



working together, always learning

the Practical Farmer

A quarterly publication of Practical Farmers of Iowa

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**SMALL
GRAINS =
BIG GAINS**
*Learn how
inside!*

On the cover



Matthew Canfield walks from the tractor to get more oat seed on April 15. He and his father, Earl, prepared the seed bed with a modified soil finisher that Earl built.

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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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(Back issues are available upon request. Unless otherwise noted, articles may be reprinted or adapted if credit is given. Clippings and notice are appreciated.)





Strong Guidance

Practical Farmers' board of directors consists of caring and wise people. I appreciate their guidance and supportive advice, both for the organization and for myself in their role as my new bosses. I revised my work goals to incorporate new director duties, and the board provided feedback at our most recent board meeting.

Gail Hickenbottom advised: "Don't be afraid to get help when you need it." He also suggested: "Hit the ground running. Share with the organization three things you will focus on your first year as director." Nathan Anderson suggested: "Make time for yourself and your family." Vic Madsen suggested: "Don't lose focus on members as leaders of this organization." While advice was in response to my role at PFI, much of it could apply to most anyone.

Per Gail's advice, here are three things I am focusing on this year in my new role as executive director:

1. Member relationships and input: I want to make sure Practical Farmers of Iowa listens to and prominently features its members. We do this on many levels, from evaluations to advisory and governance committees, planning meetings and phone calls to emails and farm visits. Getting feedback from members is of utmost importance to ensure PFI remains relevant and effective as a farmer-led organization.

Recently, in our weekly staff meeting, we provided our newest staffers, Laura Frescoln and Greg Van Den Berghe (read about

them on pages 25 and 26), with some suggestions of members they should get to know to hear thoughtful input on farming in Iowa, and PFI's role within it. Meghan Filbert suggested John Gilbert, diversified crop and livestock farmer near Iowa Falls, who serves on our livestock committee and has been a mentor for beginning farmers.

"The Gilberts operate a shining example of a diversified system: If one enterprise fails, the family can fall back on others as a safety net," Meghan says. "John talks about the idea of a three-legged stool, and that their farm is more like a 5-plus legged stool that he says 'isn't going to tip.' John also can explain the history of agriculture in Iowa and the nation. It's a history lesson every time you speak with him."

While I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with many members of the Gilbert family, I bashfully admit I have not yet been to their farm. I hope to remedy that this year by visiting them, if they'll have me! If you would welcome a visit from me to talk about your vision for how PFI can help you reach your farm goals, please let me know.

2. Individual fundraising: Ever since former board member Kathy Eckhouse explained fundraising asks as "raising money to support a cause you truly believe in," I am more inspired to talk with people about fundraising. As director I look forward to working with individuals who support Practical Farmers through generous financial support, such as members Fred and Joyce Lock of Des Moines. I want to learn what motivates them to support PFI,

as well as how they prefer to hear from us. I also look forward to learning more about planned giving. This is an area where I'll heed Gail's advice and take some training to learn the intricacies of planned giving. I also plan to reach out to all of you generous members who have made planned gifts to Practical Farmers, such as Helen Gunderson, to ensure your long-term support remains in good hands during this director transition.



3. Organizational effectiveness: Practical Farmers has an amazingly dedicated and engaged membership. Staffers work hard to provide you farmer-led education on topics you have identified as most important to reach your goals. We want to make sure we are successfully helping you to learn and make changes to improve your farming operations. Currently, our main goals to do this, as listed in our strategic plan, are: 1) Practical Farmers builds community in Iowa and beyond; 2) Farmers are stewards of our natural resources; and 3) Farmers, farms and food systems are viable.

I look forward to working more on evaluating how PFI is doing to help you achieve those goals on your farms and in your communities. We read every survey response we receive and take all feedback into account. So when you attend field days this summer, please take time to share your feedback!

Speaking of field days, we have an exciting season lined up! Billy Sammons and George Naylor will get the 2016 field day season started by showcasing their research on roller-creasing cover crops and organic no-till near Churdan on June 15. Take a sneak-peek at this year's summer field days on pages 20-21, and you will get the guide in the mail very soon!

Hope to see you soon at a field day or on your farm.

Sally Worley

← **Sally Worley:** "Jordan Clasen, who operates Grade A Gardens, took a photo of each weekly distribution in 2014 and assembled this beautiful collage. What a creative way to advertise how much deliciousness you get when you sign up for a Grade A Gardens CSA share! I'm excited to be part of Rick and Stacy Hartmann's Small Potatoes Farm CSA this season. Happy local fruit and veggie season to you all!"



Covering Mahaska County

Two new PFI families see long-term benefits of cover crops

by Stefan Gailans

The Nunnikhovens and the Plates joined Practical Farmers of Iowa in the last year. Both families farm in Mahaska County in southeastern Iowa and have recently begun using cover crops. Their stories of coming to Practical Farmers and learning about cover crops are remarkably similar. And like so many members of Practical Farmers of Iowa, they also share a remarkable sense of commitment to the present and the future.

Kerrilyn and Allen Nunnikhoven raise corn and soybeans near Oskaloosa. They got serious about wanting to improve their land with cover crops after seeing famed Ohio farmer Dave Brandt speak at a meeting in Iowa City in December 2014. Later that winter, the Nunnikhovens learned about Practical Farmers of Iowa and contacted the office in March. They were considering seeding cover crops in two fields later that fall and wanted to know what other farmers had done successfully. It just so happened that Steve Berger was hosting an Iowa Learning Farms field day later that month emphasizing cover crops on his family's farm in nearby Wellman, so the Nunnikhovens decided to attend. Seeing and hearing a local farmer talk about making cover crops work on his farm tipped the scales: The Nunnikhovens were going to adopt cover crops for their own farm.

"Everything I'm reading and hearing tells me that we're losing tons of soil and we're not going to get it back," Kerrilyn says. "I want everyone to be using cover crops and improving the soil." Kerrilyn and Allen credit Practical Farmers of Iowa and the annual conference in January with helping them connect with passionate farmers who share their sentiments about the soil. "Learning more through Practical Farmers made us want to start a conversation with others about soil conservation." With their minds now tuned into the cover crop station, so to speak, the Nunnikhovens soon learned of other like-minded farmers



Steve Plate stands in a field that was seeded to a cereal rye and rapeseed cover crop with an airplane in September 2015 when soybean leaves were yellowing. This photo was taken on March 30, 2016.

farming near them. "You should talk to Steve Plate," Kerrilyn suggests. "We've learned a lot paying attention to him."

Steve Plate and his son, Sherwin, raise crops and finish hogs on 940 acres they own near Rose Hill on the eastern side of the county. Steve explains that he and Sherwin have a conservation mindset and believe in leaving the ground in better condition than they found it. "We had previously entered into Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts for

putting in terraces and other conservation [measures], like pollinator habitat," Steve explains. "In the fall of 2014, we entered into a five-year contract to begin using cover crops with deep taproots and those that would improve water quality." That year, near Labor Day, the Plates seeded mixes of grasses and brassicas into standing crops with an airplane. Steve recalls that they had raised and cleaned their own oats that year. "We first mixed those oats with a brassica like rapeseed, radish or turnips. When we ran out of our oats, we included cereal rye with the mix to finish up the rest of the acres."

Doing Your Homework

Steve notes that he had been watching and listening to other people at meetings and field days for about five years before deciding to try cover crops on their farm. Like the Nunnikhovens, he credits Practical Farmers of Iowa's annual conference. "After seeing Dr. Jill Clapperton present about the benefits of cover crops [in January 2015], I went on the internet and watched



Steve and Sherwin Plate saw some rapeseed overwinter this year that was seeded with oats the previous September. This photo was taken on March 24, 2016.

ON COVER CROPS AS CONSERVATION DUTY

KERRILYN NUNNIKHOVEN

“This is not an overnight thing; this is a long-term commitment. We might not see improvement for five years, but we want to do the right thing for the next generation.”

STEVE BERGER

“We have a leaky system when it comes to nitrogen making its way all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. We have a moral responsibility.”

a lot of her videos on YouTube.” This research armed Steve with the knowledge and confidence he needed to get started – and helped him bypass the trial-and-error blundering he might otherwise have experienced. “Instead of learning on my own, 30 acres at a time, I was ready to try [cover crops] for myself.”

Steve’s cover crop goals include using cereal rye ahead of soybeans and trying to get more brassicas planted ahead of corn. “I want to get the benefit of the cereal rye ahead of the soybeans. There seems to be a synergy there,” Steve says. Ongoing research by Iowa Learning Farms and Practical Farmers of Iowa conducted across the state since 2008 has shown cereal rye cover crop to increase soybean yields by 4 to 8 bushels per acre in seven of 23 on-farm trials. As for brassicas ahead of corn, Steve has had good luck with rapeseed, mustard and radish. Rapeseed and mustard have also distinguished themselves in the last two iterations of Practical Farmers’ “Cover Crop Variety Trial,” providing as much ground cover in the fall as oats and cereal rye. This spring, Steve has seen rapeseed – and even some radish – overwinter this year, echoing what many others have observed across the state. The

fall of 2015 and ensuing winter were both mild enough for cover crop growth and survival; since radish is typically thought to winterkill, the fact that it overwintered in places suggests a very forgiving cold season.

The opportunity to pair cover crops with manure application is something Steve is keeping a keen eye on. “Can I put down hog manure earlier in the fall if I have a cover crop out there?” Steve wonders. “And if the cover crop sucks up some of that nitrogen [from the manure], when does that become available to the next crop?” When a cover crop breaks down and releases the nutrients it has sequestered is something many other farmers have also been curious about. Steve intends to investigate this for himself. He also knows it’s safe to say those nutrients are contained in the cover crop residue, rather than being vulnerable to loss from leaching or runoff – and that they’ll eventually release to a succeeding cash crop.

Conservation as a Moral Responsibility

“There are always going to be challenges, dips, valleys, etc., to prevent people from doing things,” Kerrilyn says when considering the obstacles to adopting soil conservation practices. “Every generation seems to say there are tough times. It’s a cycle. Every generation faces challenges and you just have to make it work.”

Steve agrees: “We own all our land, and we want to improve and invest in that land by converting all our machinery and land to no-till and cover crops. We also have a leaky system when it comes to nitrogen making its way all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. We have a moral responsibility.”

Both the Nunnikhovens and Plates underscore long-term thinking when they reflect on the practices they’ve adopted. “We have a long-term goal to see long-term benefits,” Steve says. “If I get a yield hit the first few years, that’s okay, I don’t expect that yield hit eventually. Much like when we converted to no-till, it will take a few years for the system to get tuned.”

“This is not an overnight thing,” Kerrilyn adds about why she and Allen value cover crops. “This is a long-term commitment. We might not see improvement for five years, but we want to do the right thing for the next generation.” ■

For more information on Practical Farmers of Iowa cover crop research mentioned in this article, visit practicalfarmers.org/member-priorities/cover-crops, or contact Stefan Gailans at stefan@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661.

Learn More

Research Reports:

© “WINTER CEREAL RYE COVER CROP EFFECT ON CASH CROP YIELD, YEAR 6” – practicalfarmers.org/farmer-knowledge/research-reports/2015/winter-cereal-rye-cover-crop-effect-on-cash-crop-yield-year-6

© “COVER CROP VARIETY TRIAL, 2014-2015” – practicalfarmers.org/farmer-knowledge/research-reports/2015/cover-crop-variety-trial-2014-2015/

Blog Post:

© Jill Clapperton’s presentation at the January 2015 conference: practicalfarmers.org/blog/2016/04/22/get-dirt-soil-ecology-jill-clapperton



Allen Nunnikhoven

From Daikons to Deer Hunters: Expanding Horizons Through Local Foods

by Tamsyn Jones

Buying food directly from a farmer has certain benefits over brick-and-mortar stores: building a personal relationship, eliminating the middleman, learning the growing practices or philosophies behind the food. One benefit, however, may be less apparent: expansion of one's culinary horizons. Local food exposes consumers to new products, from an unfamiliar vegetable to an unusual cut of meat. Buying from the farmer opens the door to education, encouragement – and perhaps, the discovery of a new favorite. In this article, four PFI farmers share their experiences with unique products.

Beets and Brassicas

Laura Krouse raises corn, hay, oats and about 100 varieties of garden crops at Abbe Hills Farm, near Mount Vernon. She has been selling produce through a CSA since 1996 and says she has found people are often resistant to members of the brassica family, including radishes, kohlrabi, salad turnips and Asian greens. "Anything with the word radish in it, people resist," Laura says. "I think people have had bad experiences with garden radishes, because in home gardens, the open-pollinated ones get really spicy when the weather gets stressful."

She says one radish in particular – the daikon – intimidates customers who have never tried it. Daikons encompass a broad family of Asian radishes. The most common – a cylindrical, white-fleshed variety – can grow much bigger than other kinds of radishes (the Japanese word for it means "big root"). Laura thinks the sheer size and fear of spiciness are what scare people. "They think they're only going to eat a couple of bites," she says, noting that once people try it, they discover how mild it is. "We grow watermelon radishes [another type of daikon] in the fall and people really resist those too – but when they taste it, they really like it."

