

# the Practical Farmer

Practical Farmers of Iowa Newsletter

Vol. 16, #3  
Fall 2001

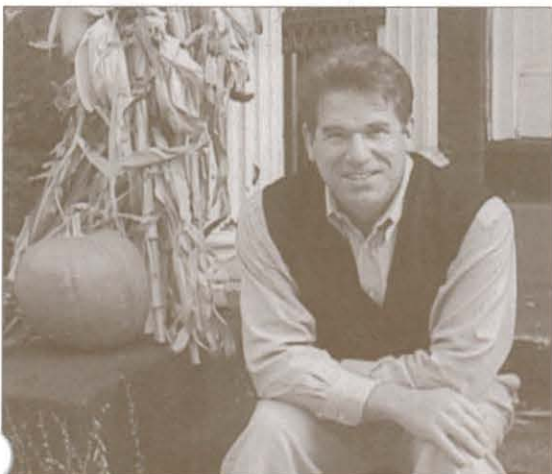
## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON PRACTICAL FARMING

Have you ever heard of “multi-functional agriculture” and the “working lands” concept? Did you know it could have a big impact on the Iowa landscape in the coming decade?

Are you interested in learning about innovative and successful ways sustainable farming and eco-marketing is being developed in other regions of the world? Would you like to understand how some of the latest global policy developments might impact your farm in the coming decade?

Mark Ritchie will enlighten you as the keynote speaker at PFI's Annual Meeting and Winter Workshops on January 19, 2002.

Ritchie is the President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade



**Mark Ritchie, President of Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, brings a global perspective to the keynoter's podium.**

Policy, a non-profit and non-partisan research organization, internationally recognized as a leader in the development of innovative trade policy, especially in the fields of environment and agriculture.

Mark has spent the last twenty years working to address a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues facing family farms

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and small towns both in the United States and around the world. Mark grew up in Georgia and Iowa, graduating with honors from Iowa State University in 1971. He managed vertically-integrated consumer cooperatives in Northern California, then became Executive Director of the Center for Rural Studies, a San Francisco-based agricultural policy research institute.

In 1981, Mark moved to Minnesota to serve as the research and resource manager of Miller Meester company, one of the nation's largest agriculture-related communications firms. In 1988, Mark became President of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. He says, "I'm thrilled to be coming back to Iowa to speak with PFI."

Recognized as one of America's 100 visionaries by the *Utne Reader* in 1994, Mark Ritchie is one of the few people in this country with a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the complex

issues involving trade and the environment. Mark is a regular columnist for farm and trade publications in the United States, Europe, Japan and Canada, and has written and produced two films on agricultural and environmental issues.

### Workshops, Cob Rolls and Friday Chicken

Besides offering an outstanding keynoter, the Annual Meeting and Winter Workshops gives every PFI member a chance to catch up with friends (see the boxed notes on Friday evening fun, page 5), transact organizational business (see "Elections" boxed on p. 9), and take home practical, fresh ideas. This year there will be 18 concurrent sessions from which to choose. (Fill out the straw poll on page 8 so we can anticipate your preferences.)

For the third year some of the sessions are designated as Cob Rolls. At a Cob Roll, the initial speaker will present a concept, or establish a

### Long overdue – Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award Goes to Dr. Derrick Exner, ISU Extension Agronomist and PFI's Farming Systems Coordinator

We know you'll want to join us on January 19 to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of Rick Exner – a man of many faces and talents. At the right we see the inventive side of on-farm research. Rick's fishing seat provides a scenic view of where he and Paul Mugge have been spreading limestone in narrow strips. It also keeps Rick out of the PTO. That's practical!



Jamming with *The Pretty Good Band*, at the right, is just one of Rick's ways to relax and bring a smile to others, as well.

Rick, unlike the rest of us, manages to shave off the years!





***We suggest you take time to digest the first nine pages of this newsletter before filling out the registration form on p. 7.***

proposition, or state an opinion, or set forth a problem. After that, the content is up to the participants; the speaker's role changes to that of facilitator. Think of these sessions as more interactive than a typical workshop setting – a bit like a chat room.



In addition, there will be a special session on poultry production and marketing on Friday afternoon. Check out the details on page 6.

In fact there's so much going on with enough new twists that we suggest you take some time to digest the first ten pages of this newsletter before filling out the registration form on p. 7.

### **What's NOT changing? – Location and lunch**

For the third year in a row our meeting will be at the Gateway Center. (Formerly the Holiday Inn, it is now called The Hotel at Gateway Center.) The accommodations and service remains superior. You can save substantially by booking your overnight guest room before December 28. Call 515-292-8600 or 1-800-367-2637 and ask for the PFI room block. (The hotel cannot guarantee our group rate after that date.) For those who choose to stay elsewhere, consult the list on page 9.

Once again we will offer an All Iowa Buffet featuring menu items from the farms of PFI members. The lunch is really an event unto itself. Last year Governor Tom Vilsack dined on the Iowa Bounty Lunch and called it “..the best meal I've eaten outside my own home as Governor.” We think you'll find it's worth every penny.

### **Child care options**

Child care is still available for both babies and toddlers in a suite at the hotel. This year the care

givers are coming from the **Ames Waldorf Association**. The cost is \$12 per child for children age 5 and under. We will take registrations for baby and toddler care on a walk-in basis.

School age children can attend **Camp Hantesa** in Boone County in the morning and an ISU women's basketball game in the afternoon for \$25 per child. This is a package deal. A bus from Camp Hantesa will pick up participants at the hotel at 8:30 AM and take them to camp for a morning of crafts, games, and outdoor adventures (weather pending). After a hot lunch at camp, the kids will travel by bus with Hantesa staff to Ames where the entire group will enjoy the basketball game. The children will arrive back at the hotel by 5 PM (even if the game goes into overtime).

The cost for this program is \$25 per child and covers camp and basketball game, lunch and transportation, all with adult supervision. (Kids will need pocket money for snacks at the game.) Unbeatable? You bet. **Pre-registration is required for this package and we cannot guarantee availability of this program if you do not register (p.7) before January 4th.** Children ages 6 and up may participate.

There is no day-long program designed for older children at the hotel. Look over the list of concurrent session topics (p. 8) and you will probably find several to match your older child's interest. They are welcome to attend as conference participants.

Just a reminder – the pool at the hotel is open from 6 AM to 10 PM with no lifeguard. Only registered overnight guests of the hotel may use the pool.

### **Definitely different**

Registration fees have gone up \$10 from last year. This increase is due to the fact that we are



## MEET JODY LARSON Annual Meeting Coordinator 2002



Hello All! My name is Jody Larson and I am the new coordinator for the 2002 PFI Winter Workshops. What do I know and can you trust such a valuable event in my hands? Let me explain . . . Born and raised on a small hobby farm in Eastern Iowa I grew up a tom girl who loved the outdoors. I went to college at Iowa State University under a long major title called Public Service and Administration in Agriculture with an emphasis in Journalism and Mass Communications – Whew! If I would have known how difficult it would be to not only say that major, let alone explain it, I would have just stuck with Event Coordination.

Regardless, I graduated in four years and was offered a job in Minnesota for a tradeshow company called Cygnus Expositions. Within Cygnus I was in charge of the all of the marketing for their seven farm shows. This job was both challenging and rewarding, but the love of my life was in Iowa. We married this past August and we live on an acreage south of Story City. Brent farms with his father and grandfather and I am now helping PFI!

Some of you may have already heard from me for one reason or another, but I look forward to seeing you all January 18 and 19 at the Gateway Center in Ames! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 515-733-2411. I can also be reached via e-mail at JodyLarson@yahoo.com. I welcome comments, input, concerns, etc and I am very excited to be a part of the PFI family!

**Editor's note: And we're lucky to have her. Jody has taken on a huge task at a late start with smiles, confidence, and efficiency. Indeed, our event is in very good hands.**

trying to make the annual meeting more self-sustaining. In the past, though quite successful, the event has never broken even, with coordination time taken into account. Thus, for the sake of the long-term fiscal health of PFI we have decided to raise the fees.

Registration fees are now \$20 per PFI household postmarked before January 4th and \$30 thereafter. A PFI household means one PFI membership and includes dependents living at the same address.

We will once again offer a **special student conference registration rate of \$15** for Saturday only with no PFI membership required.

### Refund Policy

There will not be refunds on meeting registration payments after January 4, 2002. Actually, there never have been refunds, but let's be perfectly clear about it now. We understand that if your family has to make a last minute change, you will be out some cash. But PFI members need to recognize that the risk for the organization is far greater than the risk for any member household. Our expenses will stay in place despite individual cancellations or weather calamities. Hence, the "no refunds" policy.

***Actually, there never have been refunds, but let's be perfectly clear about it now.***



## Volunteers Needed

As ever, we will need plenty of help to make the Annual Meeting a success. You can be part of the action by volunteering to help with registration, child care, workshop hosting. You can contact Jody Larson at 515-733-2411 with your offer of help.

We also need reporters to cover each workshop session. You simply write a brief summary about the workshop of your choice and submit it to the newsletter editor in January. Merlin Pfannkuch has already volunteered to coordinate this effort. You can reach him at [mpfannkuch@iowabar.org](mailto:mpfannkuch@iowabar.org). He says the phone, 515-232-3319, is less reliable but worth a shot.

## Tabletop Display Space Available

We have a limited number of tables available for display. Please contact Nan Bonfils at 515-432-2389 or [FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com](mailto:FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com) to discuss your needs.

## Finally, Bring a Friend

This is the year to reach out and bring along someone new to PFI's biggest, and quite possibly

best, event. As Colin and Carla Wilson once put it, "We've moved 5% of agriculture hundreds of yards. Now we have to bring along the 95% just a yard or two." Inviting someone new to our annual meeting is a great way to introduce them to, not only our organization, but also the very heart of sustainable agriculture. 🍷

## FRIDAY NIGHT'S FAMILY NIGHT

Friday evening will feature a slide show presentation by Carl Kurtz, renowned prairie expert, nature photographer, and author of Iowa's Wild Places and A Practical Guide to Prairie Reconstruction. The event will also showcase Iowa produced wines and cheeses; a special display of farm and nature artwork; and a local food skit for children of all ages. All this along with music and dancing!

Friday evening's festivities are free of charge and we encourage you to bring the whole family. And you can register for Saturday's workshop sessions early to avoid the lines in the morning. Come join us for this popular pre-conference event!

