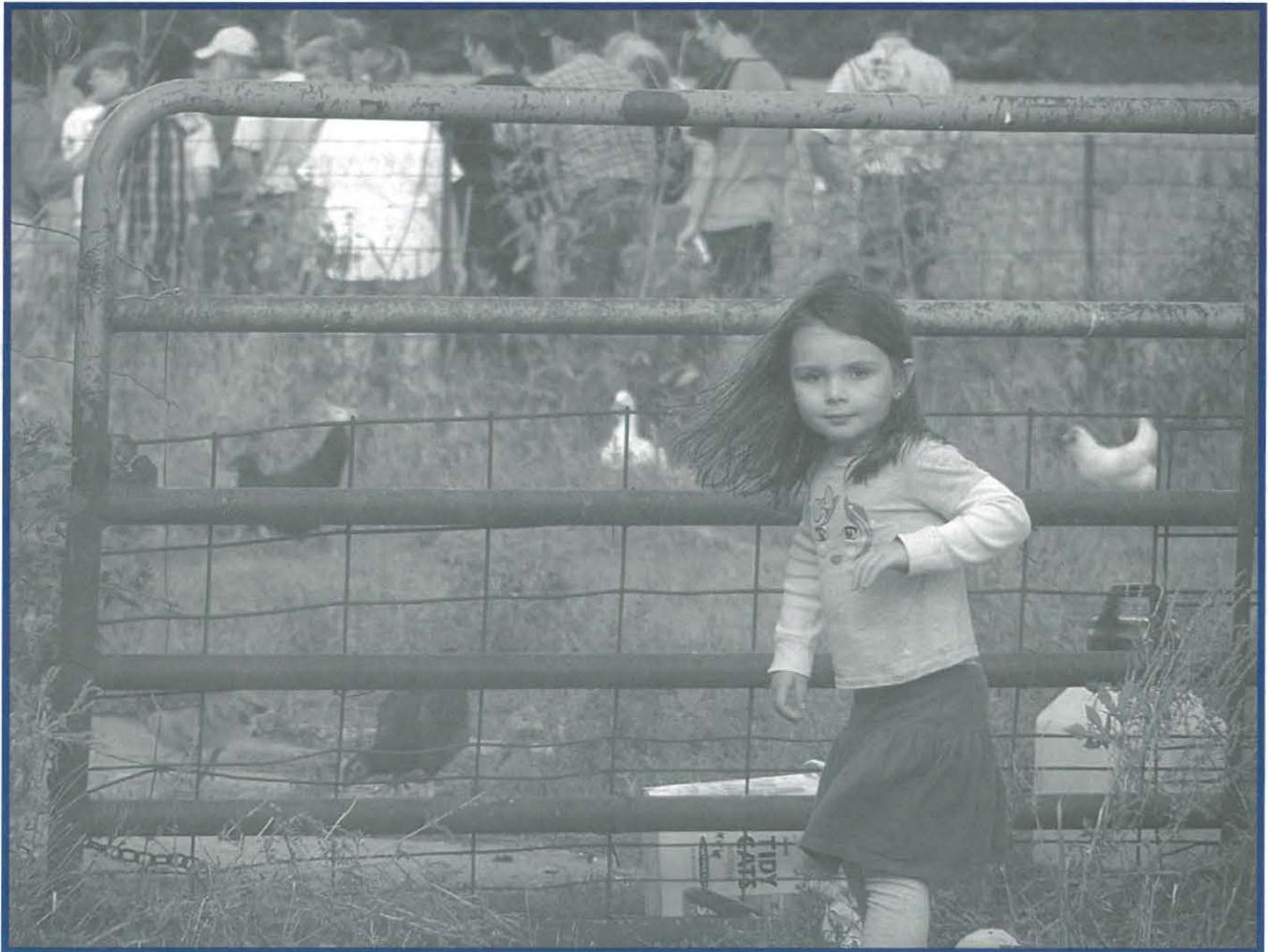


the
Practical Farmer

A Newsletter of Practical Farmers of Iowa • Vol. 23, #4 • Fall 2008



Legacy Planning 14-15

Food Storage as Season Extension 16-17

Cooperators Update 10-11

Field Day Pictures 6-9

PFI Board of Directors

Correspondence to the PFI Directors is always welcome.