One of Laura's biggest brassica success stories has been with yukina, an Asian mustard green with crinkly dark green leaves. "It's beautiful," Laura says. "It's a kind of tatsoi, very mild in flavor, that's kind of a substitute for spinach. Once people try it, they love it and want it every week."

Beyond brassicas, Laura says other types of produce that routinely require education

include winter squashes, beets – Laura surmises many people had bad experiences with canned beets, "but most change their minds when they find out how tasty fresh beets can be" – and "every single time we introduce a new shape or color," even if it's a variant of a favorite or familiar vegetable. To prepare her customers, she announces new items in her CSA newsletter.

These days, Laura doesn't have to do much educating; her customers educate each other while waiting in line to pick up their produce. Her CSA members also receive recipe ideas through Local Thyme, a recipe service based in Madison, Wisconsin.

Lamb Neck, Jowl Bacon and Beyond

For Ethan and Rebecca Book, of Crooked Gap Farm near Knoxville, raising pastured and grass-fed heritage and rare breeds

of pork, beef, lamb and poultry offers many opportunities to expand customers' culinary horizons. They operate a meat CSA, market whole- and half-hogs, sell individual meat cuts and sell to local restaurants. The Books have been in business for about eight years, and found that cuts not commonly seen in a grocer's meat case or frozen foods aisle are the ones customers tend to be unsure about.

Lamb neck roast is one such cut. "No resident would just go out of the blue to buy that," Ethan says. Jowl bacon is another such cut. While he thinks most Iowans are pretty pork-literate – especially when it comes to general cuts like the loin, side and legs – jowl bacon "is an older cut" no longer as common. "It's a pretty fatty cut from the cheek," he says. "It's not so much a frying bacon, but one you would use as an ingredient for flavoring."

Jowl bacon is one of three bacon cuts he and Rebecca offer. The others are traditional belly bacon and cottage bacon, which comes from the pig's shoulder. This origin gives it a rounder shape that Ethan thinks makes it ideal for BLTs. "We also love it on pizzas and breakfast sandwiches – a lot of customers call it 'ham bacon' because it has the feel and size of a sliced sandwich ham."

"Customers fill out an initial cut sheet so we can look it over with them and answer any questions they have," Ethan explains. "A lot of times we get back to them and say, 'hey, you didn't check off jowl bacon' to see if they might want to add that. Or maybe they really wanted back ribs, but also wanted all bone-in rib chops. We can explain that if you get bone-in chops from both sides of the hog, you're not going to be able to get back ribs – but you can still get spare ribs."

Ethan and Rebecca provide, in addition to the selection sheet, a visual guide to the various cuts illustrating where each originates on the animal. This serves as both an aid and starting point for dialog and outreach. They also include recipes when their CSA has an odd cut, and add photos and recipes to their website.

Helping customers is an important part of the Books' outreach, because it helps



Laura Krouse holding daikon

customers know what to expect – and get the most from their investment. “We really encourage new customers to look at ways to use everything, because that’s where you get the most value. A lot of those cuts are not as difficult or scary as you’d think – and you get to trying something new, while seeing the savings that comes from buying in bulk.”

Grass-Fed Lamb and Beef

The grass-fed part of their business is another area where the Books have found they need to offer extra guidance. “With the ruminants, especially, we try to add cooking tips when someone purchases individual steaks, or even ground beef or lamb. The taste of grass-fed is different, but one of the struggles is that the cooking technique is different, so we try to educate on slow-cooking techniques.”

Steve Cassabaum also raises grass-fed beef and lamb, along with pastured pork and poultry, and has found a similar gap in consumer knowledge. “Many people don’t understand that grass-fed beef and lamb are much more lean and might taste different than what they’re used to getting at the store, or meats that are corn-fed.” Steve and his wife, Michelle, have operated Trinity Farms, near Nevada, since 2011. They direct-market bulk and individual cuts, and sell through Wheatsfield Co-op in Ames, Gateway Market in Des Moines and a few restaurants.

Most of Trinity Farms’ customers are seeking what Steve and Michelle offer – animals that are healthier to eat, GMO-free and raised in a healthier environment. Even so, he says some “who were raised with corn-fed animals are a little hesitant about trying a big quantity of grass-fed right from the start.”

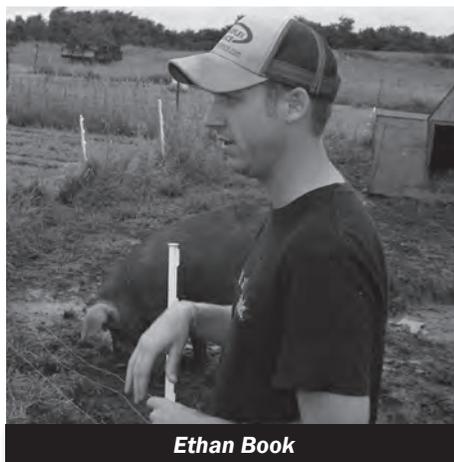
With grass-fed lamb, in particular, Steve has found some newcomers worry it will have a strong taste. And while lamb fat can taste stronger in general, he explains that “with grass-fed, there’s less fat on the animal, so the taste might be milder.” For a pretty proven taste combo, Steve recommends pairing rosemary with lamb. Stews are another good preparation method: “Leg of lamb or arm roast makes a great stew. It can simmer all day, and when you spice it up, the strong flavor of any fat cooks away.”

Greens and Edible Weeds

As a CSA farmer for 17 years, Angela Tedesco had ample time to observe the types of produce her customers found daunting. Until retiring in 2012, Angela operated Turtle Farm near Granger, growing a range of organic vegetables, fruits and herbs. “As a CSA farmer, the most challenging foods customers needed help with seemed to be how to cook greens of all sorts, from kale to collards, as our culture has gotten away from that.”

Angela herself grew up harvesting wild poke greens, and says with her CSA, she habitually gave wild nettles in the spring for anyone who was interested. When a customer with Asian in-laws started coming to Turtle Farm to gather pigweed to process, she says “of course, that got us thinking about the weeds we did know more about.” She started offering edible weeds like lambs quarter and purslane to interested CSA members.

To teach customers how to work with the variety of greens they received, Angela prepared a greens dish at the orientations she would hold for new members. “Some years, we even cooked nettles and let them take bags of nettles home from the meeting.” Angela also included recipes for greens in her newsletter, but says she feels the hands-on component was more powerful. “To let someone try them, see how tasty they can be – and then show them how to cook [those items] – makes more of an impression, and hopefully gets customers to include them in their diets rather than finding a bag of strange green stuff they can’t always identify in their [CSA share] box.”



Ethan Book



Angela Tedesco

Learning from Customers

It’s easy to think the education only happens in one direction. But Angela and Ethan both emphasize how reciprocal the learning process is. Angela recounts how, as a farmer, she was introduced to new edibles like sweet potato greens and squash stems by refugee farmers working on her farm.

“As I farmer, I used to say, if we could find a market for these weeds, we’d be rich,” Angela says, recalling how she would later watch as one such refugee farmer, Angelique Hakuzimana, “would set aside any pigweed that we were weeding from the plots, which she took home and cooked. When the refugee farmers started selling to the Iowa Food Coop, they sold amaranth greens, sweet potato vines and leaves, and some other greens I hadn’t tried.”

Ethan says he discovered a new niche market for one of his products: selling lard to hunters. “We went through a good stretch where we were selling unrendered lard to deer hunters, who would add it to their sausage. That was a market we hadn’t even thought of until suggested by our customers.”

All these farmers believe this mutual learning is one of the most satisfying benefits to working directly with customers. “A lot of people come to Community Supported Agriculture because they want to learn more about food,” Laura says. “After awhile, there’s no resistance – just curiosity.” ■

Visit our blog to read tips from these farmers on how to prepare the food products mentioned here.



Looking for Alternative Funding? Consider USDA Value-Added Producer Grant

by Steve Carlson

Alternative funding options for a farm start-up or expansion are common topics Practical Farmers members ask us about. While there are some appealing loan options for beginning farmers (such as the Beginning Farmer Loan Program from either Iowa Finance Authority or Farm Service Agency), grant funding – which is seemingly free money – is of particular interest to many cash-strapped young or expanding farm businesses.



← The outside of Harvestville Farm's on-farm retail store.

But “seemingly free” is the key phrase here. Different funding organizations have varying requirements for the application and reporting process. Many ask for very detailed and timely reports on how the funds are being spent. Some require dollar-for-dollar matching funds. Others require an application that is highly polished and thorough, often requiring the inclusion of a business plan. The takeaway? When evaluating grant opportunities, always read the fine print so you can decide how “free” the money really is. One grant some Practical Farmers members have secured is the Value-Added Producer Grant.

What Is It?

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service, the Value-Added Producer Grant provides funding to farmers or groups of farmers on a competitive basis to create or develop value-added, producer-owned businesses. Its goal is to help producers generate new products, create or expand marketing opportunities, and increase income.

A wide range of products qualify as value-added. This term is used to refer to any agricultural commodity or product whose value was increased by:

- **Changing its physical state** – such as making cider from apples, flour from wheat, jam from berries, etc.

- **Marketing a special identity** – such as organic, grass-fed, humanely-raised, etc., or by physically segregating a commodity during production and distribution (for instance, GMO-free).
- **Being locally produced and marketed** – This encompasses everything from aggregating local foods to buy-local campaigns, to community-based food enterprises.
- **Producing renewable energy on the farm** – such as biodiesel, solar or wind.
- **Linking farmers with local and regional supply networks** – such as farm-to-school, selling to restaurants, etc.

Eligible Projects and Funding

When applying, you must choose between a planning grant or a working capital grant. With a planning grant, you can receive up to \$75,000 in funds to create feasibility studies or business plans, including marketing plans, in order to determine market opportunities for value-added products. With a working capital grant, you can receive up to \$250,000 – but the funds must be used for operational costs directly related to producing or marketing a value-added product. These grants also require a third-party feasibility study and business plan as a prerequisite to funding. However, these two requirements are waived if the funding amount you are requesting is less than \$50,000. The feasibility study

requirement may also be waived if you are requesting funds to expand the market for a value-added product you have been successfully producing and marketing for two or more years.

Matching Funds Requirement: If you are awarded a Value-Added Producer Grant, you must provide matching funds on a one-to-one basis. These funds may be in the form of cash or eligible in-kind contributions – but they must be available at the time of application. However, at least 50 percent of the matching funds (or 25 percent of the total project cost) must come in the form of cash. The other half may come from the farmers' own time and effort (“sweat equity”).

One PFI Family's Experience

In 2015, four PFI farmers were among 258 businesses nationwide to receive Value-Added Producer Grant funding. One recipient was Kathy Hohl, who operates Harvestville Farm in Donnellson with her son Adam and daughter-in-law Julie. The Hohls received \$120,000 to expand and improve the operating efficiency of their business. In 2014, the family built an on-farm, multi-use commercial kitchen, which they have been using to process vegetable products such as salsas, pre-washed salad blends and ready-to-cook frozen sweet corn. Kathy says they applied for grant funding in order to expand their processed vegetable business, and plan to use the

funds “to hire additional labor for the processing, improve our packaging as we introduce new products and focus on the marketing of our value-enhanced veggies.”

To ensure they properly navigated the complex application process, the Hohls took advice from others and hired a professional grant writer. Kathy was glad they did: “Unless farmers are well-versed in the process of grant writing, we would encourage anyone to look at the possibility of hiring a professional grant writer. We’re all college-educated adults, but looking back, I would never attempt that application on my own.” She admits it was difficult at times to work with an outsider to the business. While she, Adam and Julie were all involved in the process, Kathy says they had to essentially put themselves in the writer’s hands.

“We spent a lot of time at first talking with our grant writer, then sending her any and all information by email and snail mail so she could better understand our operation – not only financials, but copies of ads, publicity, etc. Then we started writing and proofing back and forth until all were satisfied with the finished results.” The Hohls submitted their first application during the 2014 application period, but were not awarded funding that cycle. While disappointed, they received constructive feedback on how to improve their application. They worked with the same grant writer to make those changes, and submitted a successful application in 2015.

During the two-year funding period, the Hohls are working with Vicki Larson in Mount Pleasant’s USDA Rural Development office to help them through the grant reporting requirements. They need to report on general project accomplishments every six months, and submit a final status report after the project’s completion. A business programs specialist in each of Iowa’s 10 USDA Rural Development offices is available to assist grant recipients in the surrounding counties with reporting requirements.

The Application Process

For the upcoming application cycle, the deadline to submit a paper application is July 1, and June 24 for electronic applications.



(Note: Unless you have already started a Value-Added Producer Grant application for this cycle, there is not enough time to apply if you are just now learning about this opportunity. To get a head start for the next cycle, envision your project and do some prep before the 2017 notice comes out.)