7:00 P.M.: Registration opens, art viewing and wine and cheese tasting begins

7:30 "Near Grapes and Juice," a local food system skit by Rich Pirog

8:00 Presentation by Carl Kurtz

Followed by music and open mike - Bring your instruments, sing a song, read a poem!

If you or your children have artwork or photographs you would like to display for Friday evening, please contact Shelly Gradwell at 641-483-4027 or [shellyg@iastate.edu](mailto:shellyg@iastate.edu) 🍷

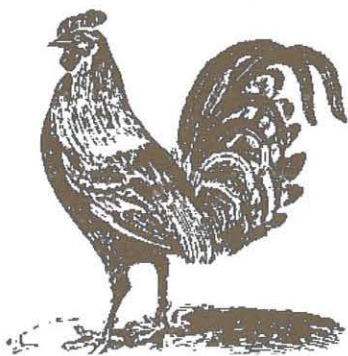
## Annual Winter Meeting At a Glance

### Friday, January 18

- 1:00 P.M. Value Chains for Poultry Markets  
Details on page 6
- 7:00 P.M. Registration opens  
Family party - details p. 5

### Saturday, January 19

- 7:00 A.M. Coffee available
- 7:30 Registration opens
- 8:30 Welcome-PFI President Colin Wilson  
Sustainable Ag Achievement Award
- 9:30 Workshops round I
- 10:30 Keynote by Mark Ritchie
- 11:30 Membership business meeting
- noon Iowa Bounty Buffet
- 1:30 P.M. District meetings and elections
- 2:15 Workshops round II
- 3:15 Posters and displays, refreshments
- 4:00 Workshops round III



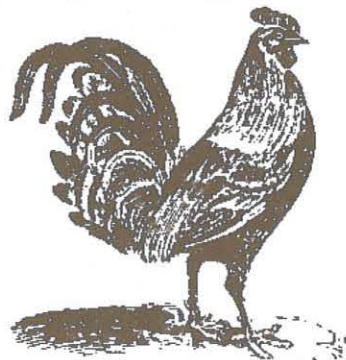
## CREATING VALUE CHAINS FOR NICHE POULTRY MARKETS

A special workshop to bring together people involved in the production, processing, distribution, and marketing of specialty poultry.

Date: Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>

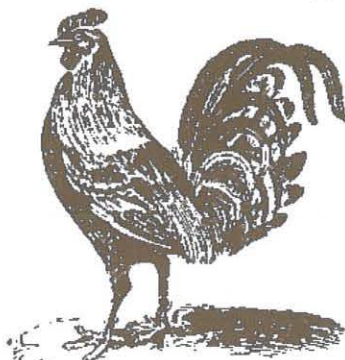
Time: from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m

Location: The Hotel at Gateway Center, Ames



We'll examine promising initiatives, challenges, and future directions for the production and marketing of organic, pasture-fed, free-range, antibiotic-free, and other differentiated poultry.

The first part of the program will be a participatory discussion of the initiatives and challenges shared throughout niche poultry value chains. The second half of the workshop will feature two breakout sessions: one for direct marketing efforts, and a second for networked structures to supply niche poultry markets.

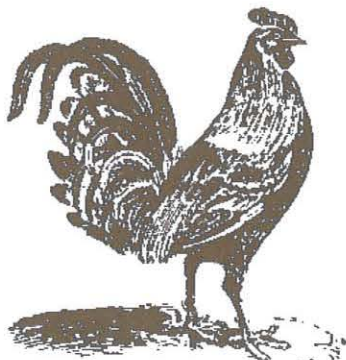


For more information contact: Diane Mayerfeld, ISU Extension (515-294-7836 e-mail [dmayerfe@iastate.edu](mailto:dmayerfe@iastate.edu)) or Rich Pirog, Leopold Center (515-294-1854 [rspirog@iastate.edu](mailto:rspirog@iastate.edu)) Interested participants are strongly encouraged to reserve a space by calling or e-mailing Diane or Rich no later than noon Friday, January 11, 2002

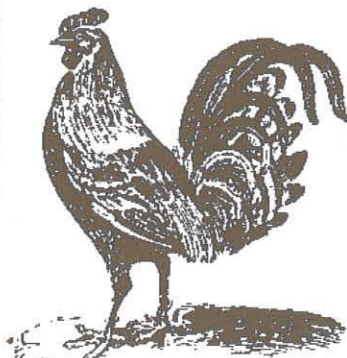
Cost: \$10 per person (includes refreshments)

On-site registration begins at 1:00 p.m.

Program begins at 1:30 p.m.

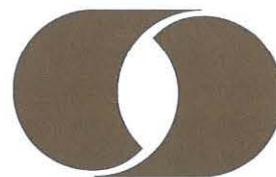


This special interest Friday afternoon workshop is sponsored by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Iowa State University Extension.



**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
University Extension

*Helping Iowans become their best.*



LEOPOLD CENTER



# Registration for PFI Annual Meeting and Winter Workshops

Friday afternoon, January 18. Creating Value Chains for Niche Poultry Markets. Please note, there is only on-site registration for the poultry workshop. See facing page for details.

Friday evening January 18. Family Fun Night begins at 7:00 PM. No charge and no need to register for this event. Everyone is welcome; details on p. 5. Come on over! The registration desk for Saturday's program will be open and you can wrap up registration details the night before.

PLEASE PRINT THE INFORMATION BELOW

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Friday

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 2002

### A. Pre-registration - postmarked by Friday, January 4, 2002

\$20.00 per PFI member household.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

+ \$25.00 Annual membership fee if not current.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Not sure about your membership status? Call Nancy Dundatscheck at 515-294-8512; ndundat@agron.iastate.edu

### or B. Registration - postmarked by January 12, 2002 and all walk-in's

Sorry, no phone in registrations. If you can't mail your registration by January 12<sup>th</sup>, just bring it with you to the event.

\$30.00 per PFI member household.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

+ \$25.00 Annual membership fee if not current.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Not sure about your membership status? Call Nancy Dundatscheck at 515-294-8512; ndundat@agron.iastate.edu

### or C. Discounted student rate - designed for high school and college students;

\$15.00 conference attendance fee per individual student. (PFI membership not required).....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

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### D. (optional) Iowa Bounty Noon Buffet. Pre-registration recommended. Seats not guaranteed after 1/4/02.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adults x \$12.50 + \_\_\_\_\_ Children (ages 5-12) x \$9.00 =.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Do not buy noon buffet tickets for children going to Camp Hantesa, see E. below.

### E. (optional) Childcare for ages 6 and up. Full day program with Camp Hantesa includes lunch See p. 3.

No guarantee on availability of this service after January 4, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_ Children x \$25.00. List names and ages of children \_\_\_\_\_.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### F. (optional) Childcare for toddlers ages 5 and under. Supervised care at the hotel includes snacks but no lunch. See. p. 3). The cost is \$12.00 per child. Do NOT include payment, but do indicate number of children in your family who may need this service. Names \_\_\_\_\_; ages \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Total** A or B or C (plus D or E if applicable) = \_\_\_\_\_. Make check payable to **Practical Farmers of Iowa**. Enclose it with this form and mail it to: Nancy Dundatscheck, 2104 Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, IA. 50011. **No refunds after January 4, 2002.**

Take a moment to fill out the "ballot" on the back of this form. It will help us plan a better conference for you.

## STRAW POLL ON WORKSHOP CHOICES

As we go to press the workshop sessions for the Annual Meeting are shaping up nicely. We are always challenged to make the best choice when it comes to deciding workshop room assignments. In fact it's a giant jigsaw puzzle, more complex for the meeting planners than participants might imagine. This year, to help us make our decision, we're asking you to give us a straw poll indication of which workshop sessions you might attend. Your check marks here in no way obligate you. In fact, we're not even going to keep track of who said what. But your initial preferences will give us another guideline as we piece the program together.

Place a check mark by the THREE workshop titles that appeal to you most. If two people are registering on this paper, you may make six marks. Thanks!

- Five Decades of Weed Observation – Dick and Sharon Thompson
- Working Together to Sell High Value Crops – Mike Breneman and Tom Wahl
- Holistic Livestock Health Care: Producers' Experiences – Bev Gilbert, Mike Arnold, Steve Williams
- Food and Values: Exploring the Soulful Landscape of Local Food Systems  
Susan Zacharakis-Jutz and Robert Karp
- Community Based Meat Processing – Brighton Locker, Arcadia Meats, Upper Mississippi Meats
- Value of Compost from a Soil Quality Perspective – Cindy Cambardella, ISU Tilt Lab
- Managing Organic Matter and Nutrients on Farms Using Organic Manures  
Walter Goldstein, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
- Native Prairie as an Alternative Seed Crop and On-Farm Biodiversity  
Mark Tjelmeland, Carl Kurtz, Laura Jackson, Mike Natvig
- Project Freeze: Light Processing for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables – Stacey Brown and Jill Weber
- Breeding Corn for Sustainable Systems: What do farmers and marketers need?  
Walter Goldstein, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Kendall Lamkey, ISU Agronomy
- Former Farmers, New Iowans – immigrant panel
- Direct Marketing Success Stories – Nina and Kelly Biensen, Larry Cleverley, Michael and Linda Nash
- PFI Student Sustainable Agriculture Leadership Project – Shelly Gradwell, Sarah Low
- Cob Roll: Dealing with Labor Shortages on Small Farms – Michael and Linda Nash, facilitators
- Cob Roll: PFI Youth Programs: How should we further develop our programs for youth and teens?  
Shelly Gradwell, facilitator
- Cob Roll: Big Picture Thinking with Mark Ritchie, IATP, and Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center
- Cob Roll: Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Sustainable and Organic Agriculture – Mike Bell, facilitator
- Cob Roll: The Future of Practical Farmers –Robert Karp, facilitator



## OVERNIGHT OPTIONS

The PFI discount on guest rooms at the Hotel at Gateway Center is only guaranteed for reservations received before December 28, 2001. Call (515) 292-8600 or 1-800-367-2637 to reserve a room there. If the Gateway doesn't suit you, check these out and you may save yourself a few dollars. All are within five miles of the meeting site. The first one is just across from Gateway Center on Elwood Drive.