District 1 (Northwest)

Heather Johnson
3750 150th Ave.
Royal, IA 51357
(712)933-2686
hgjohn@royaltelco.net

Dan Wilson
4375 Pierce Ave.
Paullina, IA 51046
(712) 448-3870
the7wilsons@gmail.com

District 2 (North Central)

Nina Biensen, PFI Vice-President
2454 Binford Ave.
State Center, IA 50247
(641) 483-2292
biensen@marshallnet.com

Tim Landgraf, PFI Secretary
1465 120th St.
Kanawha, IA 50447
(641) 495-6367
libland@frontiernet.net

District 3 (Northeast)

Jeff Klinge
16609 Highway 13
Farmersburg, IA 52047
(563)536-2314
jeffkling@netins.net
Eric Franzenburg, PFI President
6925 19th Ave.
Van Horne, IA 52346
(319) 228-8758
eafrans@netins.net

District 4 (Southwest)

Angela Tedesco
7260 NW 58th St.
Johnston, IA 50131
(515) 278-4522
atedesco@worldnet.att.net
Verlan Van Wyk, PFI Treasurer
PO Box 246
Sully, IA 50251
(641) 594-2998

District 5 (Southeast)

Ann Cromwell
3303 240th St.
Williamsburg, IA 52361
(319) 668-8248
anniowa@commspeed.net
Linda Grice
PO Box 86
South English, IA 52335
(319) 667-2350
agricol@netins.net

At-Large

Joyce Lock
725 54th St.
Des Moines, IA 50312
(515) 277-3615
stirjoy@aol.com

John Pesek
1801 20th St. Apt. F-11
Ames, IA 50010
(515) 294-2150
jpesek@iastate.edu

Advisory Board

Larry Kallem
12303 NW 158th Ave.
Madrid, IA 50156
(515) 795-2303

Dick Thompson
2035 190th St.
Boone, IA 50036
(515) 432-1560

PFI Staff

For general information and staff connections call (515) 232-5661; individual extensions are listed in parentheses after each name.

Teresa Opheim (102)
Executive Director
teresa@practicalfarmers.org

Gary Huber (103)
Niche Pork, Iowa Food Cooperative
gary@practicalfarmers.org

Suzi Bernhard (101)
Membership, Youth
suzi@practicalfarmers.org

Sally Worley (104)
Communications, Hort Crops
sally@practicalfarmers.org

Sarah Carlson (105)
Field Crops, Water Monitoring
sarah@practicalfarmers.org

Rick Exner, Consultant (108)
Oat Rust, Organic Seed Treatment
dnexner@iastate.edu

Tom German, Consultant
Grazing Clusters
(712)830-3281
tagerman@netllc.net

Gordon Reeder (107)
Communications Intern
gordon@practicalfarmers.org

Contents

Letter from the Director 3

Biological Harvest: Annual Conference 4-5

Field Day Pictures 6-9

Cooperators Update 10-11

Summer Camp Recap 12-13

Legacy Planning 14-15

Season Extension 16-17

Annual Conference Keynote 18

Next Generation Retreat 19

Farm Tours and Zoning 20

Policy on the Listserv 21

Energy Efficient Building 22

Labor Needs 22

Calendar 24

New Members 24

News 25

Merchandise 26

Join PFI 27

Cover: Maya Worley chases chickens at Genuine Faux Farm while Rob and Tammy Faux guide the adults on a tour of their fields. See more field day pictures on page 6.

The Practical Farmer is published four times a year by Practical Farmers of Iowa at 137 Lynn Avenue, Suite 200, Ames, Iowa 50014; (515) 232-5661. A free subscription is provided to PFI supporters (see page 27). Sample copies and back issues are available.

Newsletter Editor: Sally Worley
Original Template: Michael Nash



LEOPOLD CENTER

www.practicalfarmers.org

RAGBRAI Meets PFI



Biker takes a break from the road to read about PFI

“Welcome from Practical Farmers of Iowa! Free bread, honey and jam! We have a port-a-potty!”

So read the roadside signs welcoming RAGBRAI riders, who rolled by Dick and Sharon Thompson’s farm on July 22. That special day, Dick and Sharon graciously offered their shady front lawn for rests, their son Rex and grandson Cole set up a bench, and the PFI staff provided bread from The Café in Ames, along with food from Iowa farmers.

The food—and the potty—were big hits. And so was PFI. We introduced California chefs, D.C. lawyers, and Michigan farmers to PFI. And they, plus a crop of Iowa riders as well, were genuinely interested in having discovered us. Many stopped because they had heard of PFI or had toured the Thompsons’ farm years back. Others yelled “Go PFI!” from their bikes as they rode by. My son and his friend counted riders from 26 states who stopped at the PFI booth.

We hope to make RAGBRAI a yearly event. So let us know if the route will take the riders past your farm next year.

Field Day season is over, alas. Thank you to all those farmers who hosted Field Days and opened your farms to others. A big thank you to Sarah Carlson and Sally Worley, who went out of their way to make the 2008 Field Days stimulating and comfortable for you.

