate Gilbert.

“Bev and I have talked about how to be fair to our children. Not equal but to feel like

they have something,” John says. “Every farm and family is different. Parents all have different objectives, which affect how they want assets shared. The critical point is for the parents to explain their wishes to all their descendants, and have the important parts in writing with a lawyer. The money spent with professional guidance is the best investment a family can make. If parents don't want to spend the money, then the heirs need to assume the costs to make sure things are done right.”

Whatever approach you take to keep your farming heirs farming, communicate early and often. Communication is always important, but no more so than when you plan to divide your assets in a way that is not financially equal. Doing this will keep your farming heir from being forced to defend your decisions when you are gone.

“My dad made that really clear when he decided to sell Irene and me the farm,” Tom recounts. “‘Dorothy and I will be the decision makers here without referendum,’ he said. My dad did not say, ‘I am going to have my estate divided equally six ways.’ He could see that was not a good thing to do. He didn't love any of his kids less, but he had to make a decision and then go forward with that decision. And he communicated that very clearly to all of us. There was no confusion about what he was going to do, and therefore no unrealistic expectations. We dealt with his generational transfer while he was still alive, including the dispensation of his personal assets. And the six of us get along today, which is priceless.” ■

Top Resources

- + **Beginning Farmer Center offers a class** for helping to bring another generation back to the farm: www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/
- + **Transferring the Farm Series** includes an article on valuing the “sweat equity” of the farming heir: www.cffm.umn.edu/publications/pubs/farmmgttopics/transferringthefarmseries.pdf
- + **How to examine what is fair** when you have farming and non-farming heirs: www.farmjournallegacyproject.com/tools/#getstarted
- + **A step-by-step guide** that will walk you through all the aspects of planning for the future of your farm: www.agtransitions.umn.edu/
- + **Program to help women** address succession, business, estate and retirement planning: www.anniesproject.org/managing-for-today-and-tomorrow/
- + **Farm succession planning workshops**, factsheets on probate, buy-sell agreements: www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/
- + **Evaluating your estate plan**, including estate planning terms, retirement planning, gift taxes, federal estate taxes: www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wdbusiness.html#transferring
- + **Federal financing for those farming 10 years or less:** www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index
- + **Farmland owners discuss how to treat on-farm heirs fairly:** practicalfarmers.org/blog/author/teresa/
- + **Videos of farm families tackling succession issues:** www.uvm.edu/farm-transfer/?Page=videos.html
- + **Learn more about the Lynch Family** helping son build equity: www.practicalfarmers.org/farm-transfer

Back to the Basics on Oat Research

Partnership between ISU and PFI helps answer fundamental questions on oat production

by Nick Ohde

Since Practical Farmers of Iowa's founding in 1985, PFI and Iowa State University have had a close relationship. It was at a biological farming conference at ISU more than 30 years ago that PFI co-founder Dick Thompson, spurred by co-founder Larry Kallem, asked audience members if they'd be interested in starting an organization based on farmer-led research and, in Larry's words, "practical kinds of approaches to farming." Since then, PFI farmers have worked with many ISU researchers, from venerable scientists – such as agronomists Antonio Mallarino and Alfred Blackmer, economist Mike Duffy, and livestock researchers Mark Honeyman and Pete Lammers – to newer faces and the next generation of ISU researchers.

David Weisberger, a graduate student at Iowa State University in the Graduate Program for Sustainable Agriculture and the Department of Agronomy, is one of those new faces. He has spent the last two years traversing the state, working with many PFI farmers who grow small grains.

Most organic corn and soybean producers need to rotate a third crop into their farming system, making organic a good place to start with small grains research. "The problem is that farmers almost always lose money on those crops in this part of the world," David says. Recognizing this issue, a group of researchers at Iowa State secured funding from Ceres Trust in 2014 to answer the question: What are the constraints to growing small grains organically in Iowa? The researchers – all PFI members – include Mary Wiedenhoef of the Department of Agronomy, Margaret Smith of ISU Extension and Outreach and Amber Anderson, a lecturer in the agronomy department. The funds allowed the team to hire David to tackle that key question for his graduate work.

David started by visiting 40 farms across Iowa, collecting basic agronomic data on how small grains were being raised on organic farms. He also asked farmers how long they had been growing the crops, where they sold their products and what they thought was holding back production. From this survey, he came to one major conclusion: Oats were by far the most commonly grown organic small grain in

the state. David then followed up with six farmers who agreed to do on-farm trials on several topics relevant to small grains production in Iowa.

Effect of Oat Seeding Rate

David worked with three of the six farmers – PFI members Doug Alert, Ortrude Dial and Aaron Heley Lehman – to research the effect seeding rates have on the yield and profitability of organically produced oats. He wanted to focus on seeding rate, he explains, because one discovery really stood out from his initial survey. "There were massive ranges in the seeding rates of oats," he says. "Farmers I spoke with during the initial survey revealed they seeded anywhere from 1.5 bushels per acre to 5 bushels per acre." All farmers he talked to thought about how many oats they had planted in terms of bushels or pounds per acre, while they thought about corn and soybeans in terms of plant population per acre – a more precise gauge.

"I learned I would probably save money if I made a practice of figuring out how many [oat] seeds there are per pound and using that as the planting basis."

– AARON LEHMAN



Aaron, of Polk City, explains that thinking in terms of weight seeded rather than density is much less accurate because seed size can vary considerably. One bushel of oats could have more seeds than another bushel, resulting in lopsided plant stands – and possibly, a waste of money. But if farmers figured out how many oats seeds are in a pound, they could translate pounds seeded per acre with a grain drill into a plant population per acre, resulting in more uniform stands. "I learned I would probably save money if I made a practice of figuring out how many seeds there are per pound and using that as the planting basis rather than bushels per acre," Aaron says.

To study seeding rate, the farmers involved evaluated three rates: 22, 29 and 36 plants per square foot – which corresponded to about 85, 112 and 138 pounds of seed per acre, respectively. The results showed no statistically significant differences in yield among the treatments. For Aaron, this translates to potential cost-savings. "Since seeding rate didn't affect yield, farmers can maybe achieve some savings with the amount of seed they're using, within a certain range," he says. The trial also resulted in other knowledge that Aaron

says may be more beneficial: "It's not that hard to calibrate the grain drill for a more precise seeding rate," he says. "That's something I'll put into practice in the coming years."

Aaron adds: "As Iowa has become a corn and soybean state over the decades, we just haven't done enough to answer the important questions regarding small grains. I'm really happy David is doing this work."

Rotary Hoeing Oats

David's initial survey also found that weeds in small grains posed a major management constraint. Why? David explains that, because small grains grow at a different time of year than corn and soybeans, farmers face a different suite of weeds, which require different tools to manage. The challenge is even greater for organic farmers, because they can't use a chemical method to control weeds. David and his team of ISU research advisors wondered if a

"Any research we can get on how to grow a third crop better is beneficial." – DAN WILSON

mechanical method – such as a rotary hoe – could alleviate the constraint. While most of the research on small grains cultivation has been done in Europe, where various types of harrows are more commonly used, "not many Iowa farmers have those tools," David says. "But pretty much every organic farmer has a rotary hoe."

To measure the impact rotary hoeing had on weed populations and oat yield, David worked with two PFI farmers based in northern Iowa – Dan Wilson, of Paullina, and Darren Fehr, of Mallard. The farmers planted oats in early April, then made two passes with the rotary hoe at the one- to two-leaf stage of oat growth. David then measured the effect on oat and weed populations before and after rotary hoeing. He also measured weed biomass and species composition later in the year, prior



A view of one of David's research plots at the ISU Ag Engineering and Agronomy Farm from 2015. The strip on the far left was seeded April 28, the middle strip was seeded April 6 and the strip on the far right was seeded April 17. **"The results confirm what a lot of experienced growers already know: Planting as early as possible is really necessary for higher yields and test weights," David says.**

to harvest, along with oat yield and test weight. Results revealed no differences in yield or test weight between rotary hoed and non-rotary hoed oats. "Based on these results, we probably won't rotary hoe in the future, mainly because we grow our oats with an underseeding," Dan says. "But any research we can get on how to grow a third crop better is beneficial." While rotary hoeing didn't affect yield, the study showed that it did impact weed populations – important information for farmers hoping to reduce their weed seed banks.

Impact of Underseeding

In another study, David worked with Vic Madsen, of Audubon, and Doug Alert, of Hampton, to examine how an underseeding of alfalfa affected oat yield (he determined that it had no effect on yield). Even so, Vic says "alfalfa does good things for soil conservation and making nitrogen for the next year's crop, so we're happy that it doesn't hurt the oats." Vic's goal is to improve yield and test weight in hopes of selling food-grade organic oats to Grain Millers.

David also conducted small-plot research at ISU's Ag Engineering and Agronomy Farm, near Boone, on how planting date and seeding rate affected oat yields. In 2015 and 2016, he looked at three planting dates each year (dates varied each year, but spanned late-March to late-April), as

well as four seeding rates: 22, 29 and 36 plants per square foot (the same as in the on-farm trial), plus one lower rate. So far, he has one year of data back. "The results confirm what a lot of experienced growers already know: Planting as early as possible is really necessary for higher yields and test weights," David says.

He feels this aspect of his research – validating farmers' knowledge with good-quality data – is one of the most important outcomes of his work. "Good farmers like numbers," he says. "When you can see that you'll lose a bushel a day for every day you wait to plant, that's going to provide some incentive to plant early." ■

For more information on small grains production, visit practicalfarmers.org/small-grains.

Learn More

🕒 **Small Grains Research Results:** Look for David's research on the websites of the Iowa Organic Association and Practical Farmers of Iowa this winter.

🕒 According to Margaret Smith, a **new oat production guide** for both organic and conventional producers – based in part on David's research – will be available from ISU Extension in January or February 2017, in time for the 2017 production season.

Join Us and Help "Pass It On" January 20 – 21 • Scheman Center • Ames



Passing on knowledge from farmer to farmer works because farmers are credible to each other. Within Practical Farmers' network, farmers feel comfortable openly sharing information and admitting they don't know it all. They recognize constant exploration fosters ongoing innovations on their farms, improving their profitability, providing ecosystem services and promoting vibrant communities.

Be part of the 30-plus-year tradition of information-sharing! Join in as farmers share how they conserve both money and soil, grow and market a multitude of crops, practice sound financial and production recordkeeping, access land and capital, pass on the farm to the next generation, and more.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

"Three Renowned Iowa Farmers Pass It On"

FRIDAY, JAN. 21 • 5:30 – 6:30 P.M.

In our keynote address, three PFI "guiding stars" will take the stage and share words of wisdom. Vic Madsen, Susan Jutz and Dan Wilson are all past presidents of Practical Farmers of Iowa who received Practical Farmers' Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award. From their decades of farming and involvement in our community, each of these farmers will share three things they feel are most important to pass on.