Baymont Inn (formerly the Budgetel)  
515-296-2500

Americinn Motel 515- 233-1005  
or 800-634-3444

Best Western Starlite Village  
515-232-9260  
or 800-903-0009 x4

Comfort Inn 515-232-0689  
or 800-228-5150

Hampton Inn 515-239-9999  
or 800-426-7866

Heartland Inn 515-233- 6060  
or 800-334-3277

Howard Johnson Express Inn  
515-232-8363 or 800-446-4656

ISU Memorial Union 515-292-1111

Ramada Inn 515-232-3410  
or 800-922-7384

Super 8 Motel 515-232-6510  
or 800-800-8000

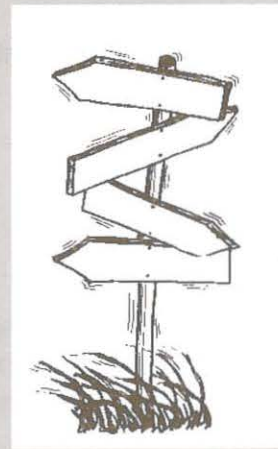
University Inn 515-232-0280  
or 800-422-5250

## Additional Donations and Sponsors Welcome

If you are inclined toward a gift to support the Annual Meeting, contact Jody Larson at 515-733-2411 or JodyLarson@yahoo.com. We will acknowledge your gift, if you choose, on the printed program and at the hotel. You can also choose to keep your gift anonymous.

## Annual Meeting Board Elections – All Districts

There will be PFI district meetings after lunch on Saturday as usual this year, giving you



a chance to meet your PFI neighbors, plan district events and elect board members.

Elections will be held for board members in all five district this year. In some districts current directors are planning to run for re-election. If you want more information or if you want to nominate

or be nominated, please contact one of your district directors listed on the back of the newsletter. You can also direct questions to Robert Karp at 515-233-3622, [rkarp@isunet.net](mailto:rkarp@isunet.net).

**Save money by registering  
for the Annual Meeting  
before  
January 4, 2002.  
See page 7.**

## Silent Auction to Support Summer Camp

Last year's silent auction camp fundraiser was a great success and we are expanding it this year! Please consider donating an art, food, craft, or other item from your farm or business. Donna Bauer is coordinating the auction again this year—Thanks Donna! Contact her if you have an item to donate at 712- 563-4084 or [dbauer@metc.net](mailto:dbauer@metc.net) Thank you for supporting PFI Camp!



## THE PFI LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Robert Karp, Executive Director

In the last issue of the PFI newsletter, I announced the beginning of a fundraising campaign to raise upwards of \$50,000 over the next year to support the growth and development of PFI. In this article I will answer some of your questions about this effort.

*Why is this leadership campaign necessary and what exactly will the money be used for?*

The landscape of agriculture is rapidly changing, and PFI is increasingly being asked to play a leadership role in a wide range of efforts. These requests come out of respect for PFI and the recognition that our members and staff people have solutions and wisdom to share. But increased responsibility comes with costs, and this is one key reason why we need to raise funds through this leadership campaign. The other is to maintain and strengthen our core program activities, such as our on-farm research and All-Iowa Meals. The money will be used to support these core activities and to cover basic operating expenses, such as newsletter and district meeting expenses. These kinds of things are hard to fund through grants. At the present time, membership dues, interest income and donations cover only about 40% of these expenses.

*Didn't the organization do something similar to this a few years ago?*

Several years ago, PFI launched a campaign to create an endowment that would provide long-term financial stability for the organization. With the help of a consultant, however, we decided it was premature to engage in a successful endowment campaign of the scope envisaged, so the effort was put on hold. This postponement of the endowment campaign was announced in the Spring 2000 Newsletter (vol.15 #1).

PFI still has an endowment fund which is earning interest. This, in turn, helps us maintain our programs and services. Anyone can still make a gift

***At the present time, membership dues, interest income and donations cover only about 40% of these expenses.***

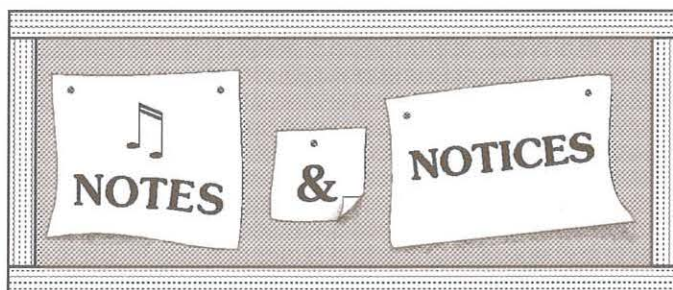
to the PFI endowment fund. We are simply not actively promoting it.

*Does PFI still have a relationship with the ISU Foundation?*

The ISU Foundation offered to help with PFI's endowment campaign and they managed the original endowment fund. When PFI decided to put the endowment effort on hold, however, we decided to withdraw our funds from the ISU Foundation. We currently do not have any type of working relationship with the ISU Foundation.

*When can I expect to hear more about the PFI Leadership Campaign?*

All members can anticipate getting an appeal letter this winter or spring. We will keep members up to date on the progress of the campaign in the PFI newsletter. I will also speak to the topic at the Annual Meeting. 🐾



### 🎵 **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Local Foods Conference** **January 25 and 26 in Cedar Falls**

Friday, 2-6 PM: Farmer-to-Farmer Workshop – Geared for experienced producers, open to all. Join an afternoon of in-depth, focused discussions on issues of interest to the experienced producers.

Saturday, 9AM -5 PM: Main Conference – Come for a day of exploration into Iowa's community-based agriculture. Voices from all aspects of this



new agriculture will shine light on emerging developments. We will celebrate the hard work that has gotten us to this point and explore what directions we need to focus our sights on.

Brochures available in December. Contact Jan Libbey, Conference Coordinator, at 641-495-6367; libland@frontiernet.net

### ♪ **Women's Winter Gathering Set for February 16 and 17, 2002**

This year's Women's Winter Gathering, will take place February 16 and 17. Nan Bonfils is currently looking for help confirming the site and rounding out the schedule. Please look for the "Little Red Hen" story on page 13 and then get in touch with Nan at 515-432-2389 or by email to FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com

### ♪ **PFI Farm Featured on IPTV**

Deb and Dave Hofmann, who hosted a PFI community day at their vermicomposting farm in Swisher, are pleased to announce that D&D Ranch will be featured on Iowa Public Television's *Living in Iowa*. The program is scheduled to air Dec 6 at 8 P.M., Dec 7 at 8:30 P.M., and again on Dec 11.

### ♪ **Upper Midwest Organic and Sustainable Resource Directory Available for Purchase**

Newly updated (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) and expanded, this forty page booklet identifies resources in seven states, including Iowa. The cost is \$5.00 each, for nine copies or less. To order contact MOSES, P.O. Box 339, N7834 County Road B, Spring Valley WI 54767. Ph. 715-772-3153 [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)

### ♪ **Opportunity for Organic Farmer**

For Rent – 40-50 acres of 120-acre farm in north Tama County, near Traer. Farm currently in third year transition to organic farming. One half of farm in alfalfa hay, or new seeding alfalfa, some clover. Rented land to be rotated with oats, hay,

and pastures managed as crop, seeding a mixture of grasses and legumes. Farming must be sustainable as well as organic. Contact Harold Wright, 1718 Clark Avenue, Ames, IA 50010-5345. Phone 515-232-3361.

### ♪ **James Frantzen Wins Humane Society Award for Online Column**

James Frantzen, 13, won recognition for his online column, *James' Journal*, which depicts life on a certified organic farm in New Hampton, Iowa. (See Notes and Notices, p.9 in PFI Winter newsletter, vol. 15, #4.) This is the second Annual Farm Animals Awareness Award from the Humane Society of the United States Midwest Regional Office. James is the son of Irene and Tom Frantzen, former PFI President.

### ♪ **Frances Zacharakis-Jutz Wins Multiple Awards for On-Farm Parasite Research**

Congratulations to Frances Zacharakis-Jutz, daughter of Jeff and Susan, PFI Vice President. Frances won two scholarships this fall for her ongoing research on treating parasites in organic livestock. One award, *The Herbert Hoover Uncommon Student Award*, came after competitive presentations. The other, the *Johnson County Farm Youth Scholarship*, recognized Frances' "active involvement in and significant contribution to a farm operation...including her research." (For more about Frances's work, see PFI Summer newsletter 2001, vol. 16, #2, page 15, On-farm Trial Results.)

### ♪ **Tim Abbas – Sharp Knives and Culinary Skills**

Tim Abbas, 19, son of PFI members Eve and Dennis Abbas, was still taking classes at chef's school in Mendota Heights, MN when he volunteered to help out in the kitchen for the Niman Ranch Farmer Appreciation Dinner in September. The annual dinner brought together the best local Iowa ingredients and a dozen chefs from as far

away as Chez Panisse in California. Tim, the rookie, made it a baker's dozen. Tim has since graduated and now works as a chef in Bloomington, MN. Congratulations to this young man who's literally followed food from the barnyard to the banquet table.

### ♪ **New Major Marketing Research Reports Available on Internet**

The *Specialty Cheese Market Report* presents an overview that attempts to uncover some of the opportunities and barriers. Ethnic and farmstead niches are also discussed in the report.

The second report, *Attracting Consumers with Locally Grown Products* summarizes the initial findings of a telephone survey of 500 Midwest households. The primary grocery shopper in the household was surveyed for attitudes and opinions on locally grown and produced food; organic and all-natural food and meat purchasing behaviors.

These reports can be downloaded as a Word or PDF file on the foodmarketing and processing (FoodMAP) clearinghouse website at <http://www.foodmap.unl.edu>. Or try North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability web site at <http://www.farmprofitability.org>. 🍷

## **HARVESTING THE BEST – PFI AUTUMN BANQUET**

Rick Hartmann

On Tuesday, October 30, 2001 at the Hotel Pattee in Perry, chefs, farmers and sustainable local food proponents gathered for *Harvesting the Best from Iowa's Farms and Chefs: An Autumn Banquet and Fundraiser*. The purpose was to raise money for PFI's service of providing freshly harvested fruits and vegetables and humanely raised meats for All-Iowa meals at hotels and conference centers in central Iowa. There are 27 members of the PFI Growers Network this year who supply farm products for the All-Iowa meal project.

