

the Practical Farmer

Practical Farmers of Iowa Newsletter

Vol. 4, #3
Fall, 1989

5th ANNUAL PFI WINTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING DECEMBER 11

Mark the calendar for Monday, Dec. 11. On that date you can hear the 27 PFI cooperators present the results of their 1989 on-farm research. In addition, ISU soil management professor Rick Cruse will speak, and an award will be presented for achievement in sustainable agriculture.

The event will take place at the Starlite Village Best Western Motel, in Ames. The Starlite is just off the 13th Street exit of I-35. Registration will begin at 8:00 A.M. Admission is free to current PFI members. Others must pay \$10, which, incidentally, is the annual membership cost. The noon meal is extra for everyone; the price is \$6.25.

At 8:30, President Ron Rosmann will give the welcoming message and introductions. At 8:45, Rick Cruse will give a talk on innovative cropping systems. Cruse has studied alternative crop rotations and narrow-strip cropping, and this year he worked with cooperators Thompson and Frantzen growing oats on ridges. Cruse is also an authority on soil temperature, moisture and nutrient movement in ridge-till.

The day will also see the presentation of the first PFI Achievement in

Sustainable Agriculture Award. The purpose of the honor is to recognize the efforts of an individual who has advanced the sustainability of agriculture. The Achievement Award will be presented to Dr. Alfred M. Blackmer, who is developing the late spring soil nitrate test for use in the midwest. The test promises to save farmers money at the same time



Rick Cruse, ISU professor of soil management.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1** PFI Winter Meeting
- 2** Sustainable Projects Program Announced
- 3** Winter Meetings
- 4** Notes and Notices
Study Gearing Up
Farming With Wildlife
- 5** Extension Sustainable Farm Tour
- 6** Groups Meet to Discuss Sustainable Ag
- 7** Study Results: Part 1
- 9** Community Cafe
- 10** *Alternative Agriculture: Two Reviews*



Lowell Wilson demonstrates the nitrate test kit at a field day.

that it benefits the quality of groundwater.

After a short break, the first farmer cooperator panel will begin at 10:30. This year PFI cooperator trials involved weed control, nitrogen rates, rates and placement of potassium, manure application, tillage, cover crops, strip cropping and disease control. The panels will be devoted to the general categories of: 1) weed control; 2) fertility; and 3) "other" trials. Each will start with a summary of trial results and then will open up for cooperator comments and questions from the audience.



Tom Frantzen's stripped field was a site for Cruse's study this year.

At 4:00, there will be a short business meeting to present progress and set directions for the future. The northeast district is due for an election to choose its board representative for the next three years.

Come to Ames on the 11th; pick up some good information and exercise your rights as a member of Practical Farmers of Iowa. See you there!

PFI "SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS" PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

Practical Farmers of Iowa is initiating a program to encourage activities in support of sustainable agriculture. The three-year effort, funded with support from the Northwest Area Foundation, encourages any Iowan to submit a brief proposal for a project related to agricultural sustainability.

Sustainable agriculture has been described as preserving the soil and water resources as well as the people involved in agriculture. In practice, it often involves the substitution of resources internal to the farm for some purchased inputs. These internal resources could include management, labor, and the utilization of biological processes.

A project could be almost anything that you might have wanted to undertake but lacked the resources. Maybe you want to conduct an on-farm trial like those that PFI cooperators carry out. Maybe you would like to create a program for the schools or the FFA that teaches young people about agriculture and the environment. Perhaps you need support to have an educational booth at the county fair. Maybe you could use some funding to get your community leaders together on issues related to sustainability. Be creative!

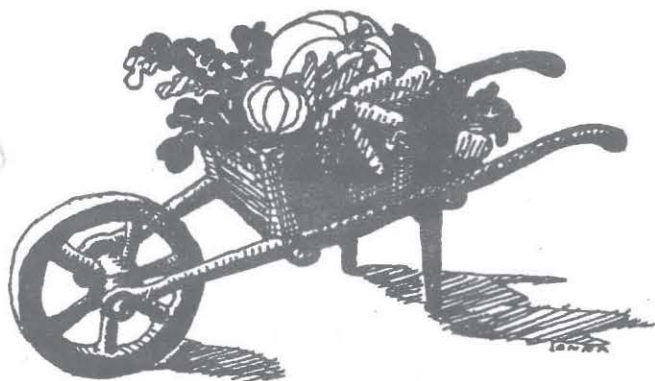
Proposals for up to several hundred dollars will be accepted. (PFI cooperators, for example, receive as much as \$350 for an on-farm trial.) It is quite legitimate to include in the proposal payment for your own time. Large equipment purchases will not be funded; however, equipment leasing can be used in proposals to defray equipment costs.