☆ **SUSAN JUTZ**

- PFI board member 1998 – 2007
- PFI board president 2002 – 2006
- 2014 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award recipient

Susan Jutz owned and operated ZJ Farm, a diversified vegetable and sheep farm from 1994 until she passed the farm on to beginning farmer Carmen Black in 2016. Susan co-founded one of the first CSA programs in Iowa, helping pave the way for this model of farming in Iowa. Susan has shared her knowledge at numerous field days, has been a long-time participant in PFI's on-farm research and has mentored several aspiring or beginning farmers over the years.



☆ **DAN WILSON**

- PFI board member 2007 – 2015
- Board president 2013 – 2015
- 2016 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award recipient

Dan and Lorna Wilson own and operate Seven W Farms. Dan began farming with his father in 1972; the Wilsons' children are the third generation to farm family land, the fourth to be farmers. The family raises organic row crops, pastured pork and chickens, dairy cattle, grass-fed lamb and beef, and free-range eggs. Dan and Lorna have served as long-time leaders by conducting on-farm research, hosting many field days and serving as mentors to beginning farmers.



☆ **VIC MADSEN**

- PFI board member 1991 – 1996, 2015 - present
- PFI board president 1993 – 1994
- 2009 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award recipient

Vic and Cindy Madsen have farmed together since 1970. The Madsens raise corn, soybeans, oats, hay, farrow-to-finish hogs, broilers and beef cattle. Curiosity sparked by participating in on-farm research led the Madsens down a path that took them from 100 percent conventional to 100 percent organic. They participated in various research trials over the years, and have passed on their lessons to others through field days, outreach and mentorships.

FRIDAY SESSIONS

* New This Year *

More Session Offerings!

- ★ **Profitable Vertical Integration of Livestock: Production, Processing and Marketing, Part I** – Learn from WILL HARRIS about the vertically integrated, multi-species farm he operates, and the farm model guiding his operation.
- ★ **Profitable Vertical Integration of Livestock: Production, Processing and Marketing, Part II**
- ★ **A Decade of Cover Crops Research** – JOEL GRUVER will share lessons learned from his decade of large-scale field research on cover crops and organic grain production.
- ★ **Lessons Learned: First 5 Years of Farming** – Three beginning farmers will share lessons learned from the first five years of their farming operations.
- ★ **Business Nuts & Bolts for Transition to Organic Grain Production** – IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IOWA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION – Hear practical strategies for successfully planning your transition to organic production.
- ★ **Farm Financial Record Keeping and Planning** – RICK HARTMANN will share the simple but functional financial record keeping and planning processes he and his wife, Stacy, employ on their farm.
- ★ **Getting Started in Your First High Tunnel** – SARA PEARSON will present a primer on high tunnel basics, from site selection and structure options to useful tools and end-of-season cleanup matters.
- ★ **Keeping the Farm and Paying for End-of-Life Care** – Hear a range on insights on and personal experiences with this important topic.
- ★ **Insects and Soil Health** – Learn from JONATHAN LUNDGREN about the many services proffered by insects, and how to harness these services on your farm.
- ★ **Lessons Learned: First 10 Years of Farming** – Three beginning farmers with six to 10 years of experience will share lessons learned from their first decade farming.
- ★ **Organic Weed Control** – IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IOWA ORGANIC ASSOCIATION – Organic farmers PAUL MUGGE and ZACH KNUTSON will pass on practical information about system and biological approaches to weed control.
- ★ **High Profits With a No-Till Farming System** – Learn how PATRICE GROS' no-till system is peaceful, neighborhood-friendly and incredibly profitable.
- ★ **Profitably Managing Your Market Mix** – Learn how to decide whether your current outlets are profitable and how to decide where to sell your product.



PRE-CONFERENCE SHORT COURSES

JAN. 19, • 1-7 P.M. and JAN. 20 • 8-11:30 A.M.

* Scheman Building *

1). Scaling Up Pastured Poultry – The American Pastured Poultry Producers Association (APPPA) will cover pastured poultry production from chick to plate in a way that helps you create a profitable pastured poultry business that can be scaled up. You will learn: housing considerations, breed selection and economics, feeding and management, humane slaughter, marketing and working cooperatively.

• **Mike Badger** is the executive director of APPPA and host of the Pastured Poultry Talk podcast. He raises pastured broilers and breeds Beltsville Small White turkeys near Hughesville, Pennsylvania.

• **Cody Hopkins** is a founding member and the general manager of Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative. Cody and his wife Andrea operate Falling Sky Farm near Leslie, Arkansas.

• **David Schafer** forever scratches and pecks at better ways to produce, protect and process the most profitable and least pretentious of farm animals, the pastured poultry, at his farm near Jamesport, Missouri.

• **Jeff Mattocks** has over 20 years' experience working with organic, pastured and sustainable agriculture. He is involved in diet formulation, assisting farmers and conducting field trials on controversial feeding methods. Jeff is from Bainbridge, Pennsylvania.



Jeff Mattocks

• **Susan Beal** has a long track record in holistic veterinary practice and is particularly interested in pasture-based ecology. Susan offers commonsense advice to support thriving individuals and ecosystems. Susan is from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.



Susan Beal

2). Conserving \$\$ and Soil – Managing production costs and stewarding the soil have long been goals of many Practical Farmers members. These two goals are not mutually exclusive, nor are they at odds with each other. There are numerous ways to achieve these goals on the farm, from taking marginal land out of production to growing your own "inputs." In this session, you will learn:

• How to identify field zones where profitability is low and alternative strategies that can increase profits from **Dave Muth** of AgSolver, Inc.

• The benefits of adding wetlands and buffers to a landscape from **Tom Isehnart**, professor of stream ecology at Iowa State University (ISU)

• About potential public cost-share dollars available to help farmers achieve their

conservation goals from **Paul Goldsmith**, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program coordinator

• How increasing cropping system diversity can balance productivity, profitability and environmental health from **Adam Davis**, associate professor of crop sciences at University of Illinois

• Details of an economic analysis of re-integrating crops and livestock in farming systems in Iowa from **Hanna Poffenbarger**, Ph.D. student in soil science and sustainable agriculture at ISU

• About the potential to reduce weed pressure using cover crops with farmers **Doug Adams** of Humboldt and **Wade Dooley** of Albion

• How to grow your own cover crop seed from farmers **Chris Gaesser** of Lenox and **Dick Sloan** of Rowley



Wade Dooley

3). Production, Processing and Marketing of Alternative Berry Crops – Perennial fruit crops are a good way to add diversity and long-term value to your farm landscape. Perennial fruits require an upfront investment, but are profitable – if you know how to sell them! In this short course, producers and processors from Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri will share their knowledge and experience growing, processing and marketing elderberry, black currant, blueberry, aronia and honeyberry.

• **Dean Henry** owns and operates Berry Patch Farm near Nevada, with his wife, Judy. Fifty years ago they began with strawberries, and now grow a variety of fruits and vegetables for pick-your-own and local markets.



Dean Henry

• **Jim Riddle** has been an organic farmer, gardener, inspector, educator, policy analyst, author, speaker and avid organic eater for more than 30 years. Jim and his wife, Joyce Ford, own and operate Blue Fruit Farm, near Winona, Minnesota, where they grow certified organic fruit.

• **Terry Durham**, an organic farmer since 1978, grows five varieties of elderberry on 37 acres near Hartsburg, Missouri. In 2011 he founded River Hills Harvest, a grower cooperative.

• **Chris Patton** grows elderberries at Natural Kick Farms near Scandia, Minnesota. He is the founder and president of the Midwest Elderberry Cooperative, and is the CEO of River Hill Harvest Marketers, LLC.

• **Kurt Rueber** is a food safety specialist with the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. He has worked in the food safety field for 35 years, with more than 20 years in a regulatory role.

OTHER TRADITIONS



Practical Farmers Update – Join us at our annual business meeting to hear the latest on PFI programming, finances, staffing and board elections.



Potluck Party – Catch up with old friends and meet new. Please bring a side dish and beverages to share. PFI will provide a main dish, water and tableware.

» **Don't want to keep food cold or warm all day?** You may drop food off at Scheman when you arrive for the conference, and we will transport it for you!



Regional Breakfast Meetings – Show up early for hot food, coffee and tea and get to know more people in your part of the state. **Not from Iowa?** Welcome! We have gathering space for you too!



Silent Auction – Peruse and bid on a wide selection of items donated by conference attendees. Proceeds help PFI's member-directed work efforts.

★ **Please consider donating quality gifts.** ★ Examples of popular silent auction gifts include books, seeds or plant stock, gift baskets and handmade items.

SATURDAY SESSIONS

★ **Cover Crops 201**

★ **Managing Weeds More Successfully**

★ **The Natural Medicine Chest for Livestock Health and Wellness**

★ **Deep Winter Greenhouse at Lida Farm**

★ **Saving Bacon: The Conservation of Traditional Breed Pigs**

★ **Building Soil Fertility on a Vegetable Farm**

★ **Transferring the Farm: Lessons from the Past**

★ **Hobby Farmer Meet-Up**

★ **Pollinator Conservation and Risk Assessment**

★ **Q&A With Will Harris**

★ **Feed-Formulating Alternatives to Corn and Soy**

★ **Intercropping for Multiple Goals in a Vegetable System**

★ **Cut Flowers for Beginners**

★ **When Am I Ready to Access Business Capital?**

★ **Forage-Fed Pigs**

★ **Planning for the Next Generation**

★ **Local Foods Roundtable**

★ **Growing High-Yield Organic Corn**

★ **Business Plan Vetting**



T.D. Holub

(*Accessing Business Capital*)

★ **Improving Family Communications**

★ **Giant Ragweed Roundtable**

★ **Cover Crops and Conservation on Rented Ground**



Angela and Jason Johnson

(*Saving Bacon*)

★ **Growing Profitable Small Grains in Iowa**

★ **Forage-Fed Pigs**

★ **Planning for the Next Generation**

★ **Local Foods Roundtable**

★ **Growing High-Yield Organic Corn**

★ **Business Plan Vetting**

★ **Lady Boss Panel: Hiring and Managing Employees**

★ **Digging Carrot Production: Lessons From the Carrot King**

★ **Record Keeping for Organic Vegetable Production**

★ **Q&A With Jonathan Lundgren**

★ **Grazing Cover Crops**

★ **Expanding Markets and Creating Identity at Hansen's Dairy**

★ **Nut Production and Marketing Q&A**

★ **Non-Farmers: Learn How to Become Farmer Advocates!**

★ **Farm Transfer Roundtable**

★ **Roller-Crimping Cover Crops**

★ **Building Relationships to Access Land**

★ **Water Quality Monitoring**

★ **Goat Production for Ethnic Markets**

★ **Cut Flowers for the Experienced Grower**

★ **Introduction to Cover Crops for Vegetables**

★ **Improving Understanding Between Specialty Crop Farmers and Pesticide Applicators**

★ **Ridge-Till Roundtable**



Margaret Smith

(*Transitioning to Organic*)



Livestock Farmers: The Iowa Forage and Grassland Council will once again hold its annual conference in conjunction with PFI's Short Courses, just prior to PFI's annual conference, at the ISU Alumni Center (right next door to Scheman!). Attend both events for multiple chances to network and learn! For more details or to register, visit www.iowaforage.org.