The fundraiser brought together a diverse and appreciative audience of farmers, chefs, caterers and professionals. What a delight it was to have such a rich and varied group come together to eat and socialize! Discussion and reflection inevitably centered around the food. Chef David North of the Hotel Pattee was given the difficult task of creating a menu from the food donated by the Growers Network, rather than the other way around, as he might prefer. When the muse finally arrived, a four-course All-Iowa gourmet meal was born.

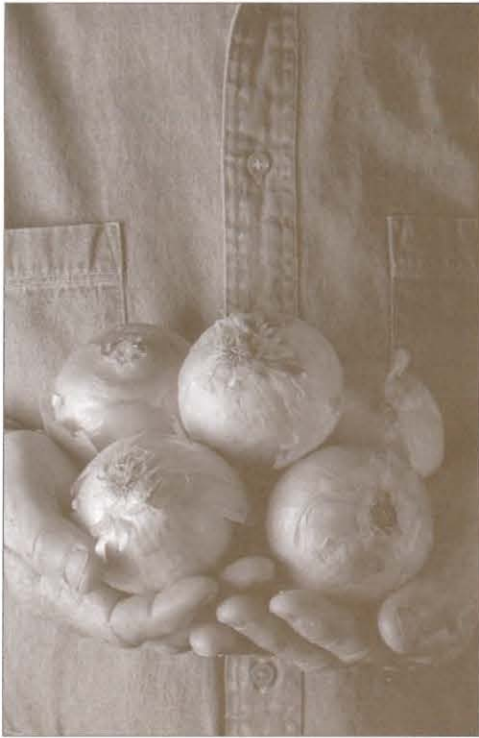
The meal was complete with wine from *Summerset Winery* in Indianola and organic fair trade coffee donated by our great neighborhood store in Ames, *Wheatsfield*.

After dinner there was entertainment by some of the farmers who had donated the food. I was prepared to give my public fiddling debut; however, my fiddle wasn't and guests were spared for at least one year. Ron and Maria Rosmann, who farm near Harlan, and Larry Cleverley, who farms near Mingo, proved to be accomplished singers and musicians. (See Sing Along with Rosmann's on p. 29.)

As dessert was served, Chef North and the guest chefs came to the banquet hall to eat with the participants and to speak about their experience with local food. Chef North has been at the hotel Pattee for about one year now and during that time has established himself as a local food advocate. Other chefs that came to help prepare the meal were Chef Steve Feig from the Hotel Fort Des

Butternut Squash Soup  
with Northern Prairie Chevre  
Asian Glazed Tofu with Winter Greens  
Stuffed Beef and Pork Roulade  
Garlic Mashed Potatoes  
with Roasted Parsnips and Carrots  
Apple Pie with Vanilla Ice Cream





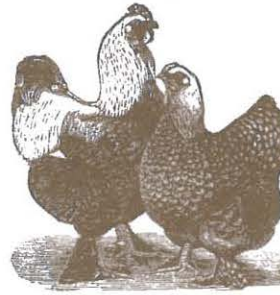
Moines, and Chefs Kurt Chausse and Joshua Clark of Aunt Maude's in Ames.

Don't worry if you missed this year's banquet. People had so much fun, there are already requests for organizing the second annual banquet. The All-Iowa meals will be continuing on into their fifth full season next spring. We are wrapping up our fourth season of sourcing these family farm products for All-Iowa meals and are on track to deliver food for nearly 50 events again this year. As this article winds its way to press, food is being sourced for the National Interpreters Convention at the State Fair Grounds and the Iowa Center for Agriculture Safety and Health at the West Des Moines Marriott Hotel. At these events, like all the ones we are involved with, the diners will not only sit down to a great meal, but also will learn about the growers of this local food. 🍷

***... our fourth season of sourcing these family farm products for All-Iowa meals and are on track to deliver food for nearly 50 events again this year.***

## **WOMEN'S WINTER GATHERING February 16 and 17, 2002**

Nan Bonfils



Sisters! Mark your calendar now for a winter escape on February 16 and 17, 2002 as plans are underway once again for the

Women's Winter

gathering. After two years of great meetings at Prairiewoods near Cedar Rapids, last year's participants suggested a more central or western location in hopes of drawing more PFI women in the western counties.

We are still looking for an appropriate site in western Iowa as well as a volunteer event coordinator. Anyone with a sound suggestion should get in touch with me right away. Meanwhile, I have penciled us in to gather at the 4-H Center near Madrid, IA for our overnight housing with a full Saturday at the adjacent Iowa Arboretum.

My tentative program/theme idea is "the Soup Kitchen" in which participants share ingredients and recipes to brew several winter soups at the Arboretum's wonderful kitchen. Everyone would take home more than a taste. This idea is in response to interest raised at last year's winter gathering about finding and utilizing local foods.

At this point I feel a bit like the proverbial Little Red Hen. I need to hear from PFI friends who want to gather the wheat, grind the flour and do the baking. Not literally. But really, who **will** help me figure out the program? Watch the budget? Collect the money? Design the flyer? Lick the envelopes? Plan the menu? Did someone say FOOD?

Chicks, let me hear from you at FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com. That's 515-432-2389. Thanks. 🍷

## 10 GOOD REASONS WHY YOU DIDN'T RENEW AND RETURN YOUR MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT FORM

Nancy Dundatscheck

- 1) The dog ate it! (Oh now, that's really original.)
- 2) The tractor (or combine) ate it! (There, now *that's* better.)
- 3) I spilled coffee on it. (We understand, we drink lots of the stuff.)
- 4) It's wedged in my car seat. (We'll take it in any condition.)
- 5) I lined my bird cage with it. (Well, *almost* any condition.)
- 6) It was cold that day and I ran out of firewood. (Value added?)
- 7) It was windy that day and it blew out of my hands. (Ah...mother nature.)
- 8) It's the postman's (or woman's) fault, not mine! (We'll send you a new one.)
- 9) Don't you know it's harvest time? (We'll take it when you're ready.)
- 10) I just plum *forgot*. (Don't worry, we *all* forget sometimes.)

Renew your membership now. You are important to us. Your unique knowledge and skills make our organization an outstanding one. And remember, a three year renewal entitles you to a PFI cap. Wear it with pride! Thanks so much for renewing—I know “the check's in the mail.” 🍷

**Please Note**  
**The correct email address for**  
**Nancy Dundatscheck,**  
**membership coordinator, is**  
**[ndundat@agrone.iastate.edu](mailto:ndundat@agrone.iastate.edu).**

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Editor's note:** The list was updated as the newsletter went to press. If you feel you have been overlooked, please contact Nancy Dundatscheck at [ndundat@agrone.iastate.edu](mailto:ndundat@agrone.iastate.edu) or 515-294-8512.

Congratulations and welcome to new members who have joined PFI since August 2001. You are in good company. If you are already a PFI member, check out this list for new folks in your neck of the woods.

### DISTRICT 1 Northwest IA

Mary Fintel, Paullina

Jean Matter, Lytton

Virginia Snip, Archer

### DISTRICT 2 North Central IA

Andrea Gronau, Ames

Erin Tegtmeier, Ames

Douglas and Jill Roberts, Garwin

Parker Forsell, Ames

Robert Guzenhauser, Huxley

Ivy Sievers, Tama

### DISTRICT 3 Northeast IA

Jeff and Kara Walberg, Mount Vernon

Leon Kruse, Fort Atkinson

John Koch, Marion

### DISTRICT 4 Southwest IA

Tom Drey, Council Bluffs

Courtney Nederhoff, Ankeny

Garth Frable & Teresa McMahon, Polk City

### DISTRICT 5 Southeast IA

Mark and Marguerite Fehseke, Iowa City

Eddie Broders, Stockton

Peter Hassler, Monticello

Tom and Margene Pierce, Grinnell

### DISTRICT 6 Outside Iowa

Russell Donithan, Rising Sun, IN 🍷



# PFI Online Directory

## TAP PFI'S NETWORK - ON THE NET

Rick Exner

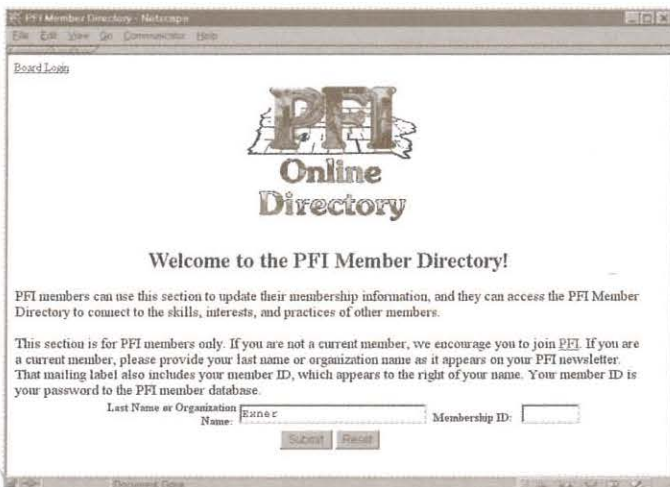
Ever wonder how to reconnect with that guy at the field day who's grazing ducks just like you? Or the woman at the district winter meeting you had such a good conversation with? PFI members are serious about sharing information, resources, and ideas. The Member Directory is one resource to move that sharing along. Another is the PFI Online Directory.

There's a link to the Online Directory right on the home page at [www.pfi.iastate.edu](http://www.pfi.iastate.edu). Click on the link, and you will find yourself at the wel-

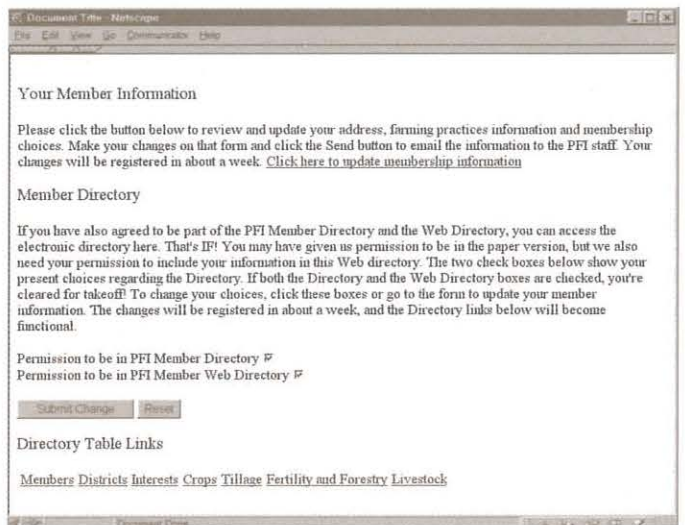
come page. That's where you tell us who you are. Remember, this is a service for *members*. Your admission ticket consists of your last name (or company name if that's how you joined) plus your member ID number, which appears on the mailing label of your PFI newsletter. Enter these two pieces of information, and you're into the member database.