In return for funding your "sustainable project," PFI asks that you agree to share the *process* of the project

as well as the results. That will help us to build on past experiences and share the successes of the program. The "feedback," or reporting plan, will be one of the criteria on which proposals are judged.

Projects will be chosen by a committee consisting of PFI members and board representatives, the PFI coordinator, and representatives of ISU, including the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Proposals for 1990 are due by Feb. 1. Committee decisions will be announced by March 1. If you have questions or would like to obtain a Sustainable Projects proposal form, contact:

PFI Sustainable Projects
2104 Agronomy, Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011



WINTER MEETINGS

Winter events are still being scheduled, but here is a partial listing of those that will involve PFI in some way.

December 7 *Reduced Tillage Expo*, National Guard Armory, Carroll. Sponsored by Extension and SCS. Cooperator Ron Rosmann is on the program to discuss reduced chemical weed control.

December 11 *The 5th annual PFI general membership meeting*. 8:30 A.M., Starlite Village Motel, 13th St. exit of I-35, in Ames.

December 13 *LISA: Positioning for the '90s*. Starlite Village, Des Moines, 9:00 to 3:15. \$20 per person.

Sponsored by Central Iowa Area Extension. Speakers include Area Director Jim Almquist, Assistant Dean of Extension Jerry DeWitt, economist Mike Duffy, PFI cooperater Dick Thompson, and University of Nebraska agronomist Chuck Francis.

January 17 *Iowa Corn Growers Association annual conference*. Hotel Ft. Des Moines, in Des Moines. Ron Rosmann will be on a panel discussing sustainable agriculture and on-farm research.

January 30 *Southwest Iowa Tillage Expo*. Elks Club, Shenandoah. Exhibits start at 8:00, program runs 8:50 to 3:00. Speakers will be from SCS and Iowa State University, including PFI coordinator Rick Exner. There will also be a three-farmer panel. Cost is \$5 ahead, \$7 at the door. For more information contact Page County Extension Director Ron Sanson at (712)-542-5171.

January 30, 31 *Eastern Iowa Conservation Tillage Show*. Five Seasons Civic Center, Cedar Rapids. PFI will have a display booth.

February 9 *Fayette County Conservation Tillage Club annual winter meeting*. PFI cooperater Tom Frantzen is helping to plan part of the program. For more information call Dan Burkhart, (319)-425-3331.

February 12, 13 *National Ridge-Till Conference*. Holiday Inn Conference Center, Davenport. Several PFI cooperaters are to be on the program.

February 16, 22 *Rodale Take-Charge workshops*. The first will take place in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The second one is scheduled for Madison, Minnesota. For details, contact Jim Tjepkema at (507)-256-7409.

March 1 *Northwest Iowa Conservation Tillage Expo*. Northern Iowa Technical College, in Sheldon. PFI is helping develop the program.

NOTES AND NOTICES

First of all, thanks to Lana Nachtigal for these and other drawings, which she has kindly made available for the newsletter.



Mike Reicherts points out features of his three-crop strips.

PFI Membership Renewal Time!

If you are a PFI member, you recently received a letter from Ron Rosmann asking you to renew your membership. If you didn't open the letter, you missed the "carrots." Renewal this year entitles you to a free tissue test (It would cost you \$22.) Up to \$2 of your \$10 renewal fee comes back to your district for PFI projects of your choosing. Then there's the PFI Sustainable Projects, open to *all* Iowans, that will fund individual projects around the state related to sustainable agriculture.

Here's the "stick." If you don't renew, you will miss the next issue of *the Practical Farmer*, which will be a big review of the 1989 PFI on-farm trials!

Please continue your support of sustainable agriculture by sending a check (and your membership renewal form, please) to PFI, RR 2, Box 132, Boone, Iowa 50036.

IOGBA First Annual Meeting

The Iowa Organic Growers and Buyers Association is a new organization that provides information and support for organic farming. It grew from Iowans for Organic Food Standards, the group that shepherded organic standards legislation through the Iowa Legislature.