Improving Connections to Good Food

PFI's updated Local Foods webpage aims to better connect farmers and consumers

by Tamsyn Jones

Earlier this year, as part of our work to strengthen ties between farmers and non-farmers, we compiled and created an online directory of PFI members – both individual farms and organizations – that sell or distribute local food products. The directory, housed on our local foods webpage, is interactive, letting users search and sort via a range of criteria.

Are you looking for PFI farmers who sell in the Council Bluffs area? Do you want to purchase locally raised beef, eggs or produce? Perhaps you have a specific farmer or family in mind but can't recall where they're located – or maybe you know the name of the farm business but not the farmer's. The directory lets you sort by all those variables – or you can search by keyword.

Currently, 81 individual farm businesses and 10 organizational members are included (each has its own space in the directory), with contact details and links to their webpages. These businesses are located across Iowa, and represent a range of enterprises, from produce and livestock products, to cut flowers and value-added goods.

The main goal for the directory is to give our members more visibility – but a related goal is to help consumers find, connect with and support our members. Fostering these connections is critical to

building stronger communities – which is a core part of Practical Farmers' broader strategic plan. About 30 percent of PFI members are non-farmers – and both farmer and non-farmer members have identified local foods as a priority issue for Practical Farmers of Iowa. We hope that, by listing members who market local foods in a centralized place, we will help foster more connections between farmers and the "friends of farmers" looking to support them. ■

All the businesses included in the directory have been added at their request, based on a survey we conducted. If you're a PFI member who markets local foods and you would like to be added, let us know!

Contact Liz Kolbe at liz@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661. The only requirements are that you have a PFI membership and sell or distribute local food. All membership categories are eligible!



Anne Bohl

At a Glance

What's New on PFI's Local Foods Page

81

Individual PFI member farms, offering everything from produce to meat and potted plants.

10

PFI organizational members representing groceries, delivery services, charcuteries and others.

14

Links to various Iowa-based **Regional Food Systems Working Groups**, which are trying to help build vibrant regional food systems in Iowa.

4

Links to other local foods resources

More Local Foods Page Updates

Other features on the revamped webpage, found at practicalfarmers.org/member-priorities/local-foods, include:

- **A list of other local food resources**, including directories of farmers markets and CSA operators in Iowa and nationally; a list of all the regional food system working groups currently operating in Iowa, with links to each group's webpage where those interested can learn more about local foods initiatives, events and other resources in their area; and a link to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Local Foods page.
- **Links to blog posts, research reports and farminars on local-food-related topics.** This content, created by Practical Farmers of Iowa, is automatically linked on the page whenever it is added to Practical Farmers' website, offering visitors seeking local food information a central place to search.

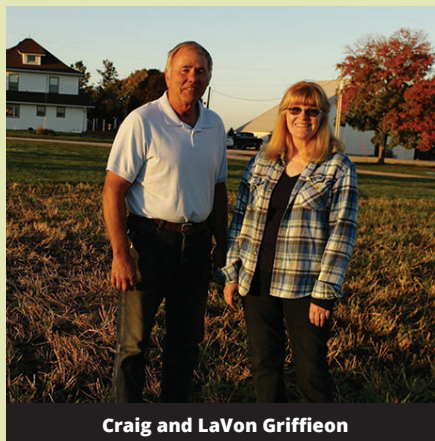


Connecting Over Food: Local food took center stage at Billy Sammons and George Naylor's field day on June 15. After a morning of learning and networking, guests enjoyed a lunch catered by local chefs Tony Pille and Chris Place. Tony is a PFI member who operates Sungold Farms. The meal featured greens from his farm and lamb from Cory Family Farm (also PFI members).

Building Community: Meals like this provide a space for members and non-members to gather, network and build community. Part of Practical Farmers' local foods work includes paying our farmers market rates for food they provide to host these meals at PFI events. This past fiscal year, we purchased nearly \$9,700 in food from Practical Farmers members.

Individual Farms

- **Aidan Hamilton** – Aroha Acres
- **Alice McGary** – Mustard Seed Community Farm
- **Andrew and Naomi Friend** – Friends' Flowers
- **Andy and Melissa Dunham** – Grinnell Heritage Farm
- **Angela and Jason Johnson** – Lucky George Farm
- **Anne Bohl and Lew Klimesh** – Low Oaks Farm
- **Beany Bode and Joanne Roepke Bode** – Bode's Moonlight Gardens
- **Ben Saunders** – Wabi Sabi Farm
- **Bill and Stacey Borrenpohl** – Woven Strong Farm
- **Bob and Donna Atha** – Appleberry Farm
- **Bonnie Riggan** – Calico Farm
- **Bruce and Connie Carney, and Amber Carney and family** – Carney Family Farms
- **Carl Glanzman and Doris Bane** – Nishnabotna Naturals
- **Carmen Black** – Local Harvest CSA
- **Craig and LaVon Griffieon** – Griffieon Family Farm
- **Dale Raasch** – Bridgewater Farm
- **Dan and Julie Beougher** – Seven Pines Farm
- **Danelle Myer** – One Farm
- **Darin and Arlene Enderton** – Apples on the Avenue
- **Dave and Meg Schmidt** – Troublesome Creek Cattle Co.
- **Dean and Judy Henry** – Berry Patch Farm
- **Denise O'Brien and Larry Harris** – Rolling Acres Farm
- **Derek Roller** – Echollective CSA
- **Dick Schwab** – Bountiful Harvest Farm
- **Donna Warhover** – Morning Glory CSA
- **Doug and Tanya Webster** – Rolling Prairie Acres Farm
- **Ed and Tricia Jackson** – Hickory Hills Land and Livestock
- **Ellen Walsh-Rosmann and Daniel Rosmann** – Pin Oak Place
- **Emma and Marcus Johnson** – Buffalo Ridge Orchard
- **Eric Sessions and Sara Peterson** – Patchwork Green Farm
- **Greg and Katie Lipas** – Lipas Family Farm
- **Janice and Ryan Marquardt** – Wild Rose Pastures
- **Janna Feldman** – Doe's and Diva's Dairy
- **Jason Grimm** – Grimm Family Farm
- **Jeanne and Jay Hansen** – Hansen's Dairy
- **Jeff Abbas and Mary Klauke Abbas** – Kitchen Table CSA
- **Jeff and Julie Forgy** – Forgy's Farm Fresh
- **Jennie Erwin** – Daystar Harvest
- **Jenny Vazquez** – Red Earth Gardens
- **Jill Beebout and Sean Skeehan** – Blue Gate Farm
- **Jim and Caite Palmer** – Prairie's Edge Farm
- **Jim and Louise Zaffiro** – Prairie Roots Farm
- **Joe Lynch and Lonna Nachtigal** – Onion Creek Farm
- **John and Janna Wesselius** – The Cornucopia Farm
- **Jordan Clasen** – Grade A Gardens
- **Jordan Scheibel** – Middle Way Farm
- **Julia Slocum** – Lacewing Acres
- **Karen and Matt Koenig** – Koenigs' Acres
- **Kate Edwards** – Wild Woods Farm
- **Laura Krouse** – Abbe Hills Farm
- **Lee Matteson and Rose Schick** – Lee's Greens
- **Linda and Randy Naeve** – Nature Road Farm
- **Loyd Johnson** – Bloomin'Wooley Acres Commercial Garden
- **Lucena Morse and Tom Lundahl** – Meristem Farm and Nursery
- **Maren and Tom Beard** – Luna Valley Farm
- **Mark Guritz** – Guritz Produce Farm
- **Martha McFarland and Dan McFarland** – Hawkeye Buffalo Ranch
- **Matt Kroul** – Kroul Farm
- **Matthew and Lori Wiese** – Heirloom Farm
- **Michelle Janssen** – Osage Clydesdales & Stock Farm
- **Mike Salama** – Salama Greenhouse and Floral
- **Nathan and Emily Paulsen** – Brun Ko Farm
- **Phillip Jensen** – Prairie Whole Farm



Craig and LaVon Griffieon



Jason Grimm

- **Rick and Stacy Hartmann** – Small Potatoes Farm
- **Rob and Tammy Faux** – Genuine Faux Farm
- **Ron and Maria Rosmann** – Rosmann Family Farms
- **Ron and Vickie Arkema** – Five Points Heritage Farm
- **Shanti Sellz, Morgan Hoenig, Derek Roller, Christina and Dennis Grell** – Green Share LLC
- **Steve and Michelle Cassabaum** – Trinity Farms
- **Steve and Nicole Jonas** – Red Granite Farm
- **Susan Frye** – small frye farm
- **T.D. Holub** – TD n' Guy Garden Oasis
- **Terry Troxel** – lowana Farm
- **Tim Blair and Kim Steele-Blair** – Bloom and Bark
- **Tim Landgraf and Jan Libbey** – One Step at a Time Gardens
- **Tony Pille** – Sun Gold Farms
- **Tony Thompson** – New Family Farm
- **Travis and Lindsay Kaiser** – Kaiser Farm
- **Vic and Cindy Madsen** – Madsen Stock Farm
- **Wendy Johnson** – Joia Food Farm
- **Zac Couture** – LSI Global Greens CSA

Organizations

- **Farm to Folk** – Local online ordering
- **FarmTable Procurement and Delivery** – Delivery Service
- **Iowa Food Hub** – Delivery service; wholesale
- **La Quercia** – Charcuterie
- **Milk and Honey** – Restaurant
- **New Pioneer Food Co-op** – Full grocery
- **Rudy's Tacos** – Restaurant
- **Story City Locker** – Custom processing; retail; meat cuts and charcuterie
- **The Homestead Farm** – Vegetables and fruits
- **Wheatsfield Co-op** – Full grocery



Conservation-Minded Rental Agreements

Landlord-tenant collaboration is key

by Stefan Gailans



According to the most recent (2014) "Tenure, Ownership, and Transition of Agricultural Land" survey, conducted jointly by the USDA National Agricultural Statistical Services and USDA Economic Research Service, 16.3 million acres of farmland in Iowa are rented. This represents more than half – 53 percent – of the 30.6 million acres of agricultural land in the state. For Lee Tesdell, a non-operator owner of farmland near Slater in Polk County, these numbers are more than a striking statistic. The land has been in his family since 1884, and he takes his farmland ownership role seriously, especially when it comes to soil and water conservation.

“Effective landlord-tenant relationships are critical when it comes to getting conservation practices on the land,” Lee says. “Landowners and farmers need to work together on long-term thinking and solutions.”

When it comes to how his family farmland is managed, Lee practices what he preaches: He plays an active role, working closely with his tenant-farmers, brothers Mike and Charles Helland, to find ways to implement practices that benefit long-term water quality and soil health. Lee

does the legwork of securing cost-share dollars for cover crops by going to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Ankeny and filling out the paperwork. Mike then orders the seed after they together agree on cover crop species, and Lee secures an airplane to seed the covers. “Mike submits the invoices to NRCS so that we get the cost-share. Then we split the remainder of the cost,” Lee explains. “For the edge-of-field things, like my terraces, filter strips, waterway and bioreactor, I make the decision and handle the financial side of it, but I inform Mike as to what I am doing.”