Along with the notice of application, the USDA released an application toolkit containing a checklist, templates, required grant forms and instructions. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition also provides a timeline and checklist as part of its “Farmers’ Guide to Applying for Value-Added Producer Grant Funding,” which is updated with current dates and information each year.

Before submitting an application, you must obtain a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number, which is a unique nine-digit number for businesses issued by Dun & Bradstreet. You must also register in the federal System for Awards Management (SAM). Basic components of the application include a variety of standard government forms along with many other written documents – so be sure to check all requirements before submitting your application.

Draft applications can be sent to Iowa’s Rural Development office for preliminary review and feedback ahead of the due date. This step is strongly recommended to avoid the potential for an incomplete application – and it’s a step the Hohls took full advantage of. Once your final application is submitted, it will be reviewed to determine if it is complete and eligible.

“Unless farmers are well-versed in the process of grant writing, we would encourage anyone to look at the possibility of hiring a professional grant writer. We’re all college-educated adults, but looking back, I would never attempt that application on my own.”

– KATHY HOHL

If so, it will then be reviewed and scored using six criteria on a scale from zero to 100, averaging scores from your state office and an independent reviewer. Scoring criteria are described in detail in the USDA’s VAPG toolkit. One criterion, however, includes up to five priority points for projects submitted by small- or medium-sized family farms; beginning, socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers; or farmer cooperatives or mid-tier value chains.

When Kathy, Adam and Julie received notice that their first application was not funded, they were also given their scores for each of the six criteria to help them understand what needed to be improved. Harvestville Farms applied for and received priority points as a small family farm.

Applications may be submitted by mail, or online by creating an account with grants.gov. For more information about the Value Added Producer Grant, speak with staff at your local USDA Rural Development office (visit www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices/ia to find the office nearest you).

To stay informed about other potential grant opportunities, it’s a good idea to periodically check sources like grants.gov, iowagrants.gov and North Central SARE, or sign up to receive ATTRA’s “Weekly Harvest” e-newsletter (visit attra.ncat.org). ■

No Surprises

The Juchems' promise: "We will never sell the farm without letting our kids know first."

by Teresa Opheim

RICK JUCHEMS, WHO RAISES CORN, SOYBEANS, cover crops and hogs near Plainfield with his wife, Jane, lugs a fat binder to the kitchen table. He flips through the binder, which includes their wills, medical and financial Power of Attorney forms, farm financials, bank account information and lock box key.

Also included are Rick's responses to a series of questions the family discussed when they attended a Thomas William Deans workshop designed to help family business owners protect their wealth and family relationships. The Juchems' answers – indeed the binder itself – could be labeled "No Surprises," because they exist, in part, to educate son Nathaniel, daughter-in-law Kristin and daughter Elizabeth about the farm finances, and to hold the conversation about the farm's future.

"Our children need to know what is going on," Rick's wife, Jane, says. "We are trying to get everything on the table, so that no one's expectations are inaccurate."

Jane says the workshop "made us talk with our kids about whether they expected to come back and farm – and if they even had the right to come back. Either way, you have to lay that out, in case they may suddenly decide at age 40 they want to farm. Right now, they are happy in their careers, and they aren't putting any sweat equity into the farm. Also, we aren't just sitting around waiting for them to return."

One of the questions the Juchems family discussed at the workshop: Do you understand that the business might someday be sold? Like many farmers, the Juchems' wealth is tied up in their land. Jane has an off-farm job, but "we are sitting on our part of our retirement plan" Rick says. "There may come a time when we sell, we don't know."

"But I don't know that we ever will," Jane counters. "If we move, we probably could rent the land. Rick is putting up a machine shed now, so we are still making improvements and actively farming. But our kids will never get a phone call where we say, 'we sold the farm today.' We will always talk to them about it beforehand."

No surprises. In Rick's family, there were surprises, and the result caused a lot of bitterness.

"Both of my brothers farmed with my dad for awhile. My older brother farmed the longest," Rick says. "Nothing was ever



discussed. It came as a shock to my brother that the farm was sold while he was working for Dad. He and his wife had to move into town. My dad didn't feel like he had a choice in the transaction and it was a stressful time. "

Rick reports his brother now has a good job working for a chemical distribution company, and seems happy now.

"Our kids will never get a phone call where we say, 'we sold the farm today.' We will always talk to them about it beforehand."

"Jane's family has been better at planning and communication. I farm with my brother-in-law, and we talk all the time," Rick says.

Rick and Jane have also asked their kids: If some of this rental ground becomes available to purchase, would they want to buy it and have Rick and Jane rent from them? "Right now, they don't feel they are able to," Jane says. "But if there are future opportunities to purchase farm ground, we will ask them again. It would be their land, and we could rent from them."

During the workshop, Rick and Jane were also asked to list strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges that could affect the health of their business. Among Rick's answers: "We have good advisors, which is a strength. A weakness? My shoulders and knees are shot. The ability to buy land is a potential opportunity. Renting farmland can be a challenge and an

opportunity. We just had 28 acres taken away because our landlord had a son-in-law who wanted to farm those acres. Our landlords are elderly, so the land will be turning over in the coming years. Change is certain, whether it is an opportunity or a threat.”

Among their landlords is Jane’s mother, who is suffering from dementia. Jane has had more than her fair share of elder issues, as she has cared for and helped make arrangements for her mother, aunt and uncle as they failed. “I am the only granddaughter on Mom’s side of the family, and my aunt and uncle had no children. With such a small family, my in-state brother and I try to divide up the responsibilities and decisions. There were a couple years where everything was a crisis – broken bones, dementia, moving, selling homes and even hospice arrangements. It’s daunting thinking about long-term care,” she says. “Who can afford that chapter of our lives at thousands of dollars a month?”

Jane and her two brothers will inherit the part of their mother’s farmland that has been in a living trust, but, again, no surprises. The disposition of that farmland was settled about 30 years ago after her father died and one of her brothers had started farming the family farmland near Hudson.

“Two of us siblings are actively involved in this operation, one is not,” Jane says. “We had to borrow money to buy some land from my non-farming brother several years ago. That was kind of hard, but at least it won’t be part of my mother’s estate now. When my



A view of one of Rick and Jane Juchems’ farm fields. On this particular field, Rick and Jane were conducting on-farm cover crop research with Practical Farmers.

mom dies, we will buy him out of the land we are cash renting from our mother at appraised value. Some days we think it would be nice to buy at a discount, since we tilled and farmed it all these years. But we know the deal. It is not a surprise. If we hadn’t talked about it, we might have gone into the reading of the will and thought ‘we’ve worked here all of our lives, aren’t we entitled to it?’

“On the other hand, we’ve been making a living off of it. Without help from family and friends, we wouldn’t be here. We were given an opportunity here. It’s a lot of give and take. It’s a plan that’s been set, like a contract, and we agreed to it. I am really hopeful it will go well.”

Rick closes and pats the binder with a promise: “We think you should lay it all out on the table with your kids. We’re going to update this information every year.” ■

“Two of us siblings are actively involved in this operation, one is not When my mom dies, we will buy him out Some days we think it would be nice to buy at a discount, since we tilled and farmed it all these years. But we know the deal. It is not a surprise.” – JANE JUCHEMS

Learn More

- © For some resources on family communications, see farmtransitions.org/family-communications-assessments-goal-setting
- © A farm Legacy Letter is a good way to get your family to start talking about farm transfer: see practicalfarmers.org/farmtransfer
- © More on Thomas Williams Dean’s approach can be found at www.EveryFamily’s Business.com

When a Farmer Marries a Farmer

How one family combined farms and enterprises

by Sally Worley

Anyone who is married to a farmer knows: Being married to a farmer can come with excessive baggage. For Michelle Janssen and Brian Swenson, two already established farmers, marriage to each other came with saddlebags and dairy cows. Michelle met Brian through the local FSA office many years ago. They finally went on a date in August 2014, and married on January 2, 2015.



WHAT'S IN A (FARM) NAME?

“[The Clydesdales are] a combination of a hobby and a breeding operation. We've sold them all over the United States and into Canada.” —MICHELLE JANSSEN

Growing Up

Michelle grew up farming with her parents, raising row crops, beef cattle and Clydesdale draft horses on Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm in northern Iowa. After high school, as a single young mom, Michelle went to Iowa State University and received her degree in animal science. She then came back to farm with her dad, hoping to raise her son in the farming lifestyle she was raised in and loves.

In 2009, Michelle purchased a 20-acre farm near Stacyville. In April 2015, her dad, Leroy, died. Now Michelle, her mom Carol, her now grown-up son Jessie and her new husband, Brian, are carrying on Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm.

Brian grew up on a dairy farm near Adams, Minnesota. They have also incorporated this dairy herd in southern Minnesota into the mix.

A Pastiche of Farm Ground

Today Michelle, Jessie and Brian collectively manage 280 acres, or five farm parcels, including:

- 100 acres at the new "home base" near Floyd that is in pasture and hay ground, and is also where Michelle's mom lives
- 20 acres at Michelle and Brian's home near Stacyville, which includes pasture and a feed lot

- Jessie's home near Osage, where Michelle's parents started farming and raised Michelle and her brother; this property is used as a winter dry lot
- 80 acres 7 miles southeast of the home base near Floyd that is used to raise row crops
- 80 acres at Brian's family farm, Swenson Dairy, near Adams, Minn., where Brian and his dad milk 60 cows

Farm enterprises include a Hereford beef cow-calf herd, Clydesdales, chickens and non-GMO corn, soybeans, oats and dairy cattle. There are also beehives and young orchard trees – Michelle's dad planted the orchard shortly before his death.

All three have full-time jobs: Michelle works in Austin, Minn., on payment limitation for the Conservation Reserve Program at the

⬇️ **Oaken and Sven are both two years old and for sale.** For more information, visit [Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm Facebook page](#).



FSA office. Jessie works as a mechanic in Osage for Ag Power Enterprises. Brian works at the grain elevator in Adams, Minn. The family has six dogs between them, and also takes in foster kids.

Managing Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm's four farm parcels – plus a dairy farm in Minnesota and three full-time jobs – means a busy schedule with a lot of moving parts for these three farmers.

A Closer Look at the Enterprises

Clydesdale Horses: Right now the family has nine registered Clydesdales on the farm. "It is a combination of a hobby and a breeding operation," Michelle says. "We've sold them all over the United States and into Canada." Oaken and Sven are both two-year-old studs currently for sale.

Last fall, 12-year-old mare Paddy was sold to 4 Freedom Equestrian Team in Ohio, an organization that provides equestrian therapy to veterans. "I'm excited for her future," Michelle says. "She's a good mare to do that."

Beef Cattle: This portion of the farm currently includes 30 to 32 beef cows "The number varies regularly," Jessie explains. "Brian has a habit of sometimes bringing cows home." While the dairy operation is staying separate, Michelle says "we pulled all Brian's



ON MARRYING ANOTHER ESTABLISHED FARMER:

“They key to making this work is lots of patience, understanding and above all – communication.”

– MICHELLE JANSSSEN

beef cows in with my cows to make it more manageable and consistent.”

All beef is sold directly to customers, mainly as halves and quarters through Facebook. Cows that aren't sold directly are taken to the sale barn in Cresco. “We tried to do market bundles of individual beef cuts, but time and effort cost more money than it was worth,” Michelle says. However, the family is looking forward to processing – and perhaps marketing – through a newly opened processor, LimeSprings Beef, in Lime Springs that Michelle says has “direct-market sources to the Twin Cities.”

Cattle are raised on pasture in the growing season and supplemented with hay and oats grown on the farm. Corn stalk bales are used for winter feed and bedding.

Crops: The corn and soybeans raised by Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm are non-GMO. The family planted 12 acres of oats last year, all baled and fed to their livestock. “We're trying to get to the point where we raise what we feed,” Michelle says. “We



From left to right: Brian Swensen, Michelle Janssen, Carol Janssen and Jessie Janssen. Some of the Clydesdales at Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm.

don't want to have to pull too much in. We are not quite there yet; we buy some in for the dairy side of the operation.”

Brian, Michelle and Jessie do not receive a premium for their non-GMO crops. Crops they do not use for feed are sold to the elevator. “We haven't received a premium in the past for non-GMO crops. I don't know if [the elevator has] the capability to keep it separate,” Michelle says. “We haven't talked with them much about the prospect, and trucking [our non-GMO crops] to places that separate and pay premiums for non-GMO crops would negate the premiums we receive.”

However, now that the family is moving its home base to Michelle's mom's farm, Michelle, Brian and Jessie hope marketing opportunities will open up. “Now that we have a house on the highway, we may put a sign on the machine shed to advertise non-GMO crops to sell to other farmers as feed,” Michelle says. “There are over 1,000 cars a day that travel this road.”

How it All Fits Together

Michelle, Jessie and Brian are in their second year farming together. Brian runs the sprayer for the grain elevator, so is busy spraying during planting season. Jessie and Michelle plant the row crops at their southern farm parcel. “Jessie is in charge of the horses and cattle,” Michelle explains.