IOGBA will hold its first annual meeting February 3, at Kirkwood College. For more information, contact: Allan Blair, 614 N. Clay, West Liberty, Iowa 52776.

Agro-ecology -- A New Newsletter from Illinois

There is a new publication from the University of Illinois called *Agro-ecology*. Printed on recycled paper, the publication attractively showcases sustainable agriculture in that state. The Sept./Oct. issue contains articles on LISA activities in Illinois, priorities in agriculture, on-farm research, and the new coordinator for sustainable agriculture at the university, John Gerber. In addition, there is a guest editorial from Donn Klor, president of the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society.

No price is listed on the newsletter. You can write for information to: *Agro-ecology* Editors, University of Illinois, 211 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE STUDY GEARING UP

The ISU people involved in the Northwest Area Foundation study on sustainable agriculture attended a retreat north of St. Paul, Minnesota this fall to meet with other state groups and university representatives. The meeting took place just before field days for Ron Rosmann and Dick Thompson, so they were unable to attend.

Back home in Iowa, work is proceeding on a survey which will go to some 2,000 farmers across the state. Dick and Ron are providing essential feedback as the questionnaire is constructed. PFI member Sue Jarnagin is the graduate research assistant assigned to work on the study for ISU sociology.

FARMING WITH WILDLIFE FIELD DAY HELD

Last Sept. 6th, the Iowa 4-H Camping Center was the site of a different kind of farm field day, co-sponsored by ISU Extension and *Successful Farming Magazine*. Conservation and wildlife groups participated in *Farming With Wildlife*, a demonstration of ways farmers can preserve the farming environment, turn a profit, and benefit a variety of wildlife.

It rained intermittently, but that didn't stop estimated 250 visitors from viewing the demonstrations scattered around the Center. In one of these, a



A demonstration of portable electric fencing at the Farming With Wildlife field day.

bulldozer was used to complete a farm wetland at the boundary between a field and woodland.

The farmers who attended seemed to hold an unusually strong commitment to conservation and wildlife. The PFI display was a good conversation piece to talk about sustainable agriculture, too. The field day was sufficiently successful that something like it will probably be held again.

IOWA EXTENSION AGENTS' SUSTAINABLE AG TOUR

On Oct. 4-5, 98 county, area and statewide personnel participated in the ISU Sustainable Ag Field Tour. Departing from Ames in two chartered buses and a couple of cars, the group toured farms and demonstrations in Iowa and Nebraska. The trip was organized by Jerry DeWitt, Associate Director of the Cooperative Extension Service in Iowa.

The first stop was the farm of Richard and Sharon Thompson, near Boone. This is a 300-acre diversified operation that uses some purchased fertilizer and raises ridge-till crops without herbicides. Dick Thompson described the practices used and the experiments that have been conducted by him and by university researchers. Many questions were asked, and the extension people evidently related to much that they saw. In comments made later on the bus, it was clear that people wanted to see more detailed economic data.

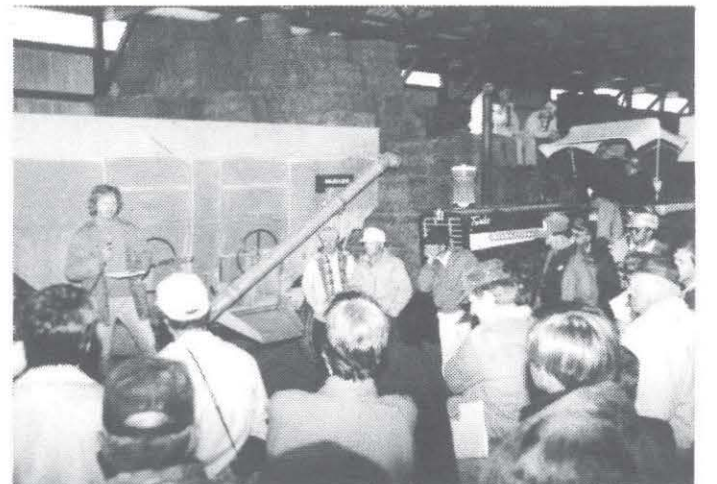


Ron Rosmann spoke to the extension group outside the hog facility.

For example, Extension staff wondered how the Thompsons can justify raising cattle on expensive central Iowa ground.