Welcome to Suzi Bernhard, who started a few weeks ago. And a big thank you to Cedar Johnson for taking the time to train Suzi



PFI Director Teresa Opheim offers local treats to RAGBRAI rider



Rex and Cole Thompson visit with a resting rider

in her position up to the day before she delivered her baby, Lewis. Cedar is a stay-at-home mom now, but she plans to attend the annual conference, so look for Cedar and Lewis there!

Teresa Opheim
Executive Director



Biological Harvest

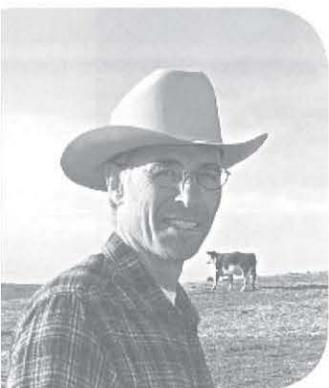
January 9-10, 2009

Marshalltown Community College

Opening Session

Biological Harvest:

The Sustainable Farmer's Hidden Opportunity



Joel Huesby

Joel Huesby, Thundering Hooves Ranch

Joel Huesby, a fourth-generation farmer who farms in Washington State, speaks with great optimism about the future of agriculture and the tremendous opportunities for "farming with the sun."

"My farm has evolved from the ground up, literally," Joel says. "I am only beginning to understand how farmers are solar energy harvesters. I am only beginning to hear the universal language of the soil and to listen to what the soil is telling me."

Read more about Joel Huesby on page 18.

Introduced by Linda Barnes

Linda Barnes and her family run High Hopes Gardens "a living experiment on whether a creative, hard-working family can make a living working with nature." Linda is also Coordinator of the Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture program and an Associate Professor of Biology at Marshalltown Community College.



Linda Barnes

Friday Workshops

The Art of Raising Drug-Free and Healthy Livestock

Will Winter, Holistic Veterinarian

- ❖ Learn how to create the healthy mineral balances that are required for full nutrition.
- ❖ Learn the hallmarks of genetic selection for maximum health and reproduction as well as the management skills that are required to achieve healthy herds and flocks.

Vision of Good Food for Agriculture

Angie Tagtow, Food and Society Fellow

- ❖ Explore the soil-to-health connection and how "good food" can boost the health of your family, farm, community and the earth.
- ❖ Take home tools that will help you examine our food system with a critical eye. You also will play Iowa "Good Food" trivia and receive tips on how to support a healthy, green, fair and accessible food system.



Angie Tagtow

Why Marshalltown?

Marshalltown is centrally located in the state and home to a new conference facility. Holding the conference here also shows support for the Marshalltown Community College's efforts to teach the diversified farmers of the future.

Posters Wanted

Member posters have a long history at the winter conference! Bring a poster about nearly anything that would interest other members—share your farm, your research and demonstration, your lessons learned!

The King Corn Guys are Back!

On Friday evening, join the filmmakers of King Corn for a sneak preview and conversation about their new film, tentatively titled "Big River." PFI has been working with Mosaic Films and filmmakers Aaron Woolf, Curt Ellis and Ian Cheney on a follow-up project to KING CORN that looks at the environmental implications of high-intensity corn production.



Friday Workshops

Managing Weeds and Soils Beyond NPK

PFI Farmers

Matt Liebman, Iowa State University

Joel Gruver, Western Illinois University

- ❖ Share your stories about managing weeds on your farm.
- ❖ Learn how soil quality can affect weed management, dealing with nutrients beyond NPK, tillage effects, soil biology and water-holding capacity.



Chris Blanchard

Time and the Tiller

Chris Blanchard, Rock Spring Farm

- ❖ Look at ways to overcome the overload of information, tasks, and projects while you keep things from falling through the cracks.
- ❖ This workshop will provide the tools you need to get on top of your game, improve your business, and maximize your quality of life.

Fledgling Farmers

Ryan and Janice Marquardt, Wild Rose Pastures

Scott and Julie Wilbur, Wilbur's Northside Market

Jerry Peckumn, Jefferson farmer

- ❖ Learn from two families who found land and developed the market savvy and the skills they needed to get started.
- ❖ Discuss how these new farmers and others tackled one of the biggest hurdles for beginning farmers: Finding land.



Ryan and Janice Marquardt

Saturday Workshops

Round I

The Biological Harvest: Discussion on the Keynote Address

Continuing Your Farm When You're Gone

The New Conservation Stewardship (Security) Program

Season Extension on the Market Farm

For the Birds: Farming with Wildlife

Round II

Cyber Farmers: Using Websites and Blogs

Iowa Cheese, Please

Cover Crops: Production and Resources

Processing On-Farm

Saving Energy on the Farm: A Roundtable

Cluster Meetings

Different sessions for: Fruits and Vegetables; Beginning Farmers; Beef; Pork; Dairy; Poultry; Sheep and Goats; Field Crops; and Policy

Round III

"U-Pick"

Write your idea on your registration form, and we will organize sessions to accommodate as many ideas as possible.