This arrangement is based on mutual respect and trust, Lee says: “We do not have a written agreement. We usually communicate by texting or email when a question comes up or when it is time to decide on cover crops. Mike doesn't want to lose the [opportunity to farm here] to someone else, and I prefer to rent to him because he's one of the very few doing no-till in this area.”

Discovering Conservation's Mutual Benefits

Chris Henning has been managing farmland near Jefferson since 1992. She

agrees with Lee that mutual respect and communication are essential when making plans with tenant-farmers about the in-field farming side of the equation. Chris' farmers are a father and son team. With her farmer-tenants, she has a crop-share agreement, based on a hand-shake and a lot of discussion. "We share the costs and the yields, 50-50," Chris says of their agreement. "Cover crops, and the decisions on non-GMO beans and minimum tillage, we evaluate at harvest time to see how the crop has produced, how the practices have affected the soil and the crop challenges of the year." This year while riding in the combine, they saw non-GMO soybeans stricken with sudden death syndrome, Chris says, but "it seemed to occur less where there were cover crops."

On the edge-of-field side of things, Chris takes on the responsibilities of maintenance and upkeep. She has implemented conservation practices that include buffer strips, wetlands and prairie pollinator habitat. "I'm responsible for any work that might be needed – fire, mowing, replanting or interseeding – and I usually participate in that effort or hire the farmer to help. We also have prairie hay and sometimes alfalfa that we do on shares."

Chris says the farmers who operate on her land are a good fit because they have land of their own nearby that is similar. "We both have land near the [Raccoon] river, with smaller fields and waterways, and farm ponds that are also erosion control structures." When Chris' tenants signed on to farm her land, she was in the third year of a contract with NRCS to plant cover crops. "So they inherited a number of the conservation measures I had on the farm by default," Chris says. "They've seen benefits in erosion control over the winter, more organic matter in the soil, and savings in fuel and work from less tillage." This collaboration between landlord and tenant has led both parties to the realization that, as Chris explains, "conservation methods help keep our land from being part of the watershed erosion problem, at least as much as we can."

Stewardship Leads to New Land Match

Up until this year, Bill Frederick raised cattle, corn, soybeans and small grains on 800 acres with his family near Jefferson, in Greene County. But after he hosted



Farmland owner Lee Tesdell (right) discusses his arrangement with tenants Mike and Charles Helland (left and middle) during the field day he hosted on July 13.

a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day in 2015 showcasing his family's efforts to integrate crop and livestock production, an opportunity for 80 additional acres presented itself. "I was offered some pasture ground to rent and run cattle on by PFI members George and Linda Pollak, a landowning couple who were at that field day," Bill says. Those 80 acres were a real "leg up" for his operation. "It's so hard to find additional pasture around here. This was kind of a no-brainer. This opportunity has allowed me to profitably grow my herd by 30 head." The landowning couple was seeking a younger farmer willing to try more intensive land management, like rotational grazing. "Basically, they told me that it's all about taking care of the grass that takes care of the cows," Bill says, describing the land he's renting as hilly, rough and more suitable for perennial pasture than row crop production. "We agree that what's best for that land is for it to be in pasture and grazed."

So far, Bill says the collaboration with the Pollaks has been favorable. Exterior and interior fence and paddocks were already set up on the land, which has made it easy for Bill to learn about using rotational grazing as a land and cattle management technique. "They've got the tools and the know-how to help me with fence maintenance, and we've had tons of communication," Bill says. "The price and terms of our agreement are fair, and at the end of every year we are going to have a meeting to decide what went well and what maybe didn't go so well to plan for the year ahead." Reflecting on the serendipitous situation, Bill thinks the Pollaks were "looking for someone to try something outside of the box and not just do things the conventional way. I'm grateful they approached me and gave me this opportunity." ■

★ Learn More at Our 2017 Annual Conference ★

Wondering who pays for the additional investment? Creates conservation plans? Assumes risk associated with conservation measures?

Dig deeper into nuances of the landlord-tenant relationship as it relates to conservation during a session called "**Cover Crops and Conservation on Rented Ground**" on Saturday, Jan. 21. Chris Teachout

– a fifth-generation farmer from Shenandoah who has used conservation practices on his family's farm since the mid-'80s – will offer a tenant's perspective. Chris Henning will provide a landowner's view on how cover crops and conservation can be a win-win. They will talk about practical experiences they've had on rented ground. We hope to see you there!

More Than One Way to CSA

PFI farmers find success by innovating on the traditional CSA

by Liz Kolbe

Since the 1980s, farmers have provided their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members consistent access to farm-fresh food through a weekly box of produce. Members agreed to share in the financial risk of the farm, pay for their CSA membership before planting and often contributed volunteer farm labor. For the farmer, the early payment supplied cash for operating expenses and ensured a market for vegetables each week. If the farm did well, members reaped the bounty; if the farm had a bad year, shares were leaner.

Over time, local and organic produce arrived in grocery stores and online. More farms offered CSA, further increasing competition. Broadly speaking, increased options for consumers made CSA a harder sell in a congested market. PFI farmers are finding success, however. This article profiles three who are each using a different model for CSA while maintaining the core purpose: ensuring farmers have the funds they need at the beginning of the season (when cash is tight) so they can offer their members quality produce from someone they know and trust.

Traditional CSA Box with a Twist

Rick and Stacy Hartmann of Small Potatoes Farm started their CSA in 2004, following the traditional model of packing a weekly box. Unlike other vegetable farmers who use CSA as one of several marketing strategies, the Hartmanns base their business and production almost entirely on CSA: It accounts for about 90 percent of the farm's planned budget, and at least that much of the farm's product. "If I want to have a community of people that supports our farm, I'm going to give them what they paid for," Rick says. For the Hartmanns, the packed box is simpler to move around and creates less opportunity for confusion. Because of overlapping drop-site times, they can't stay at each of their sites for the



Left to Right: Contents of a Small Potatoes Farm CSA box in mid-October. Rick Hartmann works on the farm driving T-posts, which are used to support pepper plants.

entire scheduled pick-up time – so simplicity is important. At their Des Moines drop-sites, their CSA members help out by rotating "shop monitor" duties, managing the drop-site each week in exchange for a small discount.

Though they pack a traditional box, the Hartmanns have introduced a clever way to address the dueling feedback on kale and other braising greens (CSA farmers often have some members decry the amount of these greens they receive while other members say they want even more): they provide an inexpensive greens share add-on, which provides continuous braising greens for 15 weeks of the share; members without this add-on get braising greens only on occasion. About 35 percent of Small Potatoes Farm CSA members purchase the greens share, and about 50 percent purchase a similar extended-season share, which provides an additional four to five weeks of fall crops. They also offer a "sharing tub" at each drop-site where they put extras, seconds – items with imperfections – and items they have learned their CSA members either love or hate (like okra and hot peppers). This gives their customers the freedom to decide whether to partake of those items.

Rick and Stacy's dedication to meeting their customers' needs and supplying quality produce has paid off: They have retained many of their members for more than

10 years. They no longer advertise; new members usually come by word-of-mouth from current members. "Most of our new customers have picked up a box before, for a friend who was on vacation, and decided they wanted to join," Rick explains. "We deliver a good product and have good service; it's a really good value."

In earlier years, Rick and Stacy relied on volunteers for labor, but found they didn't have much wiggle room to get a job done (and done well). They no longer use volunteer labor, but if they need to hire short-term help (when Rick broke his arm, for example), CSA members are their best resource. In addition to an annual farm potluck, the Hartmanns always accept member requests for visits, tours and discussions with church and community groups.

Buffet Box

Carmen Black, the new farmer and owner at Local Harvest CSA (formerly owned by Susan Jutz), is proud to continue Susan's method of buffet-style box-building. For

"People seem to like being able to get what they want, when they want it . . . They can buy one bag of beans or 30 pounds of tomatoes whenever they like."

— ERIK SESSIONS, describing some reasons why most of his customers have switched to the market-share option.



Left to Right: Erik Sessions discusses his seed-starting practices during his 2016 field day. Carmen Black speaks at her first field day earlier this summer. Carmen has continued the buffet-style CSA box-building started by Susan Jutz, whose operation Carmen took over this year.

“Farming would be lonelier without this style of CSA. Being at the drop-site and watching people select their vegetables, I get to know the members as people.”

— CARMEN BLACK, speaking about one reason she enjoys the buffet-style CSA setup.

about 120 summer shares (plus spring and fall), Carmen delivers to four drop-sites and has a few on-farm pick-ups. At each drop-site, she sets coolers containing each vegetable on the ground with a sign indicating how much people should take. As shareholders arrive, they walk down the line and fill their bags with items from each cooler – like a buffet. She also has seconds set aside; people can take as many extra seconds as they want.

Carmen likes this method. “Farming would be lonelier without this style of CSA,” she says. “Being at the drop-site and watching people select their vegetables, I get to know the members as people. I can answer questions, and I can see which items people are hesitant about, particular about or really excited about.” For instance, Carmen has observed that people are always very particular about cucumbers. They are also happy to get blemished tomatoes early, but become more discerning about them later in the season. The buffet setup also gives people a chance to talk to one another, which takes some pressure off Carmen to be the recipe source. “I introduced tomatillos to the share and the people who knew how to use them were so enthusiastic about cooking with them, they swayed the skeptics into loving tomatillos too – which was good, because I’m really not an expert at using tomatillos.”

The buffet-style CSA also increases Carmen’s efficiency because she doesn’t have to deal with – or pay for – the added labor of packing boxes. “I do have to stay

at each drop-site for an hour, but overall it saves me work,” Carmen says, adding that the more compact distribution also saves space during transport. “I deliver 50 shares to Iowa City in the back of a Nissan Titan (truck). There’s no way I could do that many boxes without a different vehicle. I need the truck to move sheep, so it needs to work for veggies, too.” When 10 minutes remain at a drop-site, Carmen calls anyone who hasn’t yet come. If she reaches them, she will usually pack a share for them and leave it with a member-volunteer in town for a later pick-up. If she can’t reach them, she donates the shares to local food pantries (she has made arrangements to do this with the food pantries in each town she serves).

Pre-Paid Market Share

In addition to a traditional CSA box, Erik Sessions of Patchwork Green Farm offers a CSA share that functions as a pre-paid market tab. The concept is adapted from a model he read about in “Growing for Market,” in which members pre-pay a market share in the spring for \$150, \$225 or \$350. Erik adds a \$10 to \$20 credit to their tab, depending on the share purchased. During the twice-weekly farmers market in Decorah, members “shop” like regular customers, but everything they “buy” is purchased from their tab. As they select their items, they write on a clipboard what they “bought.” This system lets Erik avoid having to deal in cash. He sends a weekly newsletter and a monthly email update in which he lists each member’s remaining balance.