“We maybe rely on him too much as we figure out how to split our time.” Brian adds: “Trying to keep track of everything sometimes is hard, but we make it work.”

The dairy operation will stay separate, at least for now. Part of the reason, Michelle explains, is to simplify farm transition. “We are trying to transition Jessie in as the next generation of the farm. It is already plenty complicated without the dairy farm included.” To help transition the farm to Jessie, and to future generations, Osage Clydesdales and Stock Farm is now set up as an LLC. The LLC was set up to include shares for all three active generations: parents Leroy and Carol, Michelle and son Jessie. “Shares allow protection of ownership in the family for future generational transitions,” Michelle says. “A majority vote is required to add or remove family members.”

Michelle's advice to two established farmers who fall in love and get married: “The key to making this work is lots of patience, understanding and above all – communication. We love spending time helping each other get the work done, but we've also come to realize dividing and conquering is also a system that has benefits. Each side of the family has strengths that complement the other side, and that's what makes it work for us.” ■

On-Farm Resources for Beneficial Insects

Habitat examples and tips from four farms

by Liz Kolbe

For fruit and vegetable farmers, a diversity of beneficial insects, including pollinators, is critical to their businesses. Many Practical Farmers members are making beneficial insect habitat a priority for their farm landscape, and some are turning to on-farm research to learn how best to do so.

In PFI's Cooperators' Program, five farmers are assessing bee preference relative to flower character. The idea for this project "bloomed" when farmers showed pictures of flowering strips and others wanted to adopt the practice while collecting data on borage, anise hyssop, lemon basil and cilantro flowers.

On the broader landscape, farmers are strategic about implementing habitat for beneficial insects. I visited with a few farmers to learn their favorite practices – such as in-row companion planting, in-field prairie strips, beetle banks and prairie borders – as well as their tips for successfully using these practices.

In-Field Companions



For Morgan Hoenig, borage – a delicate, purple flower with a frumpy name – is a favorite annual for attracting pollinators. "It's cool, it's fuzzy and its leaves taste like cucumbers," says Morgan, who operates Mogo Farm near Mount Pleasant. "The only problem is that it's so populated with small native bees, it's hard to pick the flowers!" Morgan

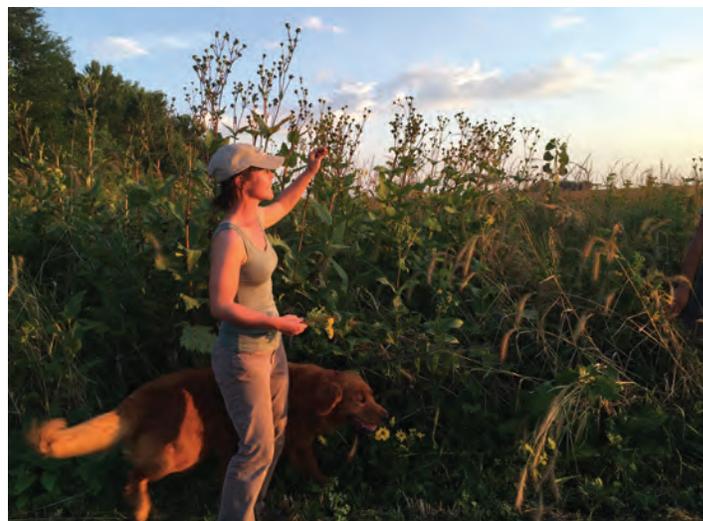
keeps about 10 percent of her production areas, including the ends of rows and inter-planted with crops, in annual flowers to attract a diversity of beneficial insects.

In agriculture, "beneficial insects" are those insects (and often, arachnids) that provide ecosystem services, like pollination and pest predation, to crops. They are especially important to fruit and vegetable farmers, who rely on insect pollination for fruit production and need to use multiple strategies to manage weeds and pests.

While Morgan admits her flower planting plan is pretty unstructured (soil condition and high diversity are her main criteria), she does have some favorite flowers and planting partners. Besides borage, she lists calendula, zinnia, sunflower and basil (she always lets a patch go to flower and the bees "go crazy") as her top picks for pollinator forage resources. She especially likes planting zinnia by the melons and squash. "The melons are low to the ground,

and when the zinnias rise up, I think they attract more pollinators to that area," Morgan says. Another favorite crop-flower pairing is sweet alyssum with brassicas. "The alyssum attracts parasitic wasps that prey on cabbage looper larvae," she explains. "I think the alyssum works: I've seen a wasp dragging larvae off the cabbage."

Growing flowers has also opened up a new market for Hoenig: She harvests a portion of the blooms



Sara Hanson and her dog, Chico, look at the plants growing in one of her prairie buffers.

from borage, calendula and nastertium to market as edible flowers to restaurants. She direct-seeds borage at least three times during the summer to ensure a constant buffet of blooms for both insects and restaurants.

Prairie Strips and Pollinator Gardens

At Mustard Seed Community Farm, operated by Alice McGary and her husband, Nate Kemperman, integrating prairie plants is one strategy for attracting pollinators. In addition to the 4.6 acres of prairie Nate has established around the borders of the farm, he is experimenting with prairie strips within the vegetable production areas – a practice not without challenges. Prairie strips have a lot of edges, which on Mustard Seed's old pasture ground are vulnerable to persistent weeds like cocklebur, Canada thistle, creeping Charlie and the worst of them, quack grass, which spreads rhizomatically.

Even with the weed pressure, the strips are progressing thanks to Nate's approach to establishment. Rather than using a drill or broadcast-seeding, he starts prairie seed in a germination flat, then moves the most promising seedlings to special containers called Ray Leach Cone-tainers, which were developed to propagate pine trees. "The 6-inch-deep Cone-tainers provide adequate space to get the root ball established on the plants," Nate says. "This makes our transplants more vigorous."

To prep the site, Nate covers the ground with black plastic for two to three months in the spring to solarize the soil – an organic, no-till method that uses solar energy to kill weed seeds, ground cover and soil-borne plant pathogens. Nate starts this process as soon as the grasses start to green up. After removing the plastic, he covers the area with newspapers and straw, and transplants in seedlings from the Cone-tainers – roughly one plant every 1.5 square feet. For each strip, he uses about 20 prairie plant species that establish easily and 10 species that take more time to establish – perhaps three to

Morgan's Favorite Flowers for Pollinators:

- Borage
- Sunflower
- Calendula
- Basil
- Zinnia
- Sweet alyssum with melons and squash
- Sweet alyssum with brassicas

"The alyssum attracts parasitic wasps that prey on cabbage looper larvae."

four years until a seedling emerges. The forb to grass ratio is about four-to-one.

Among Nate's go-to plants are partridge pea, anise hyssop, and pale purple and purple coneflower. "They establish easily and take care of themselves," Nate explains. For those seeking to add more plant diversity, he offers this advice: "Golden alexander blooms in May and establishes easily, too. Most of the asters, like goldenrod, do really well in central Iowa. For grasses, I use primarily prairie dropseed, little bluestem – side oats gramma, Indian grass, big bluestem – and on a dry, mesic site, Canada rye. Rough blazing star has done really well in dry areas, but prairie blazing star is more finicky in the transplant system. Some species just need a little more pampering to get started."

Beyond the strips, Nate and Alice also have four large prairie gardens. Looking at the whole farm, Nate prefers these to the prairie strips. "The gardens are easier to manage, have less edge-to-area and the prairie seed doesn't spread into perennial production areas."

Beetle Banks



At Grinnell Heritage Farm, Andy Dunham is using beetle banks, which are similar to prairie strips but with a more specific purpose. The beetle bank is an in-field, bermed strip composed mainly of bunch grasses that offers habitat for beneficial insects, like ground beetles, that crawl or fly short distances, eat weed seeds and prey on insect pests.

Andy started the farm's two beetle banks in 2012, treating them much like a vegetable planting. First he started the grasses – big bluestem, little bluestem and Indian grass – in the greenhouse. Next, he shaped the berms with a 28-inch raised-bed-maker and planted the bunch grasses into the berm using a water wheel transplanter, and mechanically cultivated the first year. "We thought those grasses would be big enough to shade out the competition, and it worked pretty well," Andy says.

In subsequent years, Andy has float-mowed the banks three times in the spring to keep down early, aggressive annual weeds. When



This beetle bank at Grinnell Heritage Farm looks similar to a prairie strip, but features different plant species – mostly bunch grasses.

the soil warms to 65 to 70 degrees, the bunch grasses grow quickly to out-compete the weeds. Andy says this early mowing is essential.

He recounts how one beetle bank couldn't be mowed because of a fencing experiment underway there, and how even with hand-weeding, he needed to selectively burn parts of that bank to knock back orchard and reed canary grass.

Beetles mostly work in the dark, and travel up to 100 feet from their home in the berm to find food. Though they may not reach the whole farm, the 1,740-foot-long beetle bank strips are a success. "Last year (2015), the difference in beetle populations became very noticeable," Andy says. "There were a lot of big-headed black beetles and at least three or four other species I could easily distinguish. And," he adds, "the pheasants love to use them as a corridor – they're always in there." There's just one big change Andy would make: "I wouldn't put the beetle banks in the middle of a production field next time. The grasses get tall enough to shade the adjacent ground. Instead, I would have an extra-wide field road with the beetle bank down the middle and

mowed driving paths on either side."

Prairie as Organic Buffers

Sara Hanson of Prairie Sky Farm is also seeing changes in the wildlife on her farm since establishing a prairie buffer around 5.5 tillable acres behind her farmhouse near Wesley, where she grows organic soybeans, corn, alfalfa and vegetables. "I needed a buffer for organic certification," Sara says. "But my goal was to provide more habitat for wildlife." She sees a lot of pheasant, quail, songbirds, bees, butterflies and deer; once she almost stepped on a fawn.

At its narrowest, the prairie buffer is 30 feet wide, but expands to a width of 100 feet on the west side. Sara used cost-share through Natural Resources Conservation Service to establish the buffer, which is also enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. When she seeded it in May 2010, she was transitioning the field to organic alfalfa and oats following conventional corn. To establish the prairie, Sara disced the field a couple of times and drilled 30 species using a drill with two boxes set at different rates for grass (fluffy) seed and forb seed. She sourced seed from state natural resource department sites in Iowa and Minnesota, and had it cleaned by the supplier. The first year she mowed the prairie twice; this year she is submitting plans to NRCS for a spring burn.

Sara is pleased with the success of her prairie and enjoys the slow transformation. "I try to keep track of new species I see blooming. Last year I saw a white indigo for the first time. Blazing star just came in the last year or two." When she adds more prairie to her newly acquired land, she plans to add more species to the seed mix, including a higher ratio of forbs.

Like Morgan, Andy and Nate, Sara isn't trying to quantify how her farm's beneficial-insect resources are paying her back. Each of these farmers would agree with Nate's feeling that incorporating native prairie and an ecosystem is part of a farm's stewardship mission. And sometimes, Nate says, "you do stuff and you just kind of know it's good." ■

Nate's Go-To Prairie Plant Species:

- Partridge pea
- Anise hyssop
- Pale purple coneflower
- Purple coneflower

For added diversity:

- Golden alexander
- Asters – many species
- Rough blazing star
- Prairie grasses

"For grasses, I use primarily prairie dropseed, little bluestem, side oats gramma, Indian grass, big bluestem – and on a dry, mesic site, Canada rye."

More Than Just Another Crop

For PFI farmers planting small grains, details matter

by Nick Ohde

IN FOCUS:

Small grains are an integral part of many PFI farms. For many diversified crop and livestock farms, they are the crucial “utility” crop: Not only do they help establish a quality hay crop, their straw makes for good bedding and they can be grown as forage or grain – making quality feed for most types of Iowa livestock.

As you can see on page 29, adding diversity to the crop rotation can have big benefits for Iowa's farms and environment. This year, we're making a big push to share information and on-farm research about small grains production, management, harvest and marketing.

As part of this effort, I've been traveling around Iowa, documenting PFI farmers who grow small grains. In this photo feature, meet some of these farmers as they work to plant their small grains crops.

LEARN MORE: Find research reports, presentations and other helpful resources on small grains production at practicalfarmers.org/small-grains.

A FAMILY AFFAIR:

Darren Fehr



Darren Fehr (right) and his sons Travis (left) and Lucas (middle), sit on the grain drill after a day of oat planting.



Above-Left: Darren checks the seed depth after planting.

Above: Lucas and Travis Fehr examine the soil after making a pass with the soil finisher.



Left: Darren points out an earthworm along with newly seeded oats on his farm near Mallard on April 13.



PROCESS:

Mark Tjelmeland



Left: Mark Tjelmeland fills his grain drill prior to planting oats on April 3. Mark is a Story County Soil and Water District Commissioner.

Below-Left: Mark balls up some soil to check moisture levels.

Below: Mark fills the grass seed box with a hay mix using an old coal bucket that belonged to his grandmother.