Next the tour stopped at the farm of Ron and Maria Rosmann near Harlan. This 400-acre diversified farm lies in the loess hills not far from the Missouri River. For discussion purposes, Ron handed out a sheet listing what he and Maria consider the strong and the weak points of their operation. The group toured the solar heated farrowing facility and took a brief wagon ride out to the composting site.

Comments from the group were much the same as for the Thompson farm; people wanted a better idea of the production costs involved. In the future, extension



Hay bales provided the bleachers in Jim Bender's barn.

will be in the position of supplying information on sustainable agricultural practices. These agents will feel more comfortable doing so if they have farm records to show the profitability of these practices. So far, PFI cooperators have kept very close track of the *differential* costs of practices compared in an on-farm trial, but few of them have kept enterprise records to track the total cost of production in a crop or livestock operation.

The first day of the tour ended with an enjoyable meal at the Bluffs Run track, in Council Bluffs. Next morning the buses set out through rain to the farm of Jim Bender near Weeping Water, Nebraska. This is an organic farm that grows a variety of grains (a good sorghum crop was still standing) and forages (including fall turnips). Bender has written for the American Journal of Alternative Agriculture on risk management and other aspects of organic farming. He spoke with the tour group in the barn, between bales of fresh green hay and items of farm machinery. Perhaps most interesting was his comment that making a profit is not necessarily his top priority. And like the other farmers visited on the tour, Bender had trouble saying just what his net profits are.

Back on the bus, people wondered out loud how extension can assist someone like Jim Bender. Many of the questions raised by such farmers are not about individual practices but about *systems* of practices, and some agents felt poorly prepared for that.

The last stop was a soil water monitoring study at the DeSoto Bend Wildlife Refuge. After two days, people were ready to head for home, but the concept of group tours received strong approval. The extension people enjoyed the chance to get together, yet in such a busy time of year, it was impressive that so many took two days out of their schedule to attend the tour. Similar outings may well be held in the future.

GROUPS MEET TO DISCUSS SUSTAINABLE AG

On Sept. 13, representatives of approximately a dozen groups met with Iowa State University officials to discuss educational, extension and research needs related to sustainable agriculture. The one-day conference was called by John Pesek, head of the ISU Agronomy Department. The idea grew out of a series



of meetings between ISU, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and the Iowa Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The organizations represented on the 13th have approached agricultural sustainability in different ways. Some have concentrated on social and economic aspects, while some groups have focused on the agricultural "nuts and bolts." Two of the organizations were organized specifically for organic growers. Those groups invited included: the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition, the Food and Hunger Task force, the Grinnell 2000 Foundation, the Iowa Catholic Rural Life Conference, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the Iowa Natural Foods Association, the Iowa Organic Crop Improvement Association, the Iowa Organic Growers and Buyers



Rev. Kathleen Clark, representing Town and Country Ministries, addressed the conference.

Association, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Prairie Fire, Professional Farmers of America, and Town and Country Ministries.

The meeting was planned as a listening session. Among the ISU personnel were several department heads and deans. They were there to hear what the groups believe ISU should be doing in sustainable agriculture. The comments were sometimes pointed. They ranged from the general to quite specific complaints. The Rev. Norm White, for example, reported a conversation with the manager of an outlying research station who said he would simply give sustainable agriculture "lip service" and wait for it to go away.

The general feeling expressed was: ISU and Extension need to have better information available to farmers on sustainable farming methods; research is needed to better understand both benefits and problems related to this kind of farming; and the consequences of new technologies, machinery and university research for family farms should be considered.

The meeting was not all negative. Pesek received praise for his coordinating role in production of *Alternative Agriculture*, the recent report by the National Academy of Sciences. Jerry DeWitt, Associate Dean of Extension, reported on initiatives that extension and ISU are taking in sustainable agriculture. (See, for example, "Extension Agents' Sustainable Ag Tour.") Dr. Dennis Keeney, of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, told the organic farmers present that their type of farming is "ahead of the curve" on issues of resource management, and he expressed the hope that such farmers will contribute to the programs of the center.

These groups can give something to each other, and there is a lot they can do with ISU and Extension as well. Taken together, the organizations constitute a well-

rounded definition of sustainable agriculture, one that includes the social, agronomic and economic sides of rural life. The university and extension can serve in the useful role of information clearinghouse for groups interested in sustainable agriculture. Several of these organizations will likely form an advisory group to offer feedback on the extension, education, and research programs of ISU and Extension.