Erik added the market-share option five years ago. “It’s been interesting to watch the numbers,” he says. “When we started, some people jumped from the traditional box to the market share, and some people joined for the first time because of it. Now we have about 90 people doing market shares, and 17 doing traditional shares. People seem to like being able to get what they want, when they want it, and nothing happens to their balance when they’re out of town. They can buy one bag of beans or 30 pounds of tomatoes whenever they like.”

Initially Erik used Excel to track balances, but has since gone back to pencil and paper. After each market, he enters the information into a three-ring binder with a page for each member, organized with columns for date, amount spent and remaining balance. “I like our paper system,” Erik says. “It takes about 15 minutes to enter the information after each market and I can show members their balance at market whenever they ask.”

Erik concedes the market share doesn’t exactly fit the definition of CSA because there is no shared risk on the part of the consumer. It is “more accurately” a farm buying club that his family tries to make as CSA-like as possible, he says, though he adds that he thinks they do this quite successfully. Erik, his wife, Sara Peterson, and their daughters build relationships with customers during market; they typically see 50 of their 95 members per market, and about half of their “sales” are to members. He also thinks this model benefits the small farmers market he sells at. “Because we bring members to the market so often, they are guaranteed to wander around and buy from other vendors, too.” ■



DIVERSE LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS



Diverse Livestock Systems:

- Clockwise from above:** ▶ Guests at Ethan and Rebecca Book's field day learn about their pasture-based hog operation.
- ▶ PFI member Lori Wiese (pink-and-black striped shirt) and her daughter view goats at Patchwork Green Farm. Owners Erik Sessions and Sara Peterson use the goats in lieu of a mower to help manage their land.
- ▶ Guests learn about the voluntary robotic milking system at Blue Knoll Farm, operated by Laura Jones and her father Steve Leazer.
- ▶ Attendees view pasture-raised poultry at Genuine Faux Farm during the pollinator workshop held with Xerces Society.
- ▶ Dairy cows at Blue Knoll Farm learn how to milk themselves with the voluntary robotic system, increasing milk production and saving money.



Farm Vistas: Clockwise from top left:

- ▶ Guests at the Bakehouse farm walk between fields of corn and oats.
- ▶ Steve Schmidt's cat surveys the pollinator habitat planting at his farm near Denver.
- ▶ Visitors to Jeff Jensen's (far right) farm near Fenton explore one of his hazelnut orchards.
- ▶ Early-morning sun shines on pigs raised in a farrow-to-finish pasture system at Seven W Farm, operated by the Wilson family.
- ▶ Guests have a chance to explore inside Denise O'Brien and Larry Harris' high tunnel.
- ▶ Visitors to Randy Luze's farm have a chance to see how prairie strips can be integrated into a row crop system.



NETWORKING



GOOD FOOD

Networking:

Clockwise from left: > Erik Sessions (center) speaks with Joyce (left) and Jody Fisher during the field day he hosted on his farm near Decorah.

> PFI members Russ Brandes (left) and Paul Ackley chat during the Bakehouse field day.

> Guests at Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf's field day view some of their vegetable fields and have a chance to converse.

> From left to right: Cindy Madsen, Jeremy Hall, Vic Madsen, Amber Mohr and Lenora mingle before the start of the field day that Amber and Jeremy co-hosted with Denise O'Brien and Larry Harris at their respective farms.

> Tim Landgraf speaks with Rita Vanderheiden.

> Siobhan Danreis (left) and Anne Fitzgerald work together on a hands-on activity during the pollinator workshop PFI hosted with Xerces Society.

Good Food:

Clockwise from left: > Erin Wilson (right, green shirt) helps organize food at the potluck she and her family hosted following their field day.

> PFI member Rachel Breeden fills a plate with food served during Ethan and Rebecca Book's field day. The lunch included pork raised by the Books.

> Dean Henry (left) and other guests at Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf's field day are greeted by an array of salads featuring produce raised by Jan and Tim.





LEARNING



Learning: Clockwise from top left:

► Julia Slocum (in straw hat) discusses some of the machinery she uses on her vegetable farm.

► Greg Houseal shows guests at Randy Luze's field day a prairie grass to illustrate its extensive root system.

► PFI member Clark Porter (right) and others peer into a control box that regulates a saturated buffer at the Luze field day.

► Bruce Carney (far left) shows field day guests annual forage species that he grazes.

► (Left to right): Thomas Oren, Chris Teachout and Mark Philips evaluate on-farm habitat in a soybean field on the Bakehouse family farm.

► (Left to right): Aiden Hamilton, Greg and Connie King, and Phil Ebert work on a hands-on exercise during the pollinator workshop.

► Attendees at the Mingo Locker field day see what grass-finished beef carcasses look like and get to compare Bruce Carney's beef carcasses to the live animals viewed earlier.



Making the Most of Mentorship

Beginning farmers share their tips for success

by Greg Van Den Berghe

If you were to ask a current or former Savings Incentive Program class member to tell you one main benefit of participating in the program, chances are he or she will say the mentorship experience. Not only do mentorships provide a one-on-one learning experience, they fill an important gap along a beginning farmer's journey by giving mentees special access to an experienced farmer's knowledge, skills and perspectives – not to mention, an important source of support and encouragement.

However, the success of a mentorship experience depends on a range of factors, from a thoughtful pairing of mentor and mentee to being proactive and prepared for your visits. In this article, beginning farmers from various Savings Incentive Program classes share their advice for getting the most out of a mentorship experience.



Andrew and Naomi Friend

1. Take Initiative

Andrew and Naomi Friend own and operate a flower farm near Story City. They are currently in the 2016 Savings Incentive class and are being mentored by Jody and Joyce Fisher of Fisher's Flowers and Produce in Ames. Andrew advises anyone planning to enter into a mentoring relationship with an experienced farmer to come prepared with some specific questions. "Make a list of discussion topics, questions or issues you are currently facing so that you can effectively use the time you have with your mentor," Andrew says.

For instance, what knowledge do you want to gain? What challenges do you want to overcome? What experiences do you want to seek through the mentorship? These are just a few questions you might ask yourself when preparing. These questions can serve as the basis for setting some specific goals, Andrew says. Preparing this information in advance will set you up for success when the time comes to meet face-to-face with your mentor.

Andrew recounts how, before he and Naomi ever met with Jody and Joyce, they drafted a list of discussion topics and questions that they wanted to learn from the Fishers. This included advice about direct-marketing flowers, season extension and record keeping. They felt this allowed them to make the most of the time they

spent with their mentors. For example, when Andrew and Naomi were exploring irrigation options, the Fishers shared some methods that have worked for them. This feedback helped Andrew and Naomi find a drip irrigation system that worked for their operation.

When deciding on goals, 2017 SIP class member Susan Young encourages mentees to pick a few of the most important ones. "Think about which of your goals you need the most support with," says Susan, who raises laying hens, turkeys, dairy goats

and a llama at Lucky Star Farm near Iowa City. "Organize your questions in advance so you can make the most of your time together. Help your mentor understand your current enterprise and where you would like to go so he or she can best support you."

When looking for a mentor, she requested someone who has experience with creating and managing silvopastures. She found this support in her mentor Tom Wahl. He and his wife, Kathy Dice, have owned and operated Red Fern Farm, an agroforestry and nursery farm near Wapello, for 30 years. Susan says that when she visited Tom on his farm, he shared advice on growing chestnuts and ideal practices for raising chickens among these trees. She was able to take the advice he shared and implement practices on her own farm.

Top Tips for Success

» Come Prepared

"Make a list of discussion topics, questions or issues you are currently facing so that you can effectively use the time you have with your mentor." — ANDREW FRIEND, SIP Class of '16

» Communicate Your Top Goals

"Think about which of your goals you need the most support with . . . Help your mentor understand your current enterprise and where you would like to go."

— SUSAN YOUNG, SIP Class of '17

» Keep an Open Mind

"Being a mentee is humbling sometimes. It puts you in a teachable position where you have to be willing to be taught, even when it's hard."

— KATE EDWARDS, SIP Class of '13

2. Bring an Eagerness to Learn

While the Savings Incentive Program requires that mentors and mentees meet at each other's farms, arranging a farm visit is worthwhile for any farm mentorship situation, regardless of the requirements. Susan recommends that mentees make a point of visiting their mentor's farm to hear – and see – what that person has tried and learned through his or her experiences. Seeing Tom's farm, and coming prepared to learn from him, is how she has sidestepped some mistakes.



Kate Edwards



Susan Young with her llama and some of her dairy goats.

Seeing what Tom and Kathy have done has also provided a source of inspiration and new ideas that helps her imagine how she could change a current practice. "Seeing how Tom has made choices on his farm, such as tree planting locations, I'm able to bring those ideas to my farm," Susan says. When Tom came to visit her farm, she says she likewise kept an open mind when he offered advice on where to plant certain trees and how to best operate her land to accomplish her goals.

At the same time, don't feel that you must heed all the advice you receive, says Ben Barron, a row crop farmer near Jefferson who is part of the 2016 Savings Incentive class. "Deciding what advice to take and implement and what maybe won't work for you is an important task," he says.

3.

Aim to Build a Long-Lasting Relationship

Kate Edwards owns and operates Wild Woods Farm, a CSA farm near Iowa City. She was paired with CSA farmer Susan Jutz while participating in the 2013 Savings Incentive Program class. This mentor relationship is one that has continued long beyond the class requirement. "Farming is hard and having a guide can be so helpful to get through the rough patches," Kate says. "But along with that it's wonderful to have someone to celebrate with in the good times."

When that kind of relationship is kindled, she says it can become long-lasting and endure well after the mentorship has officially ended. This has proved true for Kate: Although her official mentorship term through SIP is over, she says she still finds comfort in consulting with Susan about new struggles. Recently, for instance, she started to farm on new ground, which has resulted in learning how to deal with different soil types and pest cycles. Kate invited Susan to walk her new ground mid-season to see the crops in progress and help her troubleshoot her problems.

"Being a mentee is humbling sometimes," Kate says. "It puts you in a teachable position where you have to be willing to be taught even when it's hard." Kate says she found that learning to communicate her needs for affirmation has been important. As she learned to communicate with Susan, she found that Susan was able to help meet her needs for encouragement. "A good mentor should be someone who you can learn and grow with, but that will also learn and grow with you," Kate says. "From a tactical perspective, having Susan Jutz mentor me in the practical side of farming has been the biggest contributor to the success of my operation. But more importantly for me personally, the emotional support that comes from someone who has gone before me in the trials and successes of farming has been invaluable."

While personality can play a role in how well mentor and mentee work together, Andrew says that when personalities align, it's worth striving to build that long-lasting relationship. He and Naomi continue to keep in touch with Jody and Joyce even though their SIP mentorship term has officially ended. "With a good mentor-mentee match, both parties realize that the learning process is a two-way street," Andrew says. "Mentees learn from their mentor most of the time, but the mentor can also learn from the mentee." ■

Do You Want to Mentor a Beginning Farmer?