TECHNICAL DETAILS:

Wilson Farm



PLANTING:

Vic Madsen



Above-Left: Jarron Wilson adjusts the grain drill to change the seeding rate before he and his father, Dan, head to the field.

Left: Dan Wilson makes an in-field adjustment after the first pass planting oats on April 8 near Paullina.

Above: Vic Madsen plants oats near Audubon on March 10. Oats make up part of his experimental nine-year rotation, an effort to decrease weed pressure while improving yield.



A Day in the Life of a Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner

by Steve Carlson

Over the past couple of years you may have seen blogs, newsletters or emails from Practical Farmers encouraging you to get involved with your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Maybe you've seen SWCD commissioners on your general election ballot while in the voting booth. Or perhaps you have a general sense of what SWCD commissioners are – elected officials who help guide soil and water conservation programs in each county – but you're still curious about what that means, and what exactly would be involved if you ran for open SWCD slots in your district. To help answer your questions, I attended a Story County SWCD meeting to learn more.

A Brief Overview

With its roots dating to the 1930s Dust Bowl era, Iowa's first soil conservation district was established in Marion County in 1940. Today, Iowa has 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts – one for each county, save Pottawattamie County, which has two. These conservation districts still focus on preventing soil erosion, but have expanded to “promote protection, maintenance, improvement and wise use of the soil and water within the district.” The districts also help manage funds for local watershed projects, guide how federal programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) work in their district, and sponsor local outreach events, among other things.

Each district is governed by a board of commissioners consisting of five

commissioners from different townships within the district, who are elected on a non-partisan basis to serve four-year terms. Once elected, the role of SWCD commissioner is a volunteer one – but the “job” gives you the power to help guide soil and water conservation programs in the county, as well as the chance to influence state and national conservation programs.

General duties and expectations of SWCD commissioners include participating in monthly meetings, becoming knowledgeable on soil and water conservation laws and programs, developing and carrying out soil and water resource conservation plans, and helping direct financial incentive programs.

Each district also has two full-time staff – a district conservationist and a conservation assistant – and some districts have volunteer assistant commissioners.

A Day in the Life

Jayne Smith, conservation assistant with Story County Soil and Water Conservation District, wasn't surprised when she heard my request to attend a meeting and learned I work with Practical Farmers: before moving outside the county, PFI staff member Sarah Carlson served as a commissioner, and former staff member Drake Larsen served as an assistant commissioner. Two PFI members are currently serving: lifetime member and McCallsburg farmer Mark Tjelmeland, and Selden Spencer, of Huxley. These connections aside, conservation districts are happy to have visitors attend meetings (the meetings are held in accordance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law). Shortly after my call, I received an agenda listing my name as a guest.

The Story County SWCD meets on the first Tuesday of every month for one to two hours. The week I visited, 10 individuals (not including myself) were present: five commissioners, two assistant commissioners (these are non-voting members of an SWCD board who work in an advisory capacity offering insights and helping with activities), the district conservationist, the conservation assistant, and the Squaw Creek Watershed coordinator – who actually serves multiple districts. The county's SWCD commissioners currently include two farmers, a member of the State Soil Conservation Committee, a state representative for an agricultural company, a non-farming landowner, a retired agronomy professor and a local medical doctor (Selden). Though every district is different, it seemed to me that this group, with its diverse professional backgrounds, represented Story County fairly well. Each member brings a different skill set, which the group was able to draw from as members discussed their work.

The meeting started promptly at 9 a.m. and followed the standard parliamentary procedures, including a call to order and motions to accept the meeting agenda and previous meeting minutes. The group then addressed the first main topic: a cost-share request from a local farmer to convert cropland into hay ground, which the



Story County SWCD commissioners visit the farm of Ron Risdal (far right, black jacket) to learn about practices he has implemented through FSA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Duties of a commissioner include evaluating practices implemented through cost-share, and publicizing success stories.



The commissioners look at the dam on a nitrate removal wetland on Ron Risdall's farm. "I've enjoyed serving," says Mark Tjelmeland. "I enjoy those casual conversations with other farmers. When I see farmers doing conservation measures on their farm, I like to show my appreciation, lend interest and show support. A lot of farmers don't get the recognition they deserve. I enjoy helping those farmers get the recognition they deserve."

commissioners unanimously agreed was a worthy one to approve.

Next was a discussion of progress made toward fulfilling Story County SWCD's annual work plan – which is based on goals and priorities outlined in the district's soil and water resource conservation plan. Each conservation district has such a plan detailing strategies, goals and priorities for using, protecting and improving land, water and other natural resources unique to that district. This comprehensive document guides the district's annual work plan, including specific goals and activities for the coming year.

One goal in Story County SWCD's current work plan is its spring Trees for Kids initiative, an annual outreach event that provides trees for third- and fourth-graders in Story County on Arbor Day. The board also discussed an opinion piece Selden published in the Des Moines Register ("Cover crop usage still lagging in Iowa," March 13), and everyone chuckled

about the reaction he got from a few of his farmer friends (as a medical doctor, Selden questioned his own credibility for writing the piece). During the meeting, a few commissioners who attended the Conservation Districts of Iowa regional meeting in March shared some activities they learned other conservation districts had been working on. One district created a comic book series on soil health, and they recounted how attendees at the CDI regional meeting saw a witty new music video using the catch phrase "soil: don't treat it like dirt."

Upon hearing what some other conservation districts are doing to educate the public, Selden suggested that Story County SWCD should "step it up and make things more positive – highlight the positive things happening in Story County." Uncannily, Mark Tjelmeland had already arranged for the group to visit local farmer Ron Risdall's farm after the meeting was over. Ron has been implementing conservation practices on his farm for about 25 years, working with Iowa State University, as well as taking advantage of state and federal cost-share money.

Last fall, Ron installed riparian buffers to mitigate erosion, reduce nitrate runoff and improve wildlife habitat as part of the Bear Creek Riparian Buffer Project. This effort happens to be Story County's newest conservation addition under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – which is one of the main reasons Mark organized the farm tour: so the group could see this enhancement first-hand and visit with Ron.

CREP is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency and targets high-priority conservation issues identified by local, state or tribal governments or non-governmental organizations: in Iowa, wetlands are a targeted issue. The commissioners visit farms a couple of times per year and try to recognize conservation-minded farmers in their county.

Learn More – Attend a Meeting

One of the best ways to get a feel for what's involved with being a commissioner is to attend a meeting. Check with your local district to find out when its meetings are held, and let them know you plan to come. Some soil and water conservation districts have their own websites, though you can also find contact information by searching for your county's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or FSA office, as they usually share a building.

Read more about what's involved with being a soil and water conservation commissioner in this pamphlet: iowaagriculture.gov/soil/SWCDCommissionerBrochure3.pdf

If you're interested in running for commissioner, visit practicalfarmers.org to learn what steps to take, then contact your local SWCD to learn if your township is up for election – **and talk to me, so I can help you where possible and track your progress.** PFI encourages members to serve as SWCD commissioners as a way to share their conservation knowledge, and – through a PFI email forum for members serving on SWCD boards – to improve communication between SWCD districts. ■

SNAPSHOT: PFI in SWCD's Ranks

- ✦ **40** current SWCD commissioners are PFI members.
- ✦ **5** members are serving as assistant commissioners.
- ✦ **3** conservation districts are PFI organizational members.
- ✦ These members represent **33 of the 100** conservation districts in Iowa.

2016 Field Day Season Has Arrived!

25 Farmer-Led Learning Opportunities Across Iowa

Practical Farmers' 2016 summer field day season is almost here – **our first field day of the season is June 15, in Churdan**, featuring Billy Sammons and George Naylor sharing their experience using a custom-built roller-crimper to terminate cereal rye.

We listened to your ideas and feedback, and have planned a robust season featuring topics from cut flowers to pastured pork production, small grains to soil health, managed grazing to grading meat carcasses, orcharding to organic transition – and much more! Several events will highlight on-farm research projects underway through PFI's Cooperators' Program. Other events will explore farm transfer and the role of farmland owners in land stewardship. Here's a sneak-peek at the range of farmer-to-farmer learning and networking opportunities this summer!

Season Launch: Wednesday, June 15

Churdan • 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Billy and George received a grant from the SARE Farmer-Rancher program to experiment using a roller-crimper to terminate cover crops in corn-soybean production systems, and to determine the effects of using an organic bio-soil enhancer on soil properties and plant health.



You'll see a field on George's farm with soybeans emerging from a cereal rye cover crop terminated with the roller-crimper a few weeks earlier. How well did the roller-crimper terminate the cover crop? Is the resulting straw mulch providing weed suppression? Come find out! You'll see a locally manufactured roller-crimper and meet the builder. Two researchers will share details on 10 years of experience terminating cover crops using a roller-crimper in grain and vegetable production.

2016 Field Day Schedule

JUNE 15 – CHURDAN

(Billy Sammons and George Naylor)

Effects of a Custom-Made Roller-Crimper on Rye

JUNE 20 – POLK CITY

(Aaron and Nicole Lehman)

Reintegrating Small Grains into an Organic Crop Rotation

JUNE 21 – ORCHARD

(Leroy and Daniel Zimmerman)

Berries + Greenhouse Veggie Starts + Potted Flowers

JUNE 23 – LAMONI

(Chad and Katie Hensley)

Cut Flowers: Production, Handling, Marketing and More

JUNE 25 – CHEROKEE

(Nathan and Sarah Anderson)

Managed Grazing to Improve Pasture and Cropland

JUNE 28 – BLOOMFIELD

(Virgil Knobloch)

Improving Soil and Pastures Through Management-Intensive Grazing

JUNE 30 – KNOXVILLE

(James and Julie Petersen and Family)

Keeping Sons on the Farm: A Diverse Crop and Livestock Operation

JULY 10 – CENTRAL CITY

(Emma and Marcus Johnson, and Mary and Vernon Zahradnik)

Summer Pruning and Management on a Medium-Scale Orchard

JULY 13 – SLATER

(Lee Tesdell)

Conservation Practices on a Century Farm

JULY 17 – SOLON

(Susan Jutz and Carmen Black)

ZJ to Sundog: Sharing Knowledge and Passing on the Farm

JULY 25 – STANTON

(Mark Peterson farm)

RAGBRAI Fun in Stanton

JULY 27 – HASTINGS

(Jon and Tina Bakehouse)

Moving from a Soil Conservation to a Soil Regeneration Mindset

JULY 30 – AVOCA

(Amber Mohr and Jeremy Hall, and Denise O'Brien and Larry Harris)

Working Together: The Benefits of Mentoring and Collaborating

AUGUST 5 – KNOXVILLE

(Ethan and Rebecca Book)

Pork from Pasture (and Woodlot) to Plate

AUGUST 7 – GRINNELL

(Jordan Scheibel)

Starting a Market Garden

AUGUST 13 – PAULLINA

(Dan and Lorna Wilson and Family)

7 Farmers, 10 Enterprises: Diversity at 7 W Farm

AUGUST 14 – KANAWHA

(Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf)

Partnership for On-Farm Research and Pollinator Conservation

AUGUST 20 – WILTON

(Laura Jones and Steve Leazer)

Voluntary Robotic Milking and Baleage for Improved Dairy Production

AUGUST 20 – TRIPOLI

(Rob and Tammy Faux and Steve Schmidt)

WORKSHOP: Enhancing On-Farm Habitat for Pollinators

SEPTEMBER 10 – FENTON

(Jeff Jensen and Roger and Joyce Jensen)

Hazelnut Production and Marketing

SEPTEMBER 12-15 – EXIRA

(Dave and Meg Schmidt)

Livestock Marketing and Stockmanship Schools

SEPTEMBER 25 – DECORAH

(Erik Sessions and Sara Peterson)

Packhouse Tour and Harvest Efficiency

SEPTEMBER 28 – MAXWELL

(Bruce Carney)

Using Ultrasound as a Tool in Grass-Finishing Cattle

OCTOBER 15 – MINGO

(Alex Frangopol, Mingo Locker)

Grading Grass-Finished Carcasses for Meat Quality

NOVEMBER 15-17 – WINTerset

(Frank Santana)

The Web of Life – Three Days with Fred Provenza

Cut Flowers: Production, Handling Marketing and More

June 23 • Lamoni • Chad and Katie Hensley

Learn about starting a cut-flower operation, including marketing and production techniques. Ann Franzenburg, experienced cut-flower farmer, will discuss additional marketing and production options, and offer suggestions for the Hensley's' operation. Gain insights for pursuing a cut-flower farm or adding flowers as a new enterprise on your farm.



Conservation Practices on a Century Farm

July 13 • Slater • Lee Tesdell

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CENTRAL IOWA WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE PROJECT

Lee Tesdell owns the land; Michael and Charles Helland are his tenant-farmers. Lee says, "Effective landlord-tenant relationships are critical when it comes to conservation practices." Come learn how Lee and the Hellands work together to address soil conservation and water quality issues by implementing cover crops, no-till, buffers and other practices.