PRACTICING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN IOWA, PART ONE

Jim Malia and Pete Korsching
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Iowa State University



Last winter we initiated a study to learn about the practice of sustainable agriculture in Iowa. Because we wanted to learn about sustainable practices from farmers who actually use them, we requested the help of Practical Farmers of Iowa, who provided us with a list of their members. A letter explaining the study and a questionnaire was then sent to all farmer members. We asked you to tell us about your farming operation, your attitudes toward farming and the environment, and your

recommendations for policy and research to support sustainable agriculture. The majority of you responded. We want to thank you for your help. Below is the first of several reports of our results that we would like to share with you. Again, thank you for your assistance with our study.

This initial report will look at the level of chemical usage among PFI members, the demographic characteristics of our respondents, and why they have chosen to use sustainable farming methods. Our report is based on 168 responses.

Chemical usage

Because the use of minimal chemical inputs is at the

core of any definition of a sustainable farming system, we wanted to determine the extent of chemical usage among farmers who report they use sustainable methods. We determined chemical usage in the following way.

On the questionnaire, farmers were asked to indicate what sources of nitrogen they used and what practices they used to control weeds and insects during the 1988 crop year. For each source of nitrogen and for each weed or insect control practice, we then asked farmers on what percent of cropland they used that source or practice. This information was used to compute a separate input score for nitrogen, herbicides, and insecticides based on intensity of chemical use. The sum of the three separate scores gave us a total chemical input score for each farmer. See Table 1 for a summary of the chemical input scores. The mean is the average score. The median is the midpoint of the range of scores; half the responses are above this point and half are below. The mode is the category with the largest number of responses. A low score indicates that fewer chemical inputs are used and/or that chemical inputs are used on a smaller percent of a farmer's cropland. Of special interest in Table 1 is the relatively high percentage of farmers in our sample who used no chemical inputs on their 1988 crops.

Demographic characteristics

A distribution of the age, education, and size of farm operation of our respondents are in Table 2.

The majority of farmers in our study are younger and well educated; 70% have at least some college education. According to the sample, sustainable farming systems are being used in small, medium, and large sized farm operations. In other words, size of operation does not seem to be a barrier or facilitator to using sustainable practices.

PFI members are scattered throughout the state. The 168 responses in our sample came from 77 of Iowa's 99 counties, or approximately 2 per county. The largest number of respondents in any one county was 5. One problem this indicates to us is difficulty in maintaining regular contact among the membership. Hence the importance of a regular newsletter and frequent area meetings to keep membership in contact with one another and with the organization.

Reasons for using sustainable practices

We asked farmers how important to them a variety of reasons were for using sustainable practices. Table 3 gives the frequency of responses.

Table 1. Summary Statistics for Chemical Input Scores

| | <u>Nitrogen</u> | <u>Weed Control</u> | <u>Insect Control</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Mean | .53 | 1.57 | .41 | 2.53 |
| Median | .50 | 1.40 | .00 | 2.50 |
| Mode | .00 (22%) | .00 (26%) | .00 (61%) | .00 (19%) |
| Range | .00 - 2.00 | .00 - 5.00 | .00 - 4.30 | .00 - 8.00 |

The most important reasons given for using sustainable practices are to improve personal and family health, to farm in a way that is better for the soil and the environment, and to pass on productive land to future generations. These reasons are similar to reasons given by farmers in other studies of alternative farming systems. Increased profits as a reason for using sustainable practices was less important than factors relating to health, and the environment. PFI farmers seem to be saying that profits are important but other things are more important.

Conclusions

PFI farmers represent a variety of farming practices and experiences with sustainable farming. The diversity of the organization is a strength in that members have a greater circle of contacts than if all members were essentially the same. This diverse and extensive range of contacts is a ready network for spreading information about sustainable farming practices.