The 2018 Savings Incentive class starts in January and **we are looking for mentors to support them and share in their experience.**

All farmers in the Savings Incentive Program are required to meet with their assigned mentor three times. One visit is at the mentee's farm, another is at the mentor's farm and the third is at the mentee's place of choosing. When these beginning farmers join the program they complete a form asking questions about what they want to gain from having a mentor and what qualities they are looking for in said mentor. **If you are interested in being a mentor,** please contact Greg Van Den Berghe at (515) 232-5661 or greg@practicalfarmers.org.

Soil Loss: What Rate is Tolerable?

Helping to raise awareness about soil erosion in Iowa

by Steve Carlson

At the Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting in August, one of the many resolutions Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) commissioners voted on was aimed at reducing "T values" – an estimate of the rate of erosion per acre that soil in a given area can tolerate each year without damaging its agricultural productivity. As elected officials tasked with protecting, maintaining and improving their districts' soils, commissioners play an important role in regulating soil loss.

What is "Tolerable Soil Loss?"

Due to glacial deposits and centuries of deep-rooted, diverse prairie cover, when Iowa's "black gold" topsoil was discovered by early settlers, it was nearly 2 feet deep. After 100 years of intensive agriculture, that thick layer has significantly declined: most of the state is estimated to have half of that today. In the 1930s, the Great Plains suffered the devastating effects of the Dust Bowl, during which dry and windy conditions combined with intensive plowing to cause extreme soil loss over a period of years – and catastrophic effects to the ecology and farm-based economies of the affected region. The breadth of this man-made disaster spurred an increase in research on soil erosion, which led to the creation of the Soil Conservation Service – now the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – and Iowa's Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

In the 1960s, the Soil Conservation Service devised the concept of tolerable soil loss. The thinking was that all soils can handle some degree of erosion before their productivity is damaged. The NRCS specifically defines this soil loss tolerance level, or "T value," as "the maximum rate of annual soil loss that will permit crop productivity to be sustained economically and indefinitely on a given soil." A soil's T value ranges from 1 to 5, and is calculated using factors such as slope, soil and crop type, management and conservation practices, and weather patterns. A higher number means the soil can supposedly withstand higher rates of erosion. The NRCS has assigned most of Iowa's soils a T value of 5, which means those soils are deemed capable of losing 5 tons of soil per

acre each year without adverse effects to agricultural productivity.

Arguments Against a Tolerable Level

For advocates of soil conservation, however – including many PFI farmers – this level of soil loss is disconcerting. Recent studies have concluded that the regeneration rate for Iowa's soils is actually less than 1 ton per acre per year. Rick Cruse, from Iowa State University's Iowa Water Center, argues the rate is even lower – closer to just .24 ton. If these assessments are correct, they would indicate that the T value assessed on the vast majority of Iowa's acres is unsustainable. According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), researchers using new assessment techniques found that storms in some parts of Iowa triggered soil losses that were 12 times greater than the federal government's average for the state, stripping up to 64 tons of soil per acre from the land. Soil conservation advocates also contend that T values do not factor in the impact of soil erosion on water pollution or the environment, or the costs of cleaning eroded soils and nutrients from ditches and waterways. For instance,

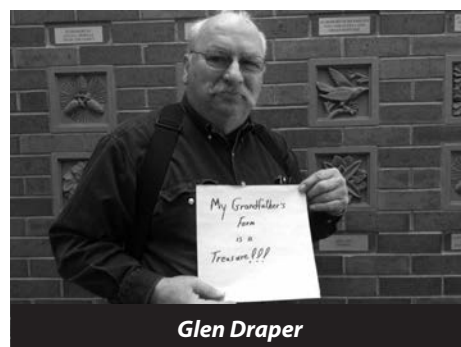
the EWG says a crop field losing soil at far less than 5 tons per acre can have major environmental impacts when eroded soil – with particles potentially carrying a range of crop-related chemicals – enters local waterways and smothers aquatic habitat.

Armed with this compelling evidence, many have been pushing to lower the T values for Iowa. These advocates also point out that the tool used to calculate soil loss – the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE2) – has a major flaw: It only calculates wind erosion and two types of water erosion (sheet and rill erosion), but not the erosion caused by ephemeral gullies. This sort of erosion is the most visible type, when channels of water carve gullies into the bare ground after intense rainfalls, carrying large amounts of sediment off the farm and into our ditches and waterways. Rick estimates that soil erosion from ephemeral gullies represents 30 to 45 percent more loss than what RUSLE2 estimates. He is currently conducting research to develop a way to calculate this erosion.

Bringing Attention to Soil Loss

As part of their responsibilities, Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners identify soil and water resource issues and annually bring them to their peers in the form of resolutions. Once voted on and passed, resolutions become part of their policy statement and act as guidelines for future work. In the past, PFI members serving as SWCD commissioners have attempted to use this resolution process to address the issue of tolerable soil loss. This year, the East Pottawattamie SWCD proposed a resolution that passed with 84 percent of the district's commissioners in favor: "CDI should encourage the NRCS to write conservation plans utilizing lower T levels."

Dwight Hobson, a commissioner in Pottawattamie County who grows corn, beans, rye and wheat near Oakland, initiated the resolution. "The problem is that many conservation plans are 30 years old and have not been updated," he says,



Glen Draper



A Thought-Provoking Display: Grundy County SWCD commissioners created this mobile display to help residents visualize what soil erosion really looks like in an effort to inspire discussion on soil conservation.



Losing Soil: This public artwork in Adair County, by RDG Planning & Design, illustrates Iowa's loss of topsoil and native vegetation since the prairie was converted to intensive agriculture 150 years ago. (Photo by RDG)

See Erosion? Report It

"I suspect most folks don't know that they can file formal complaints for [SWCD commissioners] to act upon."

— GLEN DRAPER, SWCD commissioner with Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District

referring to the required conservation plans for any farm to receive assistance through the NRCS and Farm Service Agency. Dwight would like to see commissioners working with their district conservationists to update old plans and write new plans with lower T values, and hopes some sort of process will be implemented requiring updates to these decades-old conservation plans. While the passage of this resolution doesn't change the T value or the way it is calculated, Dwight and other commissioners feel this resolution is a step in the right direction. It makes a formal effort to show other commissioners and the local NRCS staff that soil loss is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Commissioners are also raising awareness about soil loss to the public. The Grundy County SWCD (where PFI members Glen Draper and Fred Abels serve as commissioners) created a prominent visual illustrating what 5 tons of soil loss per acre looks like and displayed it in a local parade in Wellsburg this past summer. Commissioners created a massive box, which they affixed to the top of a vehicle, with the question "Is 5 ton soil loss/acre/year acceptable?" painted on the side. "The idea," Glen explains, "is to get people to think about it. You hear T value and it doesn't mean that much." PFI member Dennis Carney served as an SWCD commissioner in Floyd County and describes a different effort he and fellow commissioners took to raise awareness

about erosion: They created a campaign to mail postcards to non-farming landowners showing a photo of soil loss in a poorly managed field next to a photo of a field using conservation practices. The postcards asked questions such as: "Landowners, is your valuable topsoil still where it needs to be . . . or is fall tillage eroding your investment?"

Pursuing Erosion Complaints

Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners are also responsible for pursuing soil loss complaints within their districts. Formal complaints can be filed by anyone concerned about soil eroding from neighboring land onto their own, or into public land such as roads, ditches, parks, lakes or streams. The commissioners can then verify land ownership, document the soil loss and collectively decide if there is cause for a complaint. If they determine the soil loss is a concern, they will notify the landowner that an inspection will occur to determine if the soil loss is exceeding the land's T value. Commissioners will also offer technical assistance, as well as financial assistance to implement erosion-controlling practices such as conservation tillage, terraces, waterways and cover crops.

However, nearly all the commissioners I spoke with say they seldom receive soil loss complaints to act upon. "Soil loss complaints are rare, but that does not reflect how much soil loss is going on,"

says Jack Knight, a commissioner in hilly Allamakee County. Glen Draper estimates that, in his much flatter region of Grundy County, SWCD commissioners acted on two or three soil loss complaints in his 15 years as a commissioner. "I suspect most folks don't know that they can file formal complaints for us to act upon," Glen says, adding that he plans to retire after this term. "But I'm just catching on to what it's all about and what we can do as commissioners." In the context of soil loss, he wonders if some commissioners are aware of the role they can play. The solution? More education, he says: "This [lack of knowledge] can be improved with training, so commissioners know when they have a voice and when they don't have a voice." ■

Get Involved

➡ Whether it comes from farm fields or urban development, if you're concerned about soil loss in your county, document the loss and contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

➡ If you'd like to be part of the solution, consider running as a commissioner in your district. Contact Steve Carlson if you want to learn more: steve@practicalfarmers.org.

"Real Dirt: An Ex-Industrial Farmer's Guide to Sustainable Eating"

by Jon Bakehouse

Until I read Harry Stoddart's "Real Dirt: An Ex-Industrial Farmer's Guide to Sustainable Eating," I dismissed the term "sustainable" as a buzz word. I wish I had read this book when it was published in 2013 and spent less time ignoring sustainability and more time embracing this definition that Harry gives us from John Ehrenfeld: "Sustainability is the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever."

The introduction and first two chapters are the most exciting, as Harry lays out the foundation of his arguments. He initially focuses on three ag-related issues he predicts will result in societal strife if left unchecked: antibiotic resistance, erosion and climate disruption. Harry addresses these topics in the body of his book, but not to the exclusion of other issues like pesticides, GMOs, water and animals.

Harry also argues that sustainability has gotten lost in all the yelling about who is right and what practice is better than others. He argues there is no one-size-fits-all solution (he dresses down just about every farming practice), then lays out the pros and cons of different agricultural practices based on his experience. The stronger point of this book is, however, that agriculture can't (and most likely won't) make changes toward sustainability on its own accord. In fact, "the quickest transformation to sustainable methods will not occur through legislation. The greatest lever we can pull to shift agriculture is the power of the consumer."

"Real Dirt" really is a guide to what it's going to take, both from a consumer's and a farmer's standpoint, to work toward meeting this definition. Harry presents as evidence his own experience,

in addition to 89 in-text references and four reference pages. While some of the references Harry uses feel easily debatable, he is such an engaging storyteller I found myself wanting to believe him. Yes, meeting his definition of "sustainability" would be a massive, industry- and world-wide undertaking, and more importantly, would require a paradigm shift away from almost everybody's frame of thinking about agriculture and the food we eat. Harry, however, makes the reader believe it can be done.

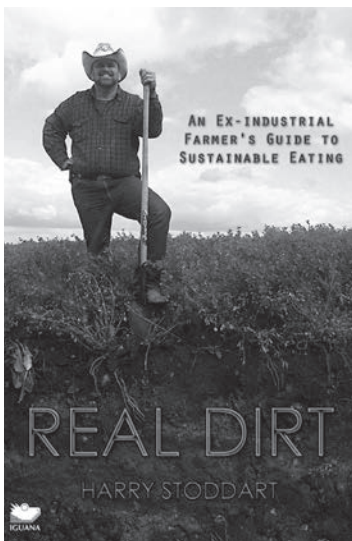


Jon Bakehouse with his wife, Tina, and son, Anderson, on their farm near Hastings, with the West Nishnabotna River in the background.