Partnership for On-Farm Research and Pollinator Conservation

August 14 • Kanawha • Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf

Jan and Tim are long-time participants in on-farm research through the PFI Cooperators' Program. This field day will highlight two projects underway this season. A new 4.7-acre Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) pollinator habitat planting will be completed in spring 2016. Learn about Jan and Tim's process, the NRCS pollinator program and the resources available to support native pollinators.



Improving Soil and Pastures Through Management-Intensive Grazing

June 28 • Bloomfield • Virgil Knobloch



Virgil started practicing Management Intensive Grazing in 2008. He raises organic, grass-fed beef on 580 acres of rotationally grazed pasture, and finishes 75 cattle a year (Devon, Red Angus and Black Angus cattle), moving them through his pastures two to five times per day. Virgil's goal is to graze year-round, and he is working to achieve this by improving his soil health and pasture species. He will discuss re-seeding pasture through the cattle, bringing back native grasses, managing fescue and stockpiling for winter.

Moving from a Soil Conservation to a Soil Regeneration Mindset

July 27 • Hastings • Jon and Tina Bakehouse



Jon and Tina are building on the success of no-till to address their realization that, despite soil improvements from no-till, "we are still farming a degraded resource." To address this, they are trying many different strategies: cereal rye drilled after corn harvest; a four-way mix drilled after shorter-season corn and beans; annual seeded pasture as part of an extended rotation; raising small grains; installing small ponds; letting some persistently wet acres go back to somewhat native species. While these practices are essential, the most important aspect has been evolving their mindset from soil conservation to soil regeneration.

Voluntary Robotic Milking and Baleage for Improved Dairy Production

August 20 • Wilton • Laura Jones and Steve Leazer

Join Laura Jones and her dad, Steve Leazer, to see how their 50-head dairy system works. A recently installed voluntary robotic milking system has increased this dairy's milk production while allowing more time flexibility. You'll learn about calf feeding, cow nutrition, baleage as a feed source, cattle handling and how this father-daughter team uses baleage for improved forage quality, better animal nutrition and easier feed storage.



Get More Details Online and in the 2016 Field Day Guide!

Read more about these – and all PFI's summer field days – in the 2016 Field Day Guide, and watch for more detailed announcements closer to the events.

◆NEW: Online Host Profiles:

To help you network better, we're creating more detailed spotlights of each field day host. These will be posted on our website – so check back often!

Plowing Alfalfa Ahead of Organic Corn

Member discussion offers forum for timely decision-making

Compiled by
Stefan Gailans

Back in February, Sally Gran, who farms near Nevada, posed the following question to fellow members on Practical Farmers' general email discussion list: "I will be plowing under my alfalfa this spring ahead of organic corn. Recently, an agronomist suggested that an appropriate depth to moldboard-plow alfalfa would be 6 inches. But I had previously heard another agronomist say that he plows his to 10 inches. How deep do you moldboard-plow your alfalfa, and is it based on your own observations, or on tradition? Any cautions or recommendations?"

Members from all across the state began chiming in with their own experiences and tips for success. What follows is a brief recap of the discussion.

How Deep to Plow?

Fred Abels, of New Holland, was the first to speak up: "If you're happy with 6 inches, plow 6 inches. As far as I'm concerned any deeper requires horsepower and fuel."

Art Behrens, of Carroll, has a 5-bottom plow with a front wheel assist that results in his plowing depth often varying between 4 to 6 inches, and says, "I cannot see any difference in the next crop of corn on the plowed ground with the varying plow depths." Art also shared why he chooses to plow: "1) Keep weeds down in organic crops. 2) Get a good seedbed for the corn seed when it is planted, and that doesn't take more than 2 to 3 inches. I think the old alfalfa tap roots break up the subsoil and allow the water and corn roots to go down past your plowing depth."

Teresa Wendt, of Stanwood, is an advocate of no-till. While she noted that "it pains me to talk about the four-letter

'P-word', I do have some experience with a plow." Teresa does a three-year rotation at the Cedar County Historical Society, plowing down vernal alfalfa ahead of corn. "Using a 2-bottom plow and a Farmall H tractor, we plow at 6 inches or possibly less. This year we'll be plowing down vernal alfalfa that was seeded in 2014 under oats. Very little issue with alfalfa regrowth with this approach. This is on a fairly heavy wet flat soil, Muscatine silty clay loam."

Doug Alert, of Hampton, shared an old rule of thumb he always abides by: "The proper depth is more a function of the machine chosen than type of crop. Each machine will have a 'sweet spot'. The 'ancient' plowing texts I have read usually state the proper depth is one-half of the cutting width for proper soil action. I learned to plow with a 2-bottom, 14-inch cut plow and have used 13 others, including the pair of 6-bottom, 18-inch cut plows we now own. None of these plows ever convinced me the 'rule of

thumb' was wrong." He added that when he has attempted to cut 5 to 6 inches deep with an 18-inch moldboard plow, he has never been happy with the results, which included "improper soil inversion and an incredibly rough surface."

In true PFI form of not telling anyone exactly how something must be done, Doug added: "Standard disclaimer – 'Your results may vary'".

When to Plow?

Ken Choquette, of New Virginia, argued the importance of field fitness: "The key is not to plow when it's too wet and to set your plow correctly to ensure uniform cover. In [Sally's] case it'd be impossible, but to plow in the fall is always better because the soil then will be in better condition in the spring for quick seedbed preparation."

When plowing alfalfa in the spring, Fred Abels had one thing to add: "Wait a day or so after plowing and follow that by culti-mulching or a shallow-disking to break up the clods and seal in the moisture. Dirt needs to crumble, so it may take just a little sun and wind. And maybe pull a spike-tooth drag behind the disk if you have one. That'll make an excellent seed bed."

Alternatives to Plowing

Some members offered ideas for other approaches to killing alfalfa that didn't require plowing. **Wade Dooley**, of Albion,



Sally Gran stands in buckwheat at Mark Peterson's farm.



Moldboard plowing at Sally's farm. She used the feedback she received from the discussion list to decide the best course of action for her situation.

mentioned he's never had bad luck killing a good stand of alfalfa with disking and field-cultivating: "The shallower tillage of disking and field-cultivating allows much faster ground speed and considerable fuel savings. It may also cut down on the number of tillage passes you do over that crop land."

He noted one condition where this approach might "not be such a great plan": if there is severe threat of small-seeded weeds, such as foxtail. In that case, disking and field-cultivating wouldn't bury the seeds quite as deep. But he emphasized that "while I understand the relative merits of plowing, I dislike it on anything other than hobby-scale (a two-bottom plow behind an open tractor is a beautiful thing, in moderation). It is time-consuming, requires a ridiculous amount of fuel and is often done when conditions are not fit. We have two good plows, and use neither of them on alfalfa. Being conventional farmers, though, we arguably don't face the same constraints as organic producers."

Echoing some of the same concerns as Teresa and Wade, **Andy Johnson** proposed the "holy grail" of sustainable agriculture for the next century: "The combination of no-tillage with no-chemical as a starting point for healthier working landscapes and land communities. The two movements have been advancing on largely independent tracks for 30 years. Some practices exist for putting them together – such as cover crops, further integration of livestock and cropping systems, agroforestry, and so forth – but we have a long way to go!"

Putting Member Feedback to Use

After reading the advice and perspectives members shared, Sally expressed her gratitude for all the information. Replying



Andy Johnson



Teresa and Rodney Wendt

back on the discussion list to thank members for sharing their thoughts on both her specific question – and the discussion about effects of tillage on the soil health and overall system sustainability – she elaborated more on part of her dilemma as a farmer striving for organic: "I agree that no-till is what we should all be working towards, and hope that a no-till organic system proven for central Iowa will be developed soon, but at this time, it's still a risky experiment." She added that she personally agrees with the sentiment many members expressed – that "no-till organic systems are the future" – and that she hopes a system based on cover crops and no-till might soon be reliable options for organic farmers in central Iowa. Until then, she pointed out that "recent Iowa State University research by Drs. Cindy Cambardella and Kathleen Delate has demonstrated that organic systems can increase soil organic matter, water infiltration, nutrient availability and other measures of soil health in spite of tillage."

(You can access that study – "Water quality in organic systems," published last year in Sustainable Agriculture Research – for free

at www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/sar/article/download/50106/26958).

Sally also shared the decision she arrived at based on all the member feedback she received: "I have chosen moldboard plowing in this application, this year, since the ground is relatively flat, the small-weed seed bank is high, and overall, the plowing will be done sparsely – a maximum of one out of every 5 years. Other forms of alfalfa termination were considered as alternatives to moldboard plowing, and I talked with several farmers while researching the options. In my case, the plowing will be done in the springtime, and with dense and intact roots to hold it in place. I will be cultipacking it down within a day of plowing, and then seeding a crop into it a few weeks later, so the level of exposure to erosion will be minimized." ■

This discussion is a perfect illustration of the benefits of signing up for Practical Farmers' email discussion lists – which are available only to PFI members, and are one of the special perks of membership: access to the wealth of knowledge PFI members possess, direct access to learn and share, and timely assistance when it's needed to make farming decisions.

Do you want to start sharing in the conversation? Contact Erica Andorf at erica@practicalfarmers.org to join or learn more about PFI's eight different email discussion groups.



A plowed field at Ken Choquette's farm



Ken's 4-bottom, 14-inch plow

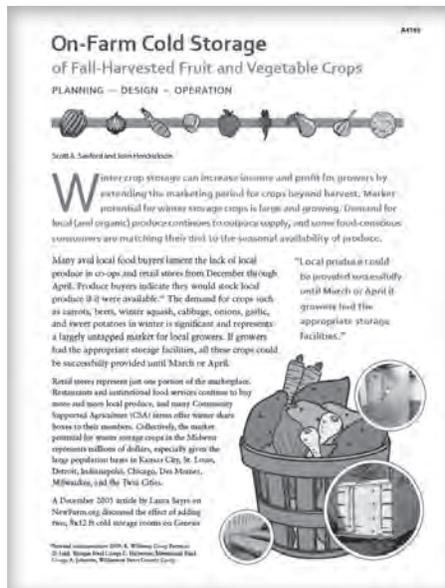
“On-Farm Cold Storage of Fall-Harvested Fruit and Vegetable Crops”

by Norman McCoy

Being a cheapskate, I'd rather spend a day tracking down information on the Web than spend 20 bucks to have it handed to me. When I started "On-Farm Cold Storage of Fall-Harvested Fruit and Vegetable Crops," by Scott Sanford and John Hendrickson, published by University of Wisconsin-Extension, I wanted to see if I could find the same information online that was covered in the book. I failed. This is an excellent publication that is well worth the cost.

If you are thinking of adding winter storage to your operation – or, as in my case, have already done it the wrong way – you will find more information in these 80 pages than you can use. As the authors state, the purpose of the publication is to “help you plan, design, specify equipment and operate a cold storage facility tailored to your specific requirements.” If you have not been thinking about adding winter storage, the section on economics presents several case studies of growers who have already added winter storage, and shows what kind of returns they have gained. In this section, you'll also find detailed costs (current as of 2014) for constructing and outfitting coolers, with a comprehensive analysis of cost and returns. One source the authors reference, the Veggie Compass (www.veggiecompass.com), is a free, downloadable spreadsheet.

Seeing case studies of several farms using different storage methods provides a feel for what others can accomplish with winter storage. (Note: Of the farms studied, the smallest operation was the most efficient in terms of gross sales per cubic foot of cooler and estimated annual capital cost). The publication offers an important warning: If you design your cooler correctly, a 2013 survey shows that moisture loss and spoilage in the surveyed farms accounts for a 3 percent to 40 percent loss, underscoring that correctly designing your cooler is paramount.



Check out the section on planning. Get a feel for how many storage rooms you might need, how big they should be, where they should be located and the environmental requirements for each crop. Even building permits are mentioned.

Dozens of crops and their optimum storage conditions are listed, including detailed tables for environmental conditions. This information is condensed from the Agricultural Handbook No. 66, “The Commercial Storage of Fruits, Vegetables, and Florist and Nursery Stocks.”

Many types of storage facilities are discussed, some in detail, such as:

- Old-fashioned root cellars
- Modern root cellars (including a discussion of construction)
- Refrigerators
- Reefer truck bodies
- Walk-in and drive-in coolers
- Prefabricated coolers (including a discussion on construction per the 2007 Energy Policy Act)
- Built-in-place coolers (including a discussion on construction, Section 547 of the National Electric Code)
- Lighting requirements for four types of fixtures



- Conversion of an existing room (including a discussion on construction)

The sections on refrigeration controls and sizing, heater sizing and humidity control have enough equations and tables to glaze your eyes over – but these details are indispensable for someone designing a new facility. For those planning larger operations, the material-handling section has formulas for determining how to build your cooler to fit your storage containers. Nerd warning: This section is filled with more equations and calculations.