Table 2. Distribution of farmers by age, education, and size of operation

| Age-Years | <u>23-44</u> | | <u>45-64</u> | | <u>65+</u> | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| % | 61 | | 33 | | 6 | |
| Education | <u>< High School</u> | <u>Some H. School</u> | <u>High School</u> | <u>Some College</u> | <u>College Grad</u> | <u>Post Grad</u> |
| % | 4 | 1 | 25 | 34 | 24 | 12 |
| Size of Operation (Acres) | <u>0-280</u> | | <u>281-500</u> | | <u>500+</u> | |
| % | 35 | | 36 | | 29 | |

Table 3. Percent of farmers indicating how important various reasons are to their use of sustainable practices.

| | <u>Importance</u> | |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| | <u>None/Little</u> | <u>More/Most</u> |
| To improve personal and family health | 13 | 87 |
| To farm in a way that is better for the soil and environment | 2 | 98 |
| To farm closer to the way of farming in the Bible | 62 | 38 |
| To achieve a higher net income | 20 | 80 |
| To produce a higher quality produce | 20 | 80 |
| To consume less energy | 26 | 74 |
| To be less dependent on outside suppliers | 20 | 80 |
| To have fewer insects | 52 | 48 |
| To have fewer weeds | 52 | 48 |
| To pass on productive land to future generations | 9 | 91 |
| To be less dependent on government subsidies | 35 | 65 |

COMMUNITY STRUGGLES TO KEEP CAFE

(This item appeared in the Sept., 1989 issue of *MFA Digest*, the newsletter of the Minnesota Food Association.)

In a small farming community like Comstock, in Minnesota's Red River Valley, a cafe can be the nerve center of the town. But, when the town's population is only 120, the volume of business may be too low to keep the doors open. Comstock's Farmers' Cafe was closed one year ago by the farmers' co-op elevator board, its owner.

Since then, several area people, including MFA board member Jon Evert, have brought the cafe back under new management and with a new orientation. Their guiding philosophy is for the cafe to be a community center for meetings and meals, with a broad base of community support and locally-grown foods made from scratch. A separate co-op was formed to share ownership in the cafe, and stock was sold. The cafe doors were opened last February, an excellent cook was hired, and Jon reports that progress is being made toward profitability.

For Jon and others, including MFA member Kerrine Thompson, the past year has been hectic. When asked to purchase stock in the cafe, some local people declined, but made donations instead. They feared they would be personally liable if the cafe failed. Explanations of co-ops' limited liability laws did not convince those area people stung by farm coop losses. Another image problem rooted in the past and changing slowly is the view that cafes are a meeting place primarily for men. Offering Sunday dinner is one means the cafe uses to market itself to women.

Undercapitalized at the outset, the cafe is becoming the true community center that Jon, Kerrine and others envisioned. They will continue to build the Comstock cafe's image as a community-owned place. Stop in for a meal the next time you are in Comstock.

ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURE: TWO REVIEWS

The recently released report *Alternative Agriculture*, by the National Research Council, has been in the news. Here are reviews of the book from two publications that are interesting in their own right. Incidentally, the farm of PFI cooperators Dick and Sharon Thompson is the subject of one of the case studies in the NRC report.

Alternative Agriculture

(This appeared in the November *CIKARD News*, published by the Center for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development, at ISU, and is reprinted with permission of Mike Warren. The newsletter may be obtained by contacting the Technology and Social Change Program, 318 Curtiss Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa 50011.)

Alternative Agriculture, by the National Research Council's Committee on the Role of Alternative Farming Methods in Modern Production Agriculture, Washington: National Academy Press, 448 pp., is available for \$19.95 (paperback) or \$29.95 (hardback), prepaid (includes shipping) from National Academy Press, 2001 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Harris Building, Room 384, Washington, D.C. 20418.

This landmark study of alternative agriculture, conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, has concluded that farmers who use few or no chemicals are often as productive as those who use pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

In the report, the 17-member National Research Council Committee states that the federal government should revise its policy to encourage alternative farming techniques that use fewer chemicals and show greater sensitivity to the environment. The committee predicted that the rate of progress in developing and adopting alternative systems could be increased tremendously with appropriate changes in farm policy and expanded and redirected research and extension efforts. The committee was chaired by John Pesek, head of the Department of Agronomy, Iowa State University.

Move Toward Sustainable Agriculture

by William F. Woodman

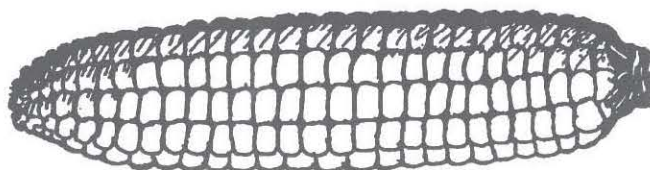
(This review comes from *The Ag Bioethics Forum*, a quarterly publication from Iowa State. It is reprinted with permission of Bill Woodman. To obtain copies or submit an article, contact managing editor Bev Christenson, 506 Ross Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa 50011).