"Coffee Shop" with Holistic Vet Will Winter

Stop in and talk one-on-one with Will Winter! Coffee shop will be open Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to noon and 1:45 -4 p.m.



Eat—Friday chilli chowdown and Saturday lunch will feature food grown by PFI farmers.

Meet—Bring Iowa wine, beer, cider, Templeton Rye or other refreshments and mingle with other PFI members Friday evening in the Hospitality Room.

Beginning Farmer Counseling

Dave Baker from the Beginning Farmer Center will be available for private consultations. Indicate your interest on the registration form, and the PFI office will contact you to set up an appointment.

Business Meeting

Don't miss the PFI Business Meeting on Friday, January 9 at 5 p.m. Find out the latest on PFI's programming, finances, staffing and more. Offer your feedback on how we're doing.



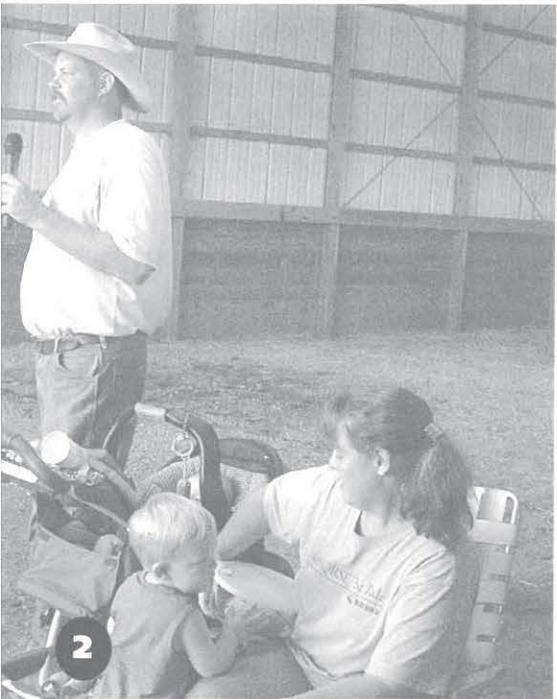
1



3



6



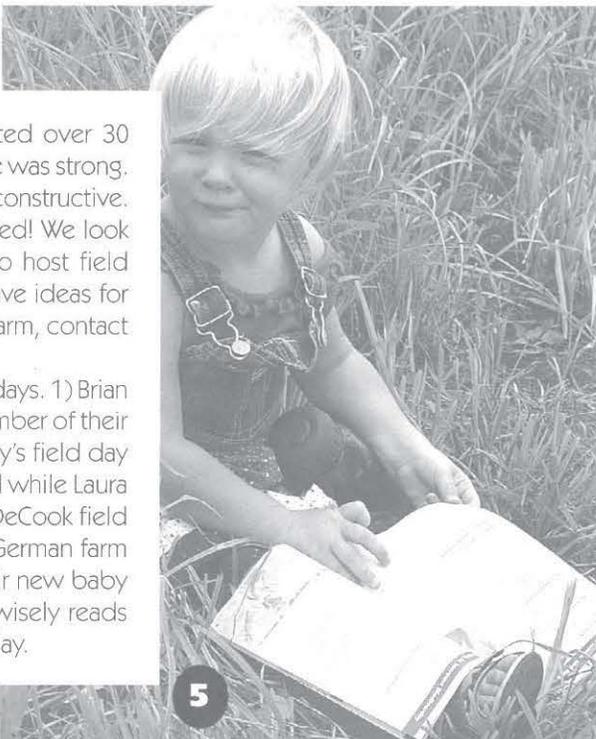
2



4



7



5



8

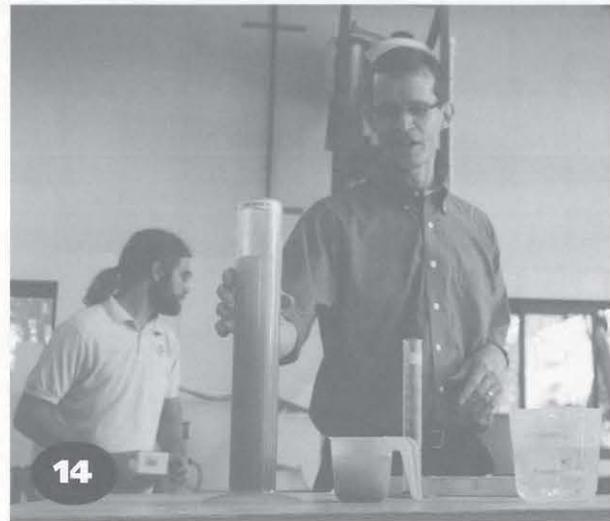