The end of the publication features case studies of seven crops from several farms. These offer fascinating, detailed descriptions of every stage of the production and storage processes. In addition, in the references section, you'll find profiles of 20 important crops. In the “Additional References” section, the authors also list where you can find the information and equipment mentioned in this book – a tremendous time-saver for those of us who spend hours waiting for Google. ■

This publication is available for \$19.95 from uwex.edu/ces/cty (search for the book title).

Norman McCoy farms near Maxwell, raising beef cattle, fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. He uses rotational grazing, practices agroforestry and has 2 acres of cover crops. Norman has been a PFI member since 1998.

Greg Van Den Berghe Joins PFI Staff as New Beginning Farmer Manager

Practical Farmers of Iowa has always been close to my heart. I grew up learning from my father how to be a good steward of the land. On our family farm in New Liberty, Iowa, there was never a shortage of learning opportunities. My curiosity for conservation began in the 1990s when we experimented with no-tilling and cover crops. When we purchased a few Dutch Belted cows, my interest in and awareness of the need for preserving our farming heritage began as well. These experiences set the stage for my career, and I was thrilled when, in late March, I went from being not just a Practical Farmers member, but a staff member too, serving as the new beginning farmer manager.

After graduating from high school, I spent a summer working at Seed Savers Exchange and then moved to Cedar Rapids, where I attended Kirkwood Community College, completing my associates degree in applied science in agriculture business. I finished my bachelor's degree in marketing from Mt. Mercy College. After completing my college studies, I moved to Des Moines and started my career, developing my skills in planning, fundraising and education. In my spare time I volunteer for organizations that promote local food and agriculture, such as Living History Farms and Eat Greater Des Moines.

In 2009, I purchased an acreage in rural Minburn that was the perfect place to practice some farming myself. On my 1.75 acres I've been raising heirloom vegetables and heritage chickens. I was lucky to find land with an established orchard that typically produces more apples than I can consume in a year! Having an abundance of fruit is also a good way to meet the neighbors. In addition to growing food on my acreage, I enjoy sharing my farm with others who desire to learn new skills. I'm always hosting inspiring learners on the farm to develop new skills such as processing chickens and saving heirloom seeds.



I look forward to building on my passion for growing local food and connecting others as I work with the many beginning and experienced farmers of Practical Farmers. PFI has helped me pursue my passion of farming, and I'm excited to be in a position to help PFI members pursue their own farming goals. ■

Help Influence Iowa's Ag Policy: Join PFI's "Policy Action" Group

Are you interested in agricultural policy? Do you want a voice in helping to influence and improve Iowa's ag policy? Consider joining Practical Farmers' "Policy Action" group! This group is open to both farmers and friends-of-farmers.

What's involved? We're seeking Practical Farmers members who are willing to take quick action – like writing to or calling elected officials – on the policy issues important to Practical Farmers, including:

- Working lands programs like CSP and EQIP
- Beginning farmer issues
- Sustainable Ag. Research and Education
- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy
- Support for cover crops, extended crop rotation and grass-based livestock

We can often provide contact information and talking points to make these requests easy on you. For these quick-turnaround requests, we hope to count on participants for a 50 percent response rate.

Interested? Questions? Contact Steve Carlson at (515) 232-5661 or steve@practicalfarmers.org. ■

Help Share the "Don't Drift" Message

Remember those "Don't Drift" images from last summer? We've made them into postcards with a message on the back for consumers.

The goal of these cards is to help engage the public in the pesticide drift conversation as advocates and supporters of fruit and vegetable farmers (and also non-GMO, organic crop and livestock farmers), while taking the pressure off the farmer to start the conversation.

If you would like a stack to put in your CSA boxes or set out on your market stand, email liz@practicalfarmers.org.



Laura Frescoln Joins PFI as Program Director

Some people have it all figured out. You know the ones. They have decided by the time they can tie their shoes that they want to be an astronaut, or a chef, or a farmer – and they have gone ahead and done it! I used to envy those people. My journey has not been so straightforward. My path to PFI is so full of twists and turns that I get a little queasy thinking about it. But I have at last arrived at my destination – Practical Farmers of Iowa –and I could not be happier.

Prior to pursuing a career in conservation and agriculture, I worked in the social services field in various administrative and program development capacities. My love of the land and experience in program management brought me to PFI after being a member for several years.

I grew up in Ames and have lived here most of my life. My family also owns farmland in northwestern Iowa. Half the land is tillable and half is a wooded area near the Des Moines River where we still gather as a family to explore nature. The natural world has always been my passion. I love being outdoors camping, hiking – or just watching, listening and thinking (or not thinking). Nature is what drives me. Back in the '80s when I was making my career choices, however, I did not have the option of pursuing a degree out of state and I was unsure how to turn my passion into a career in Iowa. Practical Farmers was

just in its infancy, and I certainly did not know about it at that time. Looking back, I think I would have been a pretty good farmer, but as a woman, I did not know that career option was open to me. I lacked the wonderful farmer role-models we see today in PFI's diverse membership. So I went with Plan B. What else am I good at? I was good with people, so that's the direction I took, entering a career in social services.

After receiving a B.S. in psychology from Iowa State University, I got my masters degree in counseling. That was a good fit for me, and I made my career in various capacities, serving as program coordinator at Youth and Shelter Services in Ames, account representative for a managed-care company in Chicago and serving in an administrative role at Heartland Area Education Agency in Ames. While my passion for the natural world remained strong during those years, it took a back seat to my career – and I was growing increasingly unsatisfied with the balance in my life. I wanted my passion to drive my career; the back seat just wasn't enough any longer. So, embracing the gray hair I have earned from raising two teenage daughters, I went back to school. To say that college has changed a bit in the



Laura Frescoln with daughters Emily (left) and Abby (right), and dog Millie.

last 20 years would be an understatement. But through some hard work, more gray hair and a passion for my studies, I earned a masters degree in sustainable agriculture from ISU. Now that I have joined the PFI staff as program director, I am eager to become an integral part of the team and work with farmers and friends of farmers all over Iowa to build viable farms and communities through environmental stewardship. As program director, I will oversee the livestock and horticulture programs, and participate in program development and planning. I look forward to meeting and working with you all! ■

Get Involved with PFI as a Volunteer

If you're eager to get more involved with Practical Farmers of Iowa, consider volunteering. Not only is volunteering with PFI a perfect way to experience life at a fast-paced sustainable agriculture non-profit, you'll be helping us achieve our mission (and there's a good chance some delicious local fool will be involved!).

We have a range of recurring needs and volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Some current needs include:

- **Assist with large mailings.** Multiple times per year, we send member solicitation and fundraising campaigns. We typically need four to six people to fold inserts and stuff, seal and stamp envelopes.
- **Data input.** We keep logs of field day sign-ins, evaluations and any other feedback we receive, and could use help processing this information after field days.

- **Filing.** From time to time we get backlogged on our filing. We still keep paper trails on all of our members and donors.
- **Publications.** We have a backlog of publications that need to be filed and organized, including research reports that need to be printed, compiled and archived.
- **Photo tagging.** We have a large database of photos that need to be tagged with descriptive keywords to improve our ability to search for and find photos.
- **Annual conference.** It takes many volunteers to run our annual conference (more than 900 people attended last year!). We need bell ringers, attendance takers, help with lunch, silent auction, childcare, exhibitors, and many other roles.

We work with volunteers of all ages, and would love to meet you! If you are interested in learning about our volunteer opportunities, please contact office manager Erica Andorf at (515) 232-5661 or erica@practicalfarmers.org. ■

Preorders Available for PFI Legacy Letters Project Book

Preorders are now available for "The Future of Family Farms: Practical Farmers' Legacy Letters Project," by Teresa Opheim, which will be coming out in September 2016. To preorder the book, see www.uiowapress.org/books/2016-fall/future-family-farms.html.

Advanced kudos for the book have been coming in. Jim Habana Hafner, executive director at Land for Good, says "PFI and its members are an inspiration! They remind us all that family, community and stewardship are at the heart of farming. Their stories are a call to action to everyone who 'belongs to the land:' start the conversation about your farm's legacy today. The future of rural communities and regional food systems may depend on it."

According to Julia Freedgood, assistant vice president of programs at American Farmland Trust, "'The Future of Family Farms' is a timely and important new book about the future of farmland and the hopes and challenges of the families who farm it. More than 40 percent of America's agricultural landscape is owned by seniors aged 65 and older so, as the author notes, we're in for a lot of drama in the coming years. The book's framing chapters make a compelling case for action, and the Practical Farmers' stories are both moving and relevant, reinforcing the need for families not only to have shared commitment but also a vision and plan for the future – whether they've been farming for more than a hundred years, or are beginning farmers."

The purpose of the Farm Legacy Letters project is to help farmers and farmland owners think about their farm's future and talk about it with their families. An essential complement to handbooks on business succession, this book gathers the letters and stories of Midwestern families about the land they cherish – how they acquired it, what they treasure most about it and their hopes for its future. Some of the writers descend from families who have owned a particular patch of earth since the 1800s, while others became farmland owners more recently – one as recently as 2015. Some are no longer farmland owners at all, because after careful thought about what mattered most to them, they sold their land to the next generation of farmers.

All these writers hope that, by sharing their farmland legacies, they will encourage others to ponder – and then write about – the histories, accomplishments, challenges and hopes for their farmland for the generations who come after they are gone.

The "Future of Family Farms" features the following PFI members: Helen Gunderson, John Gilbert, Tom and Irene Frantzen, Jon Bakehouse, Angela Tedesco, Dale Nimrod, Vic and Cindy Madsen, Barb Opheim, Del Ficke, Neil Hamilton, Margaret McQuown and Steve Turman, Fred Kirschenmann,



Deb Tidwell and Jeff Klinge, two of the PFI members mentioned in the book

Jeff Klinge and Deb Tidwell, Jim and Lisa French, Mary Damm, Phil Specht, Leon and Marilyn Isakson and the late Dan Specht. The book also includes essays by Iowa State University Professor Emeritus Mike Duffy, playwright Mary Swander, Land for Good's Kathy Ruhf and Teresa Opheim, director of PFI's Farm Transfer Program.

Teresa has dedicated the book to the members of Practical Farmers of Iowa, and all proceeds from the sale of the book will go back to PFI. ■

Watch for New PFI Merchandise!

Is your current PFI t-shirt looking a little threadbare? Is your hat so sunbleached from constant use that it's no longer an effective way to proclaim your PFI pride?

If that describes you, then you're in luck! We're in the process of ordering all-new PFI merchandise, from hats to shirts and more! Watch for more details in the coming weeks, and keep your eyes peeled for the new items at upcoming field days!

Lapsed Members: Newsletter Notice

If you enjoy reading each issue of "the Practical Farmer," be sure to check your membership status! If your membership has lapsed, this issue will be your last.

To renew your membership, visit practicalfarmers.org/get-involved/join-or-renew, or call the office at (515) 232-5661.

Not sure your status? We're happy to check! Call the office or send an email to lauren@practicalfarmers.org.

Host a Social in Your Area!

Do you want to meet other members or neighbors in your area? Let us know! We help you by sending invitations to all members in your region and providing you with sign-up sheets so you can share your information with other attendees.

If you'd like to host a social – or have questions – contact Lauren Zastrow at (515) 232-5661 or lauren@practicalfarmers.org.

Welcome, New Members!