However, if you previously granted PFI permission to include you in the Online Member Directory, then you will have more choices than members who have not done so. Right before you are two checkboxes showing whether you told us to include you in: 1) the (printed) Directory; and 2) the Online Directory. Maybe you put yourself in the PFI Directory but never got around to choosing the Online Directory. We don't just assume you want to be included in the PFI website, so you have to tell us.

Let's say you've come this far and find that one or both of your boxes aren't checked. You can simply click on the unchecked boxes on your screen, then click the button that says Submit Change. That will automatically send an email to PFI webmaster Rick Exner (yours truly), and I will promptly update your permissions.



The welcome screen for the online Member Directory. Type your last name and Member ID from your mailing label. (Make sure your Web browser isn't rejecting cookies, or you'll be unable to gain access.)



From this screen you can click to update your member information (top). The check boxes show whether you are part of the Directory. Click them to change your permissions. For members in the Directory, there are live links at the bottom of the screen to the tables of the Online Member Directory.



**the green “Membership Status Check” form ... is the electronic version of the Membership Agreement and Information Form.**

In the mean time you can update your membership information on-line by going to the top of the page and clicking on “update membership information.” You can do everything here except make the actual payment to renew membership. All your changes will be emailed directly to the PFI staff.

**Any PFI member can check and update their information online using the Membership Status Check form.**

OK, let's say you're part of the Online Directory now. At the bottom of the welcome screen are live links to various tables: *Members, Districts, Interests, Crops, Tillage, Fertility and Forestry, and Livestock*. So you click on, say, the *Members* link and find... an empty table. It's empty because we need to know if you want to download all 200-plus members listed. If so, just click on the Submit Query button and wait. If you'd like to narrow your search, select some combination of search criteria at the top of the screen, e.g., PFI District and Last Name. You can also choose whether the database finds records that match *either* criterion (District 5 or “Wilson”) or to select only records that satisfy *both* (or all) that you entered.

Last Name	First Name	Organization	PFI District	County	Town or City	State	Phone Number	Member Type
<u>Adick</u>	Dywan	Adick Brothers	Southeast	Johanson	Iowa City	IA	319-331-4168	associate
<u>Meads</u>	Jesse H.		Southeast	Johanson	Tiffin	IA	319-245-1520	voting
<u>Euland</u>	William		Southeast	Johanson	Iowa City	IA	319-339-4554 (h) 319-726-3909 (w)	voting
<u>Stuberlin</u>	Jeff and Sharon		Southeast	Johanson	Stam	IA	319-424-3052 (h) 319-377-6939 (c)	voting
<u>Shank</u>	Dan	Broadmoor Farms Ltd.	Southeast	Johanson	Fanfan	IA	319-846-3172 (h/w), 319-365-9361 (c)	voting
<u>Wahl</u>	De Carol	ICWPCD	Southeast	Johanson	Iowa City	IA	319-338-7400 (h) 319-337-2322 ext3	associate
<u>Hildago</u>	David and Debbie	P&D Farms	Southeast	Johanson	Stewart	IA	319-437-4471	associate
<u>Hilf</u>	Joanne	Joe Tim Crow Farm	Southeast	Johanson	Solon	IA	319-351-3020	voting

**Use the tables to search by the categories at the top of the screen.**

You'll notice that the members turning up in your search results have their last name or organization name underlined and highlighted in color. That's a link to all their Directory information. Click on the link and see what farm data, practices, and ideas each member is sharing through the Directory. *There's that duck grazer!*

PFI is a learning community, and your board and staff are keen to help this networking increase in richness and utility. The Online Directory encourages grassroots communications – the kind that don't need to go through a staff person or board member. We encourage all members to join the PFI On-Line Directory for this reason.

Take the opportunity to reach out to other people interested in sustainable agriculture. If you'd like to send us a snapshot or two of your family or farm, we'll even find a way to include them with your Directory listing. And please give us feedback. If there's something about the Directory that doesn't seem to work right, use the Webmaster link on the PFI home page to let us know how to improve the Online Member Directory. 🐾

**The Online Directory encourages grassroots communications – the kind that don't need to go through a staff person or board member.**





## COMMUNITY DAYS 2001 – FRIENDLY, PRACTICAL AND FUN

Nan Bonfils

I liked seeing ecosystem restoration as an active part of farm life.

Great – a chance to see something unique and clever.

I really enjoyed the open forum, hands-on experience.

I learned that agriculture in Iowa can mean more than just corn and soybeans.

Please keep these going...so many PFI members are doing neat things even though it may not be formal research.

I learned that people do care and are making efforts to farm sustainably and that it can be done!

These are the kinds of things folks are saying in response to PFI Community Days. As part of this pilot project, five PFI farms across the state hosted open farm events this summer and fall. The hosts were: Michael and Linda Nash (see page 2 of the summer newsletter vol, 16, #2); Deb and Dave Hofmann (see Notes and Notices p. 11); Colin, Carla, Dan, and Lorna Wilson; Don Adams and Nan Bonfils; Francis and Susan Thicke.

These community days developed as hybrid of a traditional field day combined with an open house. Although none of these farms featured heavy-duty field trials and research, there was plenty of innovation to showcase and stories to tell.

***These community days developed as hybrid of a traditional field day combined with an open house.***

***I learned that people do care and are making efforts to farm sustainably and that it can be done!***

Though no two community days were alike. Each one accomplished multiple purposes:

- to reach out to new people in each community and better acquaint them with PFI
- to give PFI members in each district another opportunity to get together
- to network with other like-minded organizations
- to showcase enthusiastic PFI members and let more folks see the fine work they are doing

Reactions from participants have been enthusiastic, attested to by a high return rate on evaluations and positive comments therein. The hosts are also glad they got involved in this experiment. (For further encouragement see Bits of Sustenance p. 30.)

Plans for 2002 are definitely simmering. Are you interested in being a host? Don't hesitate to get in touch with me at 515-432-2389 or [FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com](mailto:FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com) 🍷



**The Thai guys return! Summer interns enjoy a reunion at Full Circle Farm's Equinox Community Day.**



## NEW PROJECT TRACKS GRAZING EFFECTS ON MEAT AND MILK

Rick Exner

Thanks to the initiative of some PFI members and the RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) for Northeast Iowa, meat and milk may be a little healthier someday. It has been known for some time that grazing ruminants have high levels of a beneficial chemical, conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA. These benefits, which are thought to extend to the consumers of meat and milk from these animals include anti-cancer activity and protection against heart disease.

However, no one knows how to maximize CLA in products that go to the consumer. Now, thanks to a grant from the USDA SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) program, producers and scientists will spend two years getting at the question. The initiative came from PFI members Dan and Bonnie Beard, Greg and Kathy Koether, Dan Specht, and Jeff Klinge and Deb Tidwell and from the CROPP organic marketing co-op. RC&D staffperson Andy Johnson wrote the grant proposal to SARE. ISU animal scientists Allen Trenkle and Donald Beitz are coordinating the analytical work.

CLA is a form of linoleic acid, a common fatty acid. Studies have shown it can be 3-5-times higher in the meat of animals grazing new forage than in

**Participants hope to pinpoint practices that allow producers to increase and maintain this healthy factor, further enhancing the value of grazing in the marketplace.**

animals fed grain or even hay. Three dozen producers in Iowa and Wisconsin will keep feed and management records on grazing or confined stock, and milk and meat samples will be tested to track the relationship between CLA and differences in management and season. Participants hope to pinpoint practices that allow producers to increase and maintain this healthy factor, further enhancing the value of grazing in the marketplace. 🍷



**(Editor's note: Our Information Age has given us more reading material than we know what to do with. The PFI offices receive dozens of newsletters, which staff attempts to keep up with. Why? Because many provide info and insights hard to get any other way. In case you don't have enough to read, we will occasionally review some of the publications that come across our desks.)**

## “Romance vs. Reality: Hard Lessons Learned in a Grassfed Beef Marketing Cooperative”

Rick Exner

The Information Overload column runs occasionally, as I find time to review newsletters you may find useful. I'd been meaning to eventually report on one of my favorites, *Rural Papers*, published by the Kansas Rural Center. I usually love the “Small Farmer Commentary” column, and the



**Greg Koether, left, Dan Specht and Jeff Klinge describes the CLA study and plans for a northeast Iowa custom packing plant at the Sept. 21 field day.**



newsletter is full of the doings of a committed group of farmers and advocates who have been at it for more than 20 years.

I was going to review it... some time. Then I picked up the October, 2001 copy off the pile and found myself looking at the final chapter of a story I remembered well. If you attended the January, 1997 PFI winter meeting, you may recall this story too.

We invited to the meeting two representatives of the Tallgrass Prairie Producers Co-op, a fledgling effort by Kansas ranchers to market sustainable beef production. One of those representatives was rancher Annie Wilson. At the time she described how the product was handled and the development of markets. She told the story they wanted consumers to hear about a lean, clean meat raised by family ranchers. And she talked about the cooperation necessary within her group to make it all happen. It was an inspiring message – producers taking matters into their own hands and reaching out to the consumer.

Now, in the latest *Rural Papers*, is a detailed post mortem by Annie Wilson explaining why the co-op closed its doors. The article is unsparing in its analysis of mistakes made and barriers faced. Notably, though, Wilson reports that cluster members “will always be friends.” Given the stresses they evidently went through, this is an achievement in itself.

Wilson writes that profitability depends on three elements:

“Professional management of operations and marketing to establish and manage legal, safe operations, to penetrate the market and to navigate the complex food distribution system... to allow producers to do what they know how to do.” Tallgrass Co-op members tried to do most of the management themselves to save money.

“A successful business needs access to volume markets to reach breakeven... you must practice honest accounting for personal time, and

***Wilson now regrets the co-op did not start by developing a business plan and hiring an experienced manager.***

you must reach a volume that covers these true overheads.”