While the power of the consumer may be the quickest avenue toward sustainability, one of the biggest challenges facing our food system is that society's interests and a farmer's interests are not always fully aligned. Harry addresses this problem, in part, by outlining the concepts of Holistic Management, which rests heavily on the idea that people with common interests (in this instance, farmers and consumers) ultimately want the same thing. Harry has done a lot of the work for us by identifying sustainability (and its definition) as that common goal. This is an exciting prospect and one I admit envisioning PFI using as a rallying cry during the next annual conference.

Each chapter of "Real Dirt" can stand alone and serve as a jumping-off point for more thinking, research and conversation. Re-reading a chapter inevitably leads to re-reading other chapters, which rekindles the excitement that PFI could be uniquely positioned to help realize the possibility that "humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever." ■

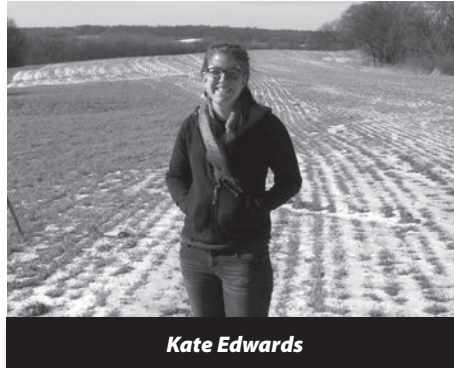
Jon Bakehouse farms with his family at Maple Edge Farm, near Hastings in Mills County. The farm was originally homesteaded by Jon's great-great grandfather in the 1880s. Today, the Bakehouses primarily raise corn and beans with a few cattle, chickens and a horse. They strive to farm in a way that protects the health of their soil, and are investigating cover crops as a way to continue conserving and, ultimately, regenerate the farm's soil.



Keep Learning with Fall Farminars

As on-farm field days conclude for the year, PFI's farminar series picks up where in-person learning opportunities leave off. These free, farmer-led webinars cover topics in all enterprises and are geared for all skill levels. **The fall farminar series began on Tuesday, Nov. 15, and runs weekly on Tuesday nights from 7-8:30 p.m. through Dec. 20.** Topics in the fall series range from high tunnel production and the Conservation Stewardship Program to tax preparation and cover crops – and were planned based on PFI member feedback. Learn about:

1. **"Growing in High Tunnels: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"** – (Nov. 15) – Jill Beebout, Blue Gate Farm, Chariton
2. **"Conservation Stewardship Program: Major Changes and Sign-Up Process"** – (Nov. 22) – Dave Brommel, Iowa's CSP coordinator; and Larette Kolbe, district conservationist, Pocahontas and Buena Vista counties



3. **"Tax Preparation for Your Farm"** – (Nov. 29) – Matt Russell, Coyote Run Farm, Lacona, and Drake Agricultural Law Center; and Kristine Tidgren, assistant director, Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation
4. **"Graze and Bale: Cover Crops as Forage"** – (Dec. 6) – James Holz, farmer and co-owner of Iowa Cover Crop, Grand Junction; and Bill Frederick, farmer and co-owner of Iowa Cover Crop, Jefferson

5. **"Getting More From Cover Crops"** – (Dec. 13) – Jack Boyer, row crop farmer, Reinbeck; and Mike Castellano, Iowa State University
6. **"Farm-Life Balance for CSA Farmers"** – (Dec. 20) – Kristen Kordet, Blue Moon Community Farm, Madison, WI; and Kate Edwards, Wild Woods Farm, Iowa City

Farminars are interactive presentations offered each autumn and winter on topics requested by our members. The series is free and easy to access: Tune in anywhere you have an internet connection and listen as a farmer or business expert presents over a slideshow, and ask questions in real-time using a chatbox.

To participate in a farminar, visit practicalfarmers.org/farminars and click the 'Join In' button. All farminars are recorded and archived on our website for later viewing. ■

Experienced Farmers: Help Train the Next Generation

Are you an experienced farmer who could use some extra help on your farm? As a trainer farm in the Labor4Learning program, PFI will help connect you with an aspiring farmer who is motivated to learn about your farm business. It's a win-win situation: You get an eager employee, and an aspiring farmer gets an on-farm job.

What's involved? In addition to hiring a beginning farmer in Practical Farmers of Iowa's network, we ask that Labor4Learning trainers develop a set of learning outcomes with the trainee and cover those topics throughout the term of employment. PFI provides a monthly payment to compensate you for the additional time spent training, which is expected to be no more than one or two hours per week.

Farms of all sizes, enterprises, production practices and regions in Iowa are encouraged to apply. To be eligible to serve as a trainer, farmers must live or farm

in Iowa and be Practical Farmers of Iowa members.

Applications are evaluated by a committee of PFI members to ensure trainers have adequate experience farming and managing employees. For more information, visit the Labor4Learning page at practicalfarmers.org.

Questions? Want to Become a Trainer? Contact Steve Carlson, (515) 232-5661 or steve@practicalfarmers.org.

Erik Sessions, of Patchwork Green Farm in Decorah, has participated as a trainer, and says the program benefits both trainer and trainee. "The program forces me to be more organized about covering topics thoroughly," Erik says, "and it's good for worker morale, as they feel like they are becoming invested in our farm as they learn more about what makes it tick." ■

Beginning Farmers: Save the Date!

Practical Farmers' ninth annual beginning farmer retreat will be held at Ewalu Camp and Retreat Center in Strawberry Point, Iowa, on Feb. 10 and 11. This annual event is an excellent opportunity to network with other beginning farmers and make progress on planning and improving your farm.

Registration will be available in December at practicalfarmers.org. Stay tuned for the announcement. Attendance is limited, so be sure to sign up early! ■



Wade Dooley and Andrea Rissing play an interactive farm-themed game during PFI's 2016 Next Generation Retreat.

Share the Harvest: Give a Gift of Grain

Would you like to support Practical Farmers of Iowa? If you're a farm operator, consider making a gift of grain. Gifting grain directly to Practical Farmers (rather than selling the grain and making a gift from the proceeds) is one way to help PFI – and may provide farm operators with more significant tax savings. "The gift of grain process is very simple," says PFI member Vic Madsen. He and his wife Cindy made a gift of grain to Practical Farmers, and he says: "Our co-op has an internal system already set up in their computer for gifts of grain. We just told the co-op the grain was PFI's grain. There are some tax advantages of giving grain rather than a check."

For instance, contributing grain allows you to avoid the sale of the commodity as income, while the production costs may still be deductible. Reducing taxable income may provide advantages such as minimizing or eliminating your self-employment tax and reducing your adjusted gross income.



Vic, Cindy and Eric Madsen

The following guidelines apply:

- **You must be a farm operator to make a gift of grain.** There is no recognized income, but the charitable deduction is limited to basis, which is ordinarily zero. Typically, your cost of raising and growing the grain can be deducted as a farm business expense.
- **Be sure the gift is grain commodities, and not a grain storage receipt.** A grain storage receipt could be considered a cash

equivalent. Practical Farmers must be able to demonstrate "control and dominion" over the gifted property. As a donor, you can offer Practical Farmers any guidance on when to sell the commodity.

- **Be sure to accomplish Farm Service Agency certification** before making a gift of grain if you annually certify or document bushels of production with FSA through your participation in various agricultural subsidy programs.

To learn more, or to proceed with a gift, fill out the Gift of Grain Notification Form (you can download it from practicalfarmers.org/get-involved/donate) and return it to Sally Worley by email at sally@practicalfarmers.org, or mail to Practical Farmers of Iowa, 600 Fifth St., Suite 100, Ames, IA, 50010. ■

Practical Farmers does not offer tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax professional for advice before making a gift of grain.

Welcome, New Members!

District 2 – North Central

- John and Tom Geake, Wall Lake
- Chris Johnson, Denison

District 2 – North Central

- Rebecca Baldwin-Kordick, Ames
- Anita Brosnahan-Johnson and James Johnson, Ames
- Darrel Burt, Marshalltown
- A.M. and Deborah Fink, Ames
- Lijing Gao, Ames
- Evan Hurd, Ames
- Tommy Kuhl, Gladbrook
- Mark and Deb Lassise, Mason City
- Ross Mazur, Ames
- Jim McHugh, Boone
- Tim Olson, Gowrie
- Matt Woods, Collins

District 3 – Northeast

- Zach Gardner, Cedar Falls
- Duane Hesse, Waterloo
- Pat Hunsberger, Elgin
- Susan Kuennen Massman, Elgin
- Kristel McClenahan, Cedar Falls

- Michael Pittman, Waterloo
- Laura Seyfer, Cedar Rapids

District 4 – Southwest

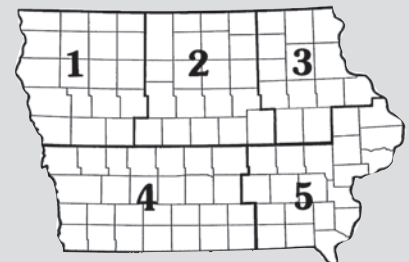
- Cathy Ayers, Indianola
- Andrew and Betsy Boone, Lorimor
- Liz and Larry Bredeson*, West Des Moines
- Mike and Edith Finck, New Virginia
- Sherry Gerlock, Elk Horn
- Elizabeth Hill, Kellogg
- Theo Gunther, Iowa Soybean Association, Ankeny
- David Royer, Coon Rapids
- Julee Santos, West Des Moines

District 5 – Southeast

- Jacob Kreiger, Abundant Biology, Fairfield
- Kelley Donham, Iowa City
- Wayne Jay Mast, Bloomfield
- Dean and Sue Thomann, Riverside
- Henry Troyer, Bloomfield
- Randall and Nicole Vos, New Sharon

District 6 – Out of State

- Robert Busch, Omaha, NE
- Dan Capecchi, Wyndmoor, PA



- Jim and Ruth Draper, Sheffield, IL
- Nancy Hansen, Geneva, IL
- Andy Kiefer, Menasha, WI
- Benjamin Moe, Yorkville, IL
- Heather Phelps, Reynoldsburg, OH
- Gregg Hochderffer, St. Andrew's Holy Carp Fertilizer, Sioux Falls, SD
- Keith and Laura Swenson, Zumbrota, MN
- Betsy Trana, Laramie, WY

* indicates lifetime members



PFI Cooperators' Program

A Glance at Shifting Member-Led Research Interests Through the Years

Practical Farmers of Iowa members have been conducting research on their farms since 1987, when the program began – just two years after Practical Farmers' founding. Early projects sought to explore ways to reduce the need for (and costs of) nitrogen applications. Since then, the program has grown and evolved – often in tandem with PFI's expanding ranks – to encompass a diverse range of farm enterprises and research interests. **Nearly 30 years on, our members continue to shape the program** as their questions shift and evolve. Here's a glimpse at how the program has changed and grown over the last 20 years – and the changing on-farm research interests and priorities of participants.