District 1 – Northwest

- Harold and Greta Postma, Sheldon
- Matt Schuiteman, Sioux Center
- Mark Schleisman, Lake City
- Daryl De Groot, Hull
- Roger Wilson, Lawton
- Wesley Degner, Fonda

District 2 – North Central

- Justin Rooney, Sheffield
- Diane Peterson and David Willhoite, Burnside
- Olivia Madison, Ames
- Dallas Wessels, Parkersburg
- Cindy Christensen, Goldfield
- Crystal and Stephen Riggins, Cambridge
- Dani and Eric Woestman, Ames
- Kristine Neu, Ames
- Raymond Stockdale, Iowa Falls
- Angela and Todd White, Madrid
- Virgina Tunncliff and Dave Bibler, Clarksville
- Curtis Plagge, Latimer
- Adam Wright, Ames
- Patrick Murken, Story City
- April Drenth, Nevada
- Eric Holtan, Forest City
- Leroy Zimmerman, Orchard

District 3 – Northeast

- Jim Fitkin, Cedar Falls
- Brandon Rutter-Daywater and Sabina Peters-Daywater, Decorah
- Brian Watters, Cedar Rapids
- Elle Gadiant, Waverly
- Kenneth Pint, Independence
- Ryan and Savanna Lange, Cedar Rapids
- Emily Dansdill, Decorah
- Emily Fagan, Decorah

•Jake Kundert, Dubuque

District 4 – Southwest

- Jim and Martha Fifield, Des Moines
- Kent and Heather Friedrichsen, Perry
- Terry and Louise Mercer, Woodward
- William Davenport, Afton
- John Elliott and Angie Harmer, Des Moines
- Karla Conrad, Des Moines
- Anthony Hamlin, Altoona
- Sampson Shnurman, Prole
- April Ziskovsky, Des Moines
- Mike Barnes, Atlantic
- Ramona and Randy Church, Granger
- Kelly and Libby Jensen, Pleasantville
- Patricia Tate, Coon Rapids
- Kevin Dixon, Ankeny
- Emily Fleming, Adel
- Sage Cory, Ankeny
- Timothy Johnson, Johnston
- Amanda Kanehl, Des Moines
- Scott Veach, Winterset

District 5 – Southeast

- David Burmahl, Baldwin
- Brian Strasser, Homestead

•Randyn and Laurel Kropf, Bellevue

•Steven Plate, Rose Hill

•Clare Davis, Solon

•Clifford and Marie Schrock, Bellevue

•Maureen Wynne, Maharishi Vedic City

•Kimberly Sowinski, Fairfield

•Kent Walker, Ottumwa

•Anne Michel, Ottumwa

•Barbara Stone, Fairfield

•Michael Vittetoe, Washington

•Ashley Swank, Iowa City

•Alexandra Crow, Batavia

•Ben and Amanda Pearce, Grinnell

District 6 – Out of State

•William Gilbert, Warren, NJ

•Jane and Elizabeth Richards, Longmont, CO

•Skylar Falter, Lincoln, NE

•Dianne and Richard Kliniski, Caledonia, MN

•Bob Carlson, Kansas City, MO

•Peter Kraus, Dresden, ME

•Jerry and Cindy Glaser, Spalding, NE

•Jim VanDerPol and LeeAnn Hanson-VanDerPol, Kerkhoven, MN

•Grant Cassavaugh, Maryville, MO

•Ben Shoesmith, Port Byron, IL

•Heath Hoppes, Omaha, NE

•Carlos and Epiphany Ramos, Bellevue, NE

•Kurt Kimber, Minneapolis, MN

•Paul Turner, Bingham Lake, MN

•Michelle Hilgenfeld, Whitewater, KS

•Tom Arnold, Elizabeth, IL

•Larry Agne, Harper Heights, TX

•Jeff Anderson, Aurora, IL

•Gary Anderson, Manhattan, IL

•Harry Carr, Stelle, IL

•Scott Friedman, Watseka, IL

•Josh McMillan, Sibley, IL

•Troy Throneburg, Assumption, IL

•Harold Wilken, Danforth, IL

•Ross Wilken, Danforth, IL

•Andy Ambriole, Roanoke, IN

•Chuck Ford, Thorntown, IN

•Stanton Ramer, Goshen, IN

•Nathan Engelhard, Unionville, MI

•Brent Shettler, Bancroft, MI



New member Leroy Zimmerman (not pictured) and his brother, Daniel (left), of Orchard, will host a PFI field day – "Berries + Greenhouse Veggie Starts + Potted Flowers" – on June 21 near Orchard.

Small Grains, Large Gains

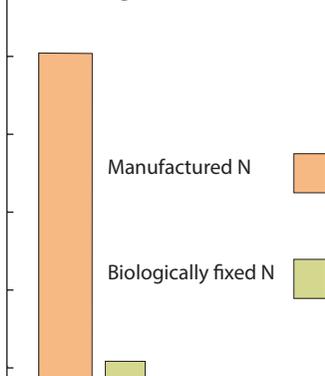
5 REASONS WHY DIVERSE CROP ROTATIONS ARE GOOD FOR IOWA

Many farmers have known this for years, but recent university research shows that adding a third crop – a small grains crop such as oats – to the more common two-year corn-soybean crop rotation would support soil and water conservation, making Iowa's rural communities more resilient.

1 Reduce Fossil Energy Use

Small grains are harvested in the summer, which lets farmers grow legume cover crops – like red clover or alfalfa – during warm weather. This gives the cover crops ample time to fix nitrogen and **decreases the amount of fertilizer** farmers have to purchase.

Energy Requirements of Nitrogen Fertilizers



3-year rotations use...
88% less mineral fertilizer
56% less fossil energy
 ...than 2-year rotations



3 Build Healthy Soils

Diverse crops grow **diverse roots** in the soil, which provide habitat for more soil life. These roots and soil microorganisms improve soil structure, increase organic matter and help prevent erosion.

3-year rotations have...
31% more particulate organic matter carbon
24% more microbial biomass
21% less erosion
10% lower bulk density
 ...than 2-year rotations



VS.



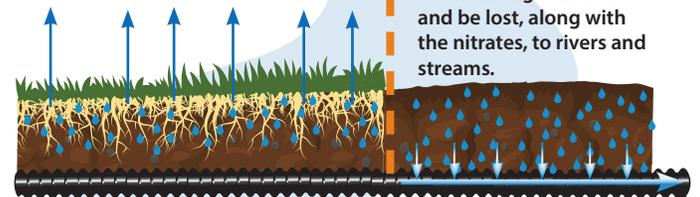
2 Improve Water Quality

Small grains are cool season crops, meaning they grow in the fall and spring, helping to **keep roots in the ground year round**.

April-May in Iowa

Actively growing plants and roots capture nitrate-rich water from the soil, and use the nitrates and water for growth, which keeps the water from draining into streams and rivers.

If plants don't grow during the rainy spring months (when large amounts of nitrates are produced), water can leach through the soil and be lost, along with the nitrates, to rivers and streams.



Cool-Season Crops

Oats Rye
Wheat Barley

Warm-Season Crops

Corn
Soybeans

4 Cut Pesticide Use

Because diverse rotations can control weeds effectively with up to **6 times less herbicide** use, their potential **freshwater ecotoxicity** is up to **200 times lower** than that of a corn-soybean alternation.

"It's good to know my farm supports biological diversity."
 – Dick Sloan

5 Stabilize Farm Income

Because small grains are harvested at a different time than corn and soybeans, diverse rotations offer potential for more even **cash flow** throughout the year.



"The ability to diversify my operation is the key. The more diversified your operation, the more able you are to ride through the rough trends by subsidizing your operation one place or another." – Wade Dooley

Learn more at practicalfarmers.org/small-grains



Calendar of Events

UPCOMING EVENTS ~ JUNE | JULY | EARLY AUGUST

JUNE

June 2 – 4 – Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Moving Forward Together | Madison, WI

This program will include more than 40 workshops; plenary addresses delivered by leaders in the farm-to-cafeteria and local food movements; networking opportunities; a series of five-minute “lightning talks”; a poster session and resource share fair; entertainment; and an evening reception showcasing Madison’s vibrant local food culture. For more, visit: farmtoschool.org/news-and-articles/announcing-the-8th-national-farm-to-cafeteria-conference

June 9 – SILT Showcase Series: Northeast Iowa | Calmar, IA

Landowners in northeastern Iowa are invited to learn how to leave a legacy by permanently protecting their land to grow healthy food. This event is hosted by Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) and includes a farm tour, lunch and presentations by appraisers and an attorney. Participants have plenty of time for questions, so please come prepared. For more information, contact Suzan Erem at suzan@silt.org

June 11 – Bison Advantage Workshop | Baldwin City, KS

The National Bison Association has received SARE funding to host a series of workshops across the country introducing producers to this emerging sector of sustainable American agriculture. This introductory course covers Holistic Management and marketing of bison, a free toolkit of educational bison production materials, a tour of the host ranch, lunch and a networking hour. This event is hosted on the Hanna Buffalo Ranch – a working bison operation with sustainable management practices. For more, visit mosesorganic.org/wp-content/uploads/Events/Calendar/BisonWorkshops.pdf

June 11 – 12 – 12th Annual Iowa Sheep and Wool Festival | Colfax, IA | Jasper County Fairgrounds

For more, visit iowasheepandwoolfestival.com/index.html

June 17 – Biological Monitoring Workshop | Hastings, NE | Central Community College, Hastings Campus | \$100

This Holistic Management workshop includes mini-lectures, examples, demonstrations and supervised practice in using the Holistic Management Model in decision-making, producing more profit and increasing the quality of life. All workshops will begin at 8:00AM and conclude by 5:00 PM each day. Lunch, break food and drinks for each day are included. Led by Holistic Management certified educators Paul Swanson and Ralph Tate. For questions, contact Bob Shields at (308) 379-1361 bob.shields01@gmail.com

June 23 – 24 – Quad Cities Pollinator Conference | Davenport, IA

This conference is geared toward the agricultural community; municipal, state and federal government employees; landowners; homeowners and urban dwellers; beekeepers; and educators. For more, visit nahantmarsh.org/qcpollinatorconference

June 25 – Bobwhite Quail Habitat Management Field Day | Columbia, MO | Bradford Research Center | 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. | FREE

This event is designed for farmers and landowners, students, and quail and upland game enthusiasts. Enjoy field tours, exhibits and indoor sessions. Tours will explore fencerow habitat for quail; management and safety of controlled burns; conducting quail whistle counts; field habitat management for quail; and cover crops and in-field habitat. No fee and no reservations required. Lunch will be provided. For more, visit: calendar.missouri.edu/event/pollinator_monarch_and_bobwhite_quail_field_day#.Vz9BdeTkVg8

JULY

July 7 – Organic Small Grains Production and Processing Field Day | Lone Rock, WI

Join us for the first MOSES and OGRAIN co-hosted field day of 2016! Participants spend the morning on-farm with experienced organic small grains growers learning about food-grade grain production. We’ll travel in the afternoon to tour the mill where the farm’s grain is processed. Farmer Dave Dolan, grain miller Gilbert Williams, baker Andrew Hitchinson and researcher Julie Dawson are among the experts who lead the day. Lunch is provided. For more, visit: mosesorganic.org/events/organic-field-days

July 9 – SILT Showcase Series: Western Iowa | Honey Creek, IA

Landowners in Western Iowa are invited to learn how to leave a legacy by permanently protecting their land to grow healthy food. This event is hosted by A Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) and includes a farm tour, lunch and presentations by appraisers and an attorney. Participants have plenty of time for questions, so please come prepared. For more information, contact Suzan Erem at suzan@silt.org

July 15 – In Her Boots: Sustainable Agriculture for Women, by Women | Grayslake, IL

These day-long, on-farm workshops include a detailed farm tour, lunch and networking opportunities. With a focus on sharing experiences, stories and ideas, the In Her Boots format builds on the idea that women farmers learn best from each other. Bring your questions! Women just starting on their farm or food business dream are especially encouraged to attend. For more, visit: mosesorganic.org/events/organic-field-days/july-15

July 17 – 20 – North American Prairie Conference | Normal, IL

Join Illinois State University for invited sessions on landscape-scale restoration, the status of grassland birds – and much more! The event will feature more than 70 oral papers on many aspects of prairie ecology, restoration and management, and some innovative ideas on working lands. For more, visit: nap2016.illinoisstate.edu

EARLY AUGUST

August 1 – Webinar: Residue and Tillage Management in Organic Farming Systems: Eastern States | 2 – 3 p.m.

This webinar is presented in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)- Science and Technology National Technology Support Centers. The first of this three-part series will feature organic producers from the Eastern region discussing their methods of residue and tillage management. Local NRCS staff will present opportunities and challenges in implementing these practices in organic systems. For more and to register, visit tilth.org/event/residue-and-tillage-management-in-organic-farming-systems-eastern-states

August 2 – Summer Fruiting Crops in High Tunnels (Tomatoes and more) | Battle Creek, MI

Cost: \$150 for 1 person (\$40 for a 2nd person from the same farm)
This hands-on workshop covers the nuts and bolts of successful planning, production, post-harvest handling, packaging and marketing of summer fruit under hoops (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers). The workshop will also cover ginger, sweet potatoes and basil. Led by Adam Montri and Trent Thompson. For more and to register, visit msuorganicfarm.org/farmer-field-school.html

For more events, visit practicalfarmers.org



Grow your farm with Practical Farmers. Join today!

This annual membership is a:

- New membership
- Renewal

I am joining at the level of:

- Student – \$20
- Individual – \$50
- Farm or Household – \$60
- Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups – \$110)
- Lifetime Member – \$1,000

My interest in joining PFI is primarily as a:

- Farmer or grower
- Non-farmer – (You will have the opportunity to expand upon this when you receive your membership information form.)

How did you hear about Practical Farmers of Iowa?

..... Each membership includes one subscription to *the Practical Farmer*.

Sustain PFI

For the long-term health and vitality of PFI, we ask you to consider making a donation above and beyond your membership fee. I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to PFI in the amount of:

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

JOIN OUR GIFT OF THE MONTH CLUB

The Gift of the Month Club is an easy way to support Practical Farmers of Iowa! Send in your pledge with your credit card information, and we will automatically deduct your donation the first of each month.

YES! I would like to give _____ per month to PFI, to be automatically charged to my credit card the first of the month. (\$10 per month minimum)

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

Thank you!

Individual, Farm or Organization Name*: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Primary Phone (with area code): _____

Alternate Phone (with area code): _____

Email: _____

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

Payment:

Total: \$_____ = \$_____ membership + \$_____ donation

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

TO PAY WITH A CREDIT CARD, PLEASE GO TO: practicalfarmers.org/join-pfi.html

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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 www.youtube.com/user/pfvideos

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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.