“Cost-effective operations are necessary to realistically price your product and reach the volume needed to be profitable.”

The co-op was short of – or didn’t plan for – the volume of production and capital investment necessary to succeed in these three areas. Wilson now regrets the co-op did not start by developing a business plan and hiring an experienced manager.

Annie Wilson recognizes that the co-op was idealistic, as were many well-meaning supporters. “We know of many other similar operations that are not yet profitable, but are nonetheless presented as successful models in marketing. This misrepresentation is not only unrealistic but also possibly harmful...” Wilson also describes her frustrations defining grass-fed beef in a world of pill-oriented health food stores and consumers looking for marbled meat.

The article seems fairly objective, given that the co-op’s demise must have been a major disappointment for members. Annie Wilson still believes in grass-fed beef and connecting producers and consumers, but she wants to be clear about the challenges.

You can read the full text of her article, *Romance vs. Reality: Hard Lessons Learned in a Grassfed Beef Marketing Cooperative*, at <http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/>, and you can subscribe to the *Rural Papers* newsletter by sending \$25 to Kansas Rural Center, 304 Pratt St., Whiting, KS, 66552. 🍷

### 2001 Summer Field Days Out and About - II



Colin Wilson describes deep-bedded farrowing and finishing at the Sept. 6 field day.



Here's how it's done folks. Don Adams lashes up logs as Nan Bonfils describes their firewood business.



The goat never missed a cue (with some help), explaining sustainability at the Zacharakis-Jutz field day.



Humor at the Mugge field day, held in cooperation with the Organic Crop Improvement Association.



Dieter Geest and his parents Katy and Ed, sell pork and sausage from this trailer at the Davenport farmers' market.



Forestry professor Dick Schultz brought a rainfall simulator to the Lubben field day to discuss management of riparian areas.



# PFI 2000 ON-FARM TRIAL RESULTS – IV

(Editor's note: This is the fourth and final report of PFI on-farm research results from the year 2000. Soil is fundamental to agriculture, and the soil's ability to support crops is strongly affected by its fertility. Here, in one stiff dose, are most of the fertility trials carried out by cooperators in 2000. They start with nitrogen, move to the miscellaneous and manure, and conclude with a study asking just what we mean when we say "soil fertility." Finally a little unfinished business with seeding trials from last year. But stay tuned because the 2001 sequel to these stories is no further than the January 19 Winter Workshops.)

## Nitrogen

Weather affected field research in many ways in 2000; for example, the two nitrogen management trials shown in Table 1. Northeast Iowa farmers John and Joan Lubke, Ridgeway, are part of PFI's collaboration with the Iowa Farm Bureau. They expected a yield response to the 66 lbs N sidedressing they applied to corn. After all, the 9 ppm (parts per million) nitrate-N that they got from the late spring soil nitrate test suggested the crop was definitely in need of additional nitrogen. But the

weather stepped in, in the form of a hail storm. The damaged crop could not make full use of additional nutrients, and yields barely broke 100 bushels.

At the other end of the state, Darwin McGhee carried out an N rate comparison with his students at River Valley High School, in Correctionville (Table 1). The river bottom field they chose yielded better crops than many in the area, but moisture was the limiting factor for production. Additionally,

## Reading Numbers, Knowing Terms

When you see the outcome of a PFI trial, you also see a statistical indication of the strength of the difference observed. The following information should help you to understand the reports of the trials contained in this report. The symbol "\*\*\*" shows that there was a "statistically significant" difference between treatments; that is, one that likely did not occur just by chance. We require ourselves to be 95% sure before we declare a significant difference. If instead of a "\*\*\*" there is a "N.S.," you know the difference was "not significant" at the 95 percent confidence level.

**Comparing Two Practices** Many on-farm trials are of a straightforward "A versus B" type. These trials, which are easy to design and analyze, correspond to the typical experimental question "Is alternative 'B' better than, worse than, or the same as my customary practice 'A'?" This approach can be used to evaluate individual practices or whole systems of practices.

There is a handy "yardstick" called the "LSD," or "least significant difference," that can be used in a trial with only two practices or treatments. If the difference between the two treatments is greater than the LSD, then the difference is

significant. You will see in the tables that when the difference between two practices is, for example, 5 bushels (or minus 5 bushels, depending on the arithmetic), and the LSD is only, say, 3 bushels, then there is a "\*\*\*" indicating a significant difference.

**Multiple Treatment Trials** The LSD doesn't work well in trials with more than two treatments. In those cases, letters are added to show whether treatments are statistically different from each other. (We usually use a statistical test called a multiple range grouping.) The highest yield or weed count in a trial will have a letter "a" beside it. A number with a "b" next to it is significantly different from one with an "a," but neither is statistically different from a result bearing an "ab." A third treatment might produce a number with a "c" (or it might not), and so on.

**Economics** Average 2000 statewide prices for inputs were assumed in calculating the economics of these trials. Average fixed and variable costs and time requirements were also used. These can vary greatly from farm to farm, of course. The calculations use 2000 prices of \$1.35 per bushel for corn, \$4.25 for soybeans, and \$1.15 for oats, and \$77 per ton for grass-



**Table 1. Two-Treatment Nitrogen Rate Trials in Corn**

COOPERATOR	LOW RATE TRT			HIGH RATE TRT			RATE DIFF.	LSNT (ppm)
	YIELD (bu)	N RATE (lbs N)	STALK NO <sub>3</sub> -N	YIELD (bu)	N RATE (lbs)	STALK NO <sub>3</sub> -N		
(AFTER SOYBEAN)								
LUBKE	107.0	77		107.4	143		66	9
RIVER VALLEY HS	156.3	0		154.3	60		60	15

the sidedressing was carried out late, with high-clearance equipment, and in the dry soil, the added nitrogen may not have made its way to the roots in time to benefit the crop.

***corn after berseem yielded 4.5 bushels better than corn following oats alone***

Several cooperators in the PFI network have taken part in a project co-sponsored by the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute that examines the effects of small grains in the crop rotation. Wayne and Ruth Fredericks, Osage, carried out a trial in 1999, comparing oats with a berseem clover underseeding to oats alone. In 2000, Wayne grew corn on those plots (Table 2). The late spring soil nitrate test showed no greater available soil N where berseem had grown, and so Wayne did not take stalk nitrate tests at the end of the season. However, corn after berseem yielded 4.5 bushels better than corn following oats alone. Was this because of a late-season release of nitrogen from the clover residue? Maybe, but it also could have been that undefined “rotation effect.” Michael Fields Institute researchers have observed healthier corn roots with longer crop rotations, and they hope to work with PFI producers to better understand these rotation effects. The Dordt College Agricultural Stewardship Center, Sioux Center, set the stage for a rotation effect study in 2001. The red clover they seeded with oats did nothing to hold back the excellent small grain harvest (Table 5, page 28). While the clover seed cost made the practice look like a loser in

2000, the tilth and fertility benefits would be enjoyed by future crops.

Here is a riddle. The late spring soil nitrate test (LSNT) moves away from the idea of an “average field” benchmark for corn nitrogen management. More than 70 replicated PFI trials have successfully used the LSNT to manage N more profitably. But what if your field doesn’t fit with the average of those PFI fields? Then you have to get your own answers, and it can be a lonely business. Dennis and Kate McLaughlin, Cumming, carried out three years of trials to find the best way to use anhydrous ammonia nitrogen in their system (Table 2 and Figure 1). Unlike most other research cooperators, they have not had convincing success with the LSNT. Dennis writes:

***“I started out wanting to know if all-sidedress could compete with preplant-only or split applications of anhydrous ammonia.”***

“I started out wanting to know if all-sidedress could compete with preplant-only or split applications of anhydrous ammonia. Two of three years all-preplant gave me a 10-bushel yield advantage. That was a surprise. But I also learned that the late spring nitrate test following spring-applied anhydrous does not work for me.”

For three years, McLaughlin compared a 140-lb preplant application to a split application of 70-70.



## Two-Treatment Nitrogen Rate Trials in Corn

STALK N SIG.	YIELD DIFF.	YLD SIG.	YLD LSD	LOW RATE \$ BENEFIT	GAL. DIESEL EQUIV.	COMMENT
	-0.4	N.S.	3.4	\$14.14	15.7	HAIL REDUCED YIELD & N RESPONSE
	2.0	N.S.	32.9	\$15.08	14.3	DROUGHT CONTRIBUTED TO YIELD VARIABILITY



Diversified cropping on the McLaughlin farm.

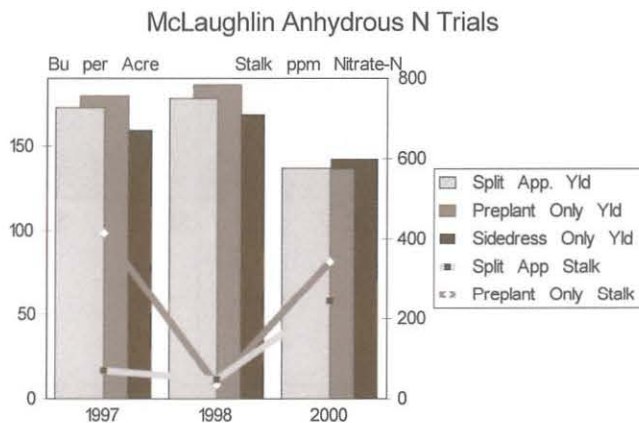
Without access to a high-tech anhydrous regulator, adjusting rates has been a challenge, but by now Dennis feels he has the procedures mastered. Then in 2000, the “rock in the fan” was “green snap in

July followed by severe stalk rot. . . I’m not surprised that there was no significant yield difference.”

Figure 2 shows yields for the three years of the trial. (The sidedress-only treatment was not fully replicated but was included as a demonstration.) Preplant-only anhydrous applications haven’t hurt yields; in fact that treatment yielded significantly more in 1997 and 1998. Does that mean it’s a better treatment? Dennis thinks so. He has considered many theories why the split application may not be working right. (Yes, the knives were sealing. No, there weren’t more weeds to steal the sidedressed N.)