One of the chief reasons that most farmers do not adopt agricultural practices which would demand less of the soil and water resources, concludes a recently issued report by the National Research Council, is that federal agricultural research policies serve as a deterrent. Such policies discourage crop rotations, planting diversity, and reduction of pesticide applications. Another reason given by John Pesek, the chairman of the NRC committee issuing the report and head of the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University, is that sustainable agriculture practices require more labor, time, and management skills than conventional approaches.

However, says Pesek, it isn't just the size of the grocery bill that concerns supermarket shoppers, but rather matters such as pesticide and herbicide residues, antibiotics in meats, and overall food purity. Add to that the increased public attention to water pollution, soil erosion, and the role of chemicals in agriculture, and it is clear that what is often called "conventional agriculture" can be both productive and efficient, it also carries with it hazards and costs. Chief among these costs is the degradation and depletion of the land as erosion, loss of soil fertility, and the chemical soup used by modern farmers takes its toll.

Meanwhile, attention is being focused on alternative approaches leading to what is called by many "sustainable agriculture." These practices call for a battery of methods and means which do less to tax the long-term productivity of the land. The report, entitled *Alternative Agriculture*, is the product of the Committee on the Role of Alternative Farming Methods in Modern Production Agriculture (Board on Agriculture) of the National Research Council and was released this fall.

The release of this publication is especially timely, as the next issue of the *Ag Bioethics Forum* will carry an extended interview with John Pesek on a number of issues raised in the NRC report.



Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name _____

Organization or Affiliation

Address _____

City _____

County _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone number(s)

()- _____

This is a new membership
 renewal

Do you derive a significant part of your income directly from farming?

Yes No

Suggested by (name of person)

Please enclose check or money order for \$10.00 payable to "Practical Farmers of Iowa" and mail to:

Practical Farmers of Iowa
RR 2, Box 132
Boone, Iowa 50036

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence to the PFI directors' addresses is always welcome. Member contributions to *the Practical Farmer* are also welcome and will be reviewed by the PFI board of directors.

District 1 (Northwest): Bob Graaf, RR 1, Palmer, 50571. (712)-359-7787.

District 2 (North Central): Dick Thompson, RR 2, Box 132, Boone, 50036. (515)-432-1560.

Associate board member for District 2: Allyn Hagensick, RR 4, Box 57, Hampton, 50441. (515)-456-2945.

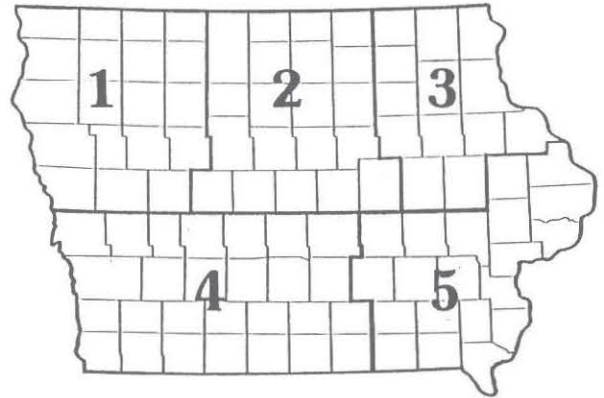
District 3 (Northeast): Tom Franzen, RR 2, New Hampton, 50659. (515)-364-6426.

District 4 (Southwest): Ron Rosmann, RR 1, Box 177, Harlan, 51537. (712)-627-4653.

District 5 (Southeast): Mark Mays, RR 2, Box 45, Wilton, 52778. (319)-732-2040.

Coordinator: Rick Exner, Room 2104, Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa, 50011. (515)-294-1923.

PRACTICAL FARMERS OF IOWA MEMBERSHIP DISTRICTS



Acknowledgment:

The Practical Farmer and the PFI on-farm demonstrations are supported, in part, by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, and the Integrated Farm Management Demonstration Project of the Agricultural Energy Management Fund, State of Iowa, through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, with appropriations from the Iowa Groundwater Protection Fund.

Practical Farmers of Iowa

Rt. 2, Box 132, Boone, Iowa 50036

**Forwarding and Address
Correction Requested**