1996

25 trials | 20 cooperators

21

FIELD CROPS TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Nitrogen and Manure Management

PFI Participants: Ron Brunk and family; Ray and Marj Stonecypher; Dick and Sharon Thompson



Ron Brunk

- Corn Borer Control with the Fungus Beauveria

PFI Participants: Doug Alert and Margaret Smith; Ron Brunk and family; Dennis and Kate McLaughlin

2

HORTICULTURE TRIALS

TOP PROJECT:

- Hazelnut Establishment

PFI Participants: Tom and Irene Frantzen; Mike Natvig



Mike Natvig

2

LIVESTOCK TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Alfalfa as a Feed Establishment for Finishing Hogs

PFI Participants: Ron and Maria Rosmann

- Learning How to Use Management-Intensive Grazing in Our Dairy Operation

PFI Participants: Matt and Diana Stewart

2006

23 trials | 21 cooperators

20

FIELD CROPS TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Weeds and Cover Crops

PFI Participants: Doug Alert and Margaret Smith; Dick and Sharon Thompson

- Weed Management in Flax

PFI Participants: Doug Alert and Margaret Smith; Art Behrens; Ken Choquette; Paul and Karen Mugge; Dan Parizek; Ron and Maria Rosmann; John Veith



Dan Parizek



Flax in bloom

3

HORTICULTURE TRIALS

TOP PROJECT:

- Combination Treatment for Cucumber Beetles

PFI Participants: Susan Jutz; Laura Krouse; Sally Worley

0

LIVESTOCK TRIALS

2016

109 trials | 76 cooperators

59

FIELD CROPS TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Termination Date of Cereal Rye Cover Crop Ahead of Soybeans

PFI Participants: Jack Boyer; Jeremy Gustafson

- Winter Cereal Rye Cover Crop Effect on Cash Crop Yields (WITH IOWA LEARNING FARMS)

PFI Participants: Jim Funcke; Rick Juchems; Jerry Sindt; Rob Stout; Kelly Tobin; Darwin Pierce and Rob Davis

28

HORTICULTURE TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Broccoli Variety Trial

PFI Participants: Alice McGary; Rick and Stacy Hartmann; Carmen Black; Jill Beebout and Sean Skeeahan; Jordan Scheibel; Rob Faux

- Enterprise Budgets for Cucumbers

PFI Participants: Ann Franzenburg; Emma and Marcus Johnson; Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf

22

LIVESTOCK TRIALS

TOP PROJECTS:

- Grazing Cover Crops

PFI Participants: Bruce Carney; Wade Dooley; Ben Albright; Wesley Degner; Mark Schleisman; Bill Frederick; Scott Hicks; Matt Schuetiman; Nathan Anderson



Kayla Koether

- Pasture Monitoring

PFI Participants: Martha McFarland; Kayla Koether and Landon Corlett; Bruce Carney



Calendar of Events

UPCOMING EVENTS ~ NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | JANUARY

NOVEMBER

Nov. 29 – 30 – 2016 Green Lands Blue Waters Conference | Columbia, MO

The theme of this year's conference is "Going Green with Conservation-Based Farming: Market-Based Approaches to Promote Soil Health and Water Quality." The conference includes working sessions on cover crops, agroforestry, perennial biomass crops, perennial forage and pasture systems, and perennial grains, as well as the perennial favorite "Tour of Watersheds in the Midwest." To learn more and register, visit: snr.missouri.edu/green-lands-conference

Nov. 30 – Dec. 2 – United We Farm Stakeholder Conference | East Lansing, MI

The 2016 Farmer Veteran Stakeholders Conference will bring together farmer veterans from across the country with the government, agriculture, educational and non-profit groups that support them. The conference will include tracks on livestock, cropping, bees and beneficials, business and finance, marketing, employment and training, and continuing education, as well as farm visits, networking and exciting guest speakers. For more details or to register, visit: www.farmvetco.org/fvsc

Nov. 30 – Dec. 2 – 2016 Acres U.S.A. Conference | Omaha, NE

The annual Acres U.S.A. conference features farmers and consultants from every side of eco-farming who come together to share their experience and expertise. Learn the latest in cutting-edge technology and methods, and return home ready to make your farming operation the best it can be. **Note: This year, PFI member Denise O'Brien will deliver one of the keynote talks.** For more details or to register, visit: www.acresusa.com/events

DECEMBER

Dec. 6 – 7 – Iowa Farm Bureau Annual Meeting | Des Moines, IA

The theme for Iowa Farm Bureau's (IFBF) 98th annual meeting – "Believe-Lead-Achieve" – will celebrate the achievements of county farm bureaus and IFBF members. Sessions will explore digital data use and management, Iowa's variable weather, and endangered species and Iowa agriculture, among others. For more, visit: www.iowafarmbureau.com/Events

Dec. 6 – 8 – Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo | Grand Rapids, MI

This premier show for fruit and vegetable growers, greenhouse growers and farm marketers features an expo and trade show, educational sessions, pre-conference events – including the North American Berry Conference, being held this year in tandem with the Great Lakes Expo – networking opportunities and more. For more details or to register, visit: www.glexpo.com

Dec. 8 – 9 – Iowa-Midwest Energy District Conference 2016 | Decorah, IA

Each of the two days of this working conference will engage participants in defining the future of the energy-district movement at the regional, state and national levels. Each half-day will include a cycle of presentation briefs; break-out small-group work sessions; and rejoinder discussion. For more details or to register, visit: energydistrict.org/projects/iowa-midwest-energy-district-conference-2016/

Dec. 15 – 16 – 2016 Crop Management Conference | Columbia, MO

The conference will feature sessions on a range of crop, nutrient, pest, soil and water management topics. Learn about SDS in soybeans, new and re-emerging corn diseases, a recap of dicamba injury, updates on cover crop strip trials, new farm-weather tools, recycling drainage water, pasture management – and more. Professional advisors can earn CEC's. Farmers not seeking CEC's will have a reduced registration fee. Conference registration allows free entry to the MO AG trade show held at the same hotel. For more details or to register, visit: plantsciences.missouri.edu/cm

JANUARY

Jan. 10 – 14 – 2017 North American Beekeeping Conference & Tradeshow | Galveston, TX

This year's conference is a joint effort of the American Beekeeping Federation, the American Honey Producers Association and the Canadian Honey Council. The theme is "Building a Sweeter Future," and will focus on improving bee colony health and sustainability during a challenging time for beekeepers. For more information or to register, visit: nabeekeepingconference.com

Jan. 12 – Temple Grandin Presentation | New Hampton High School | New Hampton, IA | 7 p.m.

Temple Grandin will give a presentation at New Hampton high school, followed by a book signing. More details will be posted on Practical Farmers' web calendar: practicalfarmers.org/news-events/events

Jan. 19 – 20 – PFI Pre-Conference Short Courses | Ames, IA

Attend a pre-conference short course before the start of Practical Farmers' 2017 annual conference. This year, we are offering three short course options: "Scaling Up Pastured Poultry"; "Conserving \$\$ and Soil"; and "Production, Processing and Marketing of Alternative Berry Crops." See page 11 for full details. To register, visit: practicalfarmers.org

Jan. 20 – 21 – Practical Farmers of Iowa 2017 Annual Conference – "Pass It On" | Ames, IA

Don't miss this premier farmer-focused learning opportunity! This year's theme, "Pass It On," celebrates the farmer-to-farmer model of knowledge-sharing that defines PFI's efforts to strengthen farms and communities. Join in as farmers share how they conserve both money and soil, grow and market a multitude of crops, practice sound financial and production record-keeping, access land and capital, pass on the farm to the next generation, and more. See pages 10 – 11 for full details. To register, visit: practicalfarmers.org

Jan. 26 – 8th Annual Agroforestry Symposium | Columbia, MO

The theme of this year's symposium is "Enhancing Health, Conservation and Livelihoods: Medicinal Plants in Agroforestry." Tom Newmark, with the American Botanical Council, will deliver the keynote address. More details will soon be available at: www.centerforagroforestry.org/events/symposia.php

For more events, visit practicalfarmers.org



Grow Your Farm with Practical Farmers. Join or Renew Today!

JOIN or RENEW

< **This annual membership is a:**

- New Membership
 Renewal

< **I am joining at the level of:**

- Student – \$20
 Individual – \$50
 Farm or Household – \$60

- Organization – \$110
 Lifetime Member* – \$1,000

* See details at <http://bit.ly/PFI-lifetime>

< **I am joining or renewing as:**

- An Aspiring Farmer A Farmer or Grower Non-Farmer

< **How did you hear about PFI?**

SUSTAIN PRACTICAL FARMERS with an ADDITIONAL DONATION!

For the sake of the long-term health and vitality of Practical Farmers of Iowa, we ask you to consider making a donation above and beyond your membership fee.

I would like to make a one-time, tax-deductible donation to PFI in the amount of:

- \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$_____

Or, make a recurring monthly or quarterly donation.

- Yes, I would like to give \$_____ per month per quarter

(This will be automatically charged to your credit card on the first day of each month or quarter).

Practical Farmers of Iowa is a 501(c)3 organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank You!

MEMBER INFORMATION

Contact Name(s)*: _____

Farm or Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ County: _____

Phone 1: _____ Phone 2: _____

Email 1: _____ Email 2: _____

*** For Farm or Household membership, please list names of all persons included. For Organization membership, please list one or two contact persons.**

EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP SIGN-UP

When you join our email discussion groups, you can network, build community and exchange ideas from anywhere, at any time. **Sign up for as many groups as you'd like (be sure to include your email address above)!**

- Cover Crops Field Crops General Horticulture Livestock Policy

PAYMENT

Membership level \$ _____ per year, for _____ year(s) = \$ _____

Additional donation = \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT = \$ _____

Check or money order is enclosed. (Please make payable to "Practical Farmers of Iowa.")

Credit card (Visa, MasterCard or Discover only).

Name on card _____ Number _____ Exp. _____

Please automatically charge this credit card each year for membership

Practical Farmers of Iowa

600 Fifth Street, Suite 100

Ames, IA 50010-6071



Diverse Farms

Farms that are prized for their diversity of crops and livestock their wildlife, healthy soils, innovations, beauty and productivity their connection to a rich past and a fulfilling present where individuals and families are earning a good living



Healthy Food

Food that is celebrated for its connections to local farmers to seasons, to hard work and good stewardship Communities alive with diverse connections between farmers and friends of farmers

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 twitter.com/practicalfarmer

 www.youtube.com/user/pfvideos

 www.linkedin.com/company/practical-farmers-of-iowa



Vibrant Communities

Places where commerce, cooperation, creativity and spirituality are thriving Places where the working landscape, the fresh air and the clean water remind us of all that is good about Iowa.