The other issue in Dennis’ mind is the use of the late spring soil nitrate test after anhydrous applications. In his trials, the LSNT has indicated adequate nitrogen after preplant-only applications and nearly-adequate N in split-application plots even before sidedressing. Yet, as the figure shows, fall stalk nitrate levels have been in the marginal (less than 700 ppm) and low (less than 250 ppm) ranges. This suggests that yields for both treatments may have been limited by N shortfalls. Whether or not Dennis changes his fertilization practices in the future, he feels that, in his system at least, the LSNT has not provided information to help him adjust anhydrous ammonia nitrogen management.

### Split N Application vs. Preplant-Only



Trend: adequate LSNT followed by low stalk nitrate in both trts.

Fig. 1. Yields and fall stalk nitrate with three kinds of anhydrous management.

**Table 2. Other Fertility Trials**

COOPERATOR	CROP	TREATMENT "A"			TREATMENT "B"
		DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	DESCRIPTION
FREDERICKS	CORN	OATS, BERSEEM PREVIOUS	154.9	\$31.75	OATS ONLY PREVIOUS
MCLAUGHLIN	CORN	SPLIT APP 70/70	136.9	\$29.80	PREPLANT 140 LBS
MADSEN	SOY-BEANS	COMPOSTED HOOP MANURE	45.1	\$6.12	NONE
STRUTHERS	CORN	SPRING HOOPHOUSE MANURE	138.9	\$20.68	NO MANURE
WILSON	CORN	COMPOSTED HOOP MANURE	135.6	\$29.21	NO COMPOST

### Manure and Compost

In the last five years, swine hoophouses have sprung up all over the state. Those deep-bedded systems use a tremendous amount of crop residue. When the hoophouse is cleaned out, the mixture of

bedding and manure contains a great deal of carbon compared to nitrogen. If the material is applied directly to the field, that carbon can temporarily tie up nitrogen, competing with crops for that nutrient. Composting reduces the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio, but composting is time consuming. What is the

**Table 3. Multiple Treatment Fertilizer and Manure Trials**

COOPERATOR	CROP	PREVIOUS CROP	YIELD SIGNIFICANCE	TREATMENT "A"				
				DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu. or T)	STAT.	TRT COSTS	\$ BENEFIT
VALVICK	CORN	SOYBEANS	*	3-18-18 STARTER (3+3+16 LBS/ACRE)	157.6	a	\$18.00	-\$6.42
WILCOX	CORN	SOYBEAN	*	T22 SEED TRT	108.6	b	\$21.29	\$0.00
FRANTZEN	CORN	SOYBEANS	*	FALL-APPLIED HOOP COMPOST	116.1	a	\$6.12	\$15.17
FREDERICKS	CORN	SOYBEANS	N.S.	FRESH HOOPHOUSE MANURE, FALL-APPLIED	145.3	a	\$66.09	\$0.00
MUGGE	CORN	OATS	N.S.	FRESH HOOPHOUSE MANURE, FALL-APPLIED	116.2	a	\$6.12	\$0.00



**Other Fertility Trials**

TRT "B"		DIFFERENCE				COMMENT
YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	YIELD DIFF.	YLD LSD (bu.)	YLD SIG.	\$ BENEFIT OF TRT "A"	
150.3	\$0.00	4.5	2.7	*	-\$25.62	NO DIFFERENCE IN LSNT IN FOLLOWING CORN
136.4	\$23.44	0.5	7.6	N.S.	-\$6.36	DEMO OF 140 LBS N ALL-SIDEDRESS YIELDED 142 BU/ACRE
44.8	\$0.00	0.3	0.7	N.S.	-\$6.12	
118.8	\$14.56	20.1	10.9	*	\$19.39	BOTH TRTS RECD. 80 LBS N SIDEDRESS
128.2	\$23.09	7.4	5.3	*	\$3.88	BOTH TRTS RECD. 90 LBS N PREPLANT

most practical means of handling the material coming out of the hoopouses?

PFI is participating in a study to find answers. ISU scientists Cindy Cambardella, Matt Liebman, and Tom Richard have a grant from the Leopold

Center, and their research includes on-farm collaboration. Six PFI cooperators took part in the study in 2000 (Tables 2 and 3). Vic and Cindy Madsen, Audubon, saw no yield benefit from applying composted hoop manure to soybeans. Dave and Becky Struthers, Collins, spring-applied hoopouse

**Multiple Treatment Variety and Planting Trials**

TREATMENT "B"					TREATMENT "C"					OVERALL COMMENTS
DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu. or T)	STAT.	TRT COSTS	\$ BENEFIT	DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu. or T)	STAT.	TRT COSTS	\$ BENEFIT	
10-34-0 STARTER (9+30+0 LBS/A)	156.9	a	\$9.00	\$2.58	CONTROL - NO STARTER	148.7	b	\$0.00	\$0.00	
STARTER	120.2	a	\$35.76	-\$0.46	CONTROL - NO STARTER OR SEED TRT	117.7	a	\$19.29	\$16.02	STARTER TRT LEAF TISSUE HIGHER IN MANGANESE
SPRING-APPLIED HOOP COMPOST	116.6	a	\$6.12	\$15.17	CONTROL	100.6	b	\$0.00	\$0.00	
COMPOSTED HOOPHOUSE MANURE, FALL-APPLIED	148.1	a	\$66.09	\$0.00	CHECK	144.3	a	\$59.98	\$6.12	ALL TRTS RECEIVED 135+17+150 PURCHASED FERTILIZER
COMPOSTED HOOPHOUSE MANURE, FALL-APPLIED	111.2	a	\$6.12	\$0.00	CONTROL	104.1	a	\$0.00	\$6.12	NO DIFF IN LSNT OR GRASS, BUT CHECK TRT STALK QUALITY BETTER



**In the foreground, a thermometer probe in a composting windrow of hoophouse manure and bedding. In the background, Wayne and Ruth Fredericks' field day.**

manure/bedding and produced a significant yield increase in corn. Dave noticed some unevenness in the stand with manure, but it didn't keep the crop from enjoying a "strong benefit." Colin and Carla Wilson and Dan and Lorna Wilson, Paullina, achieved a significant corn yield increase by applying composted hoophouse manure. Both Struthers and Wilson applied additional N to the crop that

should have satisfied most of its nitrogen requirement.

Tom and Irene Frantzen, Alta Vista, compared a fall and a spring application of composted hoophouse manure (Table 3). Both treatments yielded significantly better than the control treatment, which received no compost or fertilizer. Wayne and Ruth Fredericks, Osage, fall-applied fresh and composted hoophouse manure. Both those treatments and a check treatment also received 135+17+150 lbs per acre of purchased fertilizer nutrients the following spring. They saw no difference in corn yields among these three treatments. Paul and Karen Mugge, Sutherland, carried out the same trial, and they also saw no yield differences. Paul did observe that the stalk quality appeared better in the control treatment. As this study continues, the ISU researchers intend to combine the on-farm data with results from a university experiment farm in order to determine the best ways to use hoophouse manure. They will also work with cooperators to develop a more precise picture of handling and composting labor

**Table 4. Fertility Paradigm Trials**

COOPERATOR	CROP	TRT."A", RATIO FERTILITY			SUFFICIENCY TRT.
		DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	DESCRIPTION
ABBAS	SOYBEANS	POTASSIUM SULFATE, ROCK PHOSPHATE, ZINC	32.2	\$44.79	POTASSIUM SULFATE, ROCK PHOSPHATE
ARMSTRONG	SOYBEANS	CALCITIC LIME	37.0	\$75.38	DOLOMITIC LIME
BOKELMAN	CORN	11-52-0, CALCITIC LIME, ZINC	96.1	\$85.71	11-52-0, DOLOMITIC LIME
BRUNER	SOYBEANS	18-46-0, ZINC	56.1	\$15.64	18-46-0, DOLOMITIC LIME
HESTAD	SOYBEANS	0-0-60, 11-52-0, ZINC	53.1	\$28.81	0-0-60, 11-52-0
LUBBEN	CORN	GYPSUM	154.0	\$19.00	NO AMENDMENTS
MUGGE	SOYBEANS	GYPSUM	51.4	\$19.00	DOLOMITIC LIME
NEW MELLEREAY	SOYBEANS	POTASSIUM SULFATE, ZINC	60.4	\$21.33	NO AMENDMENTS
		AVERAGE CORN:	125.0		
		AVERAGE SOYBEANS:	48.4		



requirements, so in future PFI reports the manure and compost will show different costs.

### Starter Fertilizer

What's in a starter fertilizer? Preferences about starters can be almost as strong as preferences about tractor color. Arlyn and Annette Valvick, Swea City, are part of PFI's collaboration with the Iowa Farm Bureau. That program pairs producers with local agribusinesses for on-farm research. Arlyn and Byron Adams, of Crop Production Services Inc., agreed on a comparison of two starters, 10-34-0 and a 3-18-18 that Arlyn describes as food grade. Of course they included a check treatment that received no starter at all.

As Table 3 shows the corn crop did respond to starter fertilizer. On the other hand, there was no difference in yield between the two formulations. On that basis, the cheaper product, 10-34-0, was the only one whose yield benefit exceeded its cost.

### Fertility Paradigms

Sometimes it's not *what* you fertilize with but *how* you fertilize that's important. With funding from the USDA SARE program, PFI has been comparing two competing philosophies, or *paradigms*, of fertility. One approach is to look at a soil test and ask "Is there *enough* available nutrients?" This could be termed the "sufficiency" tack. The other approach asks "Are the nutrients available in the right *proportions*?" This orientation looks at the ratio of nutrients on the soil cation exchange, so it could be called a *ratio* methodology.

Six cooperators and two ISU farms are hosting side-by-side comparisons of the ratio and sufficiency approaches to fertilization. In 2000, the second

**Six cooperators and two ISU farms are hosting side-by-side comparisons of the ratio and sufficiency approaches to fertilization.**

**Fertility Paradigm Trials**

SUFFICIENCY		DIFFERENCE				COMMENT
YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	YIELD DIFF.	YLD LSD (bu.)	YLD SIG.	\$ BENEFIT OF TRT "A"	
30.3	\$67.37	1.9	2.3	N.S.	\$22.58	FIRST YEAR OF TRIAL
36.7	\$54.77	0.3	1.7	N.S.	-\$20.61	-\$38.54 IN 1999
100.0	\$66.74	-3.9	2.7	*	-\$24.20	FIRST YEAR OF TRIAL
56.4	\$22.16	-0.3	4.3	N.S.	\$6.52	-\$10.67 IN 1999
52.8	\$28.06	0.4	1.5	N.S.	-\$0.75	FIRST YEAR OF TRIAL
148.4	\$0.00	5.6	1.8	*	-\$17.79	-\$49.62 IN 1999
50.9	\$20.38	0.5	1.8	N.S.	\$1.38	-\$48.07 IN 1999
58.1	\$0.00	2.3	4.6	N.S.	-\$21.33	-\$3.45 IN 1999
125.0					-\$21.00	
48.4					-\$2.04	



**Dennis and Eve Abbas are part of the fertility paradigm study.**

year of the study, some farms were in their second year and some were new. Table 4 summarizes yields and input costs. Whereas in 1999, there were no significant yield differences, 2000 produced two – one in favor of the ratio approach and one in which the sufficiency treatment yielded more. The table also shows treatment costs.

With assistance from the National Soil Tilth Lab, soil samples are being analyzed for changes in organic matter and microbial biomass. Leaf tissue and grain are being analyzed for nutrient content and feed quality. With SARE approval of a third and final year, this study continued into 2001.

## Seeding Trials

Of course, the big advantage of open-pollinated corn is that you can save and replant the seed. But for how long? In 2000, Dan Specht compared seed grown in 1999 to seed from the 1997 season. The untreated seed had been stored in a grain wagon covered by a tarp. Dan points out that stands were poor in both treatments of the trial due to spring conditions and planter settings. The stand variability probably contributed to the high LSD of 13.2 bushels per acre. Compared to that, the 7.7 bushel yield difference was not statistically significant. More years and trial locations will be needed to answer the storage question, but these results are encouraging.

**No difference in yields resulted. The planter is a bit cheaper to run than the drill.**

To drill or not to drill. That is the question that won't stay answered. Dave and Lisa Lubben, Monticello, asked it in 2000, comparing drilled soybeans in 7½-inch rows to 30-inch rows. Both treatments were no-till (Table 5). No difference in yields resulted. The planter is a bit cheaper to run than the drill. David would also appreciate the convenience of less equipment. Does one year's data answer the question? Doubtful.

**Table 5. Seeding and Weeding Trials**

COOPERATOR	CROP	TREATMENT "A"			TREATMENT "B"
		DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	DESCRIPTION
DORDT COLLEGE	OATS	OATS+RED CLOVER	113.2	\$17.19	OATS ALONE
LUBBEN	SOYBEANS	NO-TILL DRILLED	43.8	\$38.80	NO-TILL 30" ROWS
SPECHT	OP CORN (NOKOMIS)	1999 SEED	112.3		1997 SEED



**♪ Sing Along with the Rosmann's**

**Editor's note: This song, composed by Maria Rosmann in her kitchen, we're told, was performed by the lyricist and her husband, Ron, at the PFI Autumn Banquet and Fundraiser at the Hotel Pattee in October (see p. 12). You can sing along in your own kitchen to the tune of *I'd Like to Teach the World To Sing*.**

I'd like to teach this state to eat  
More locally grown fare  
More apples, beets and onions too  
Consider it a dare

This concept's great we've proved that right  
We raise what's very fine  
For chefs to use and chop and dice  
So customers can dine

It's the real thing  
What we have here  
IOWA grown food  
What we all hold dear

Lots of folks have tried our food  
They say it is so great  
Just ask Vilsack he cleaned his plate  
Gave him a friendly mood

Don't you love that PFI  
Dedication's a must  
Hartmann and Huber they work so hard  
So clients will not fuss

It's the real thing  
What we have here  
Iowa grown food  
What we all hold dear

It's neat to see there's foods out there  
That have great taste and more  
You are supporting family farms  
You're opening a door

It's the real thing  
What we have here  
Iowa grown food  
What we all hold dear

Now don't you fret this is the last  
Of our participation here  
We're glad you joined us here tonight  
The fellowship was clear

It's the real thing...



**Seeding and Weeding Trials**

TRT "B"		DIFFERENCE				COMMENT
YIELD (bu.)	TREATMENT COST	YIELD DIFF.	YLD LSD (bu.)	YLD SIG.	\$ BENEFIT OF TRT "A"	
111.9	\$7.05	1.3	3.3	N.S.	-\$10.14	MORE FALL GROUND COVER, NO REDUCTION IN OAT YIELD FROM CLOVER
44.1	\$30.23	-0.3	0.5	N.S.	-\$8.58	BOTH TREATMENTS WERE NO-TILL
104.6		7.7	13.2	N.S.		LOW STANDS IN BOTH TREATMENTS



## BITS OF SUSTENANCE

The Bits of Sustenance pages are a place where PFI members can share their writing – stories, poems, letters, book reviews, experiences. Hopefully, Bits of Sustenance will give every reader something to ponder.

## TAKE IT ALL THE WAY IT IS

Nan Bonfils, Madrid

Last spring, another farm wife asked me, “So, are you all set for your field day?”

I presumed she was joking; it was four months away. “No, but we will be,” I laughed, barely looking at her.

“Are you painting?”

I whirled on her incredulously. “Painting?! As in the house?”

“Well, some do you know.”

“I’ll be lucky to have the porch swept, let alone the house painted. People will have to take it all the way it is.”

And so they did. As the weeks ticked down to September 22, the TO DO list seemed to get longer. I have to testify that nothing was added that hadn’t been on the procrastinator’s deluxe list for quite some time. In other words, we didn’t do anything for the community day that hadn’t been on our list of good intentions for at least a year. The real source of the seemingly perpetual increase was that my husband, Don, had his own *secret* TO DO list whereas mine (ours, I had thought) was posted on the refrigerator and had been all summer.

Actually, getting ready for hosting a field day is a bit like inviting over your in-laws. You get this itch to tidy up just a bit, mumbling the whole time that you don’t really care what *they* think. In our case, the community day did coincide with a visit from the in-laws – Don’s. Many thanks to my dear

mum who putzzed around on odd jobs and errands for days before the gathering.

Weather is always a wild card. On September 22, an hour before our published start time, the wind was whipping so vigorously I couldn’t lash cloths to picnic tables. The work detail had all disappeared down the road somewhere, indulging in my mum’s grilled cheese sandwiches. It was their absence of counsel that prevented a decision to move to our rain site at Ledges State Park.

The guests started rolling in as I was rolling out to pick up the salsa from our neighbor, Camp Hantesa. By the time I got back, I was glad I had a reserved parking spot. There were lots of folks! Immediately I encountered people I hadn’t expected to see, every one of them an instant volunteer, pressed into service.

As the event officially started the wind abated and a warm sun provoked de-layering. I realized that Don had grabbed a moment somewhere to slip into clean clothes, and there I was reading poetry to seventy-five or so people still in my morning grubs. “They will just have to take it all the way it is.” I thought.

And so they did. Now when we are fatigued or disheartened, we reflect on the abundant appreciative comments that came back to us in response to the community day – a veritable flood of good karma. A favorite is the handwritten thank you note mailed to exactly the right place – Full Circle Farm, 1579 P Avenue, Madrid. Alas, no zip code and no IA. This note reached us one month after the day it was mailed, the envelope covered with Spanish stamps and notices. It went to Spain, of course, but its loving content came home, full circle.

Don and I wish to thank everyone who attended our community day for taking us just the way we are. You made it a golden afternoon.

Thinking of hosting next summer? Take heart. You don’t have to paint. 🍷



### STAY CONNECTED WITH STAFF

We're running this text as a reminder of who's who and how to find them. Most of this information also appears, albeit in small print, on the back of every newsletter. You can find contact information for PFI board members there too.

PFI has two offices. **Robert Karp**, Executive Director, works at 300 Main Street, Ames, Iowa, 50010. You can reach him at **515-233-3622**; rkarp@isunet.net

The Food Systems Program office is also located at the Main Street address above. You will reach **Rick Hartmann** and **Gary Huber** there. Call Rick Hartmann at 515-232-5661; rick@isunet.net. This is also the office phone for **Stacey Brown**. Her email is neha\_stacey@hotmail.com

Gary's phone is 515-232-5649; fff@isunet.net You can also leave a message for **Shelly Gradwell** at Gary's number. Shelly's email is shellyg@iastate.edu.

On-farm research and membership services operate out of 2104 Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, IA 50011. That's the mailing address to use for **Rick Exner**, Farming Systems Coordinator. His phone is 515-294-5486; dnexner@iastate.edu

**Nancy Dundatscheck** coordinates membership services from the same campus address above. Call Nancy at 515-294-8512. Unfortunately, an incorrect email address was printed in both our summer newsletter and the fall membership renewal letter. We apologize for the confusion. The correct email address is **ndundat@agron.iastate.edu**

You can reach **Nan Bonfils** at 515-432-2389 or FullCircleFarm@opencominc.com.



### PFI Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ new membership  
 \_\_\_\_\_ renewal

Do you derive a significant part of your income directly from farming in Iowa?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Individual or family membership: \$25 for one year, \$75 for three years plus a PFI cap.

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

**Practical Farmers of Iowa  
 2035 190<sup>th</sup> St.  
 Boone, IA 50036-7423**

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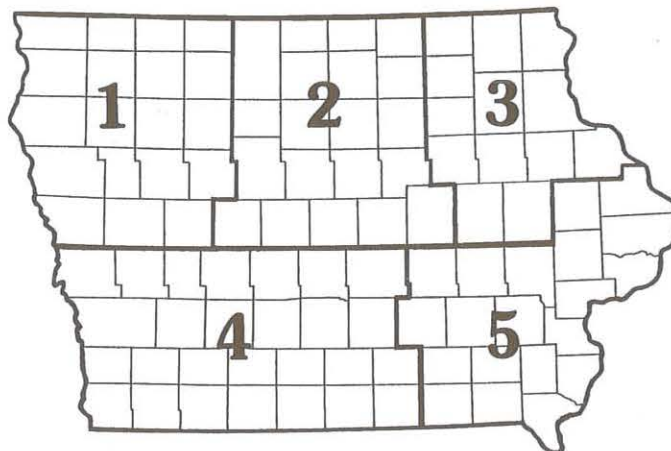
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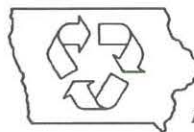
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#### Acknowledgment:

*The Practical Farmer* and the PFI on-farm demonstrations are supported, in part, by Iowa State University Cooperative Extension, and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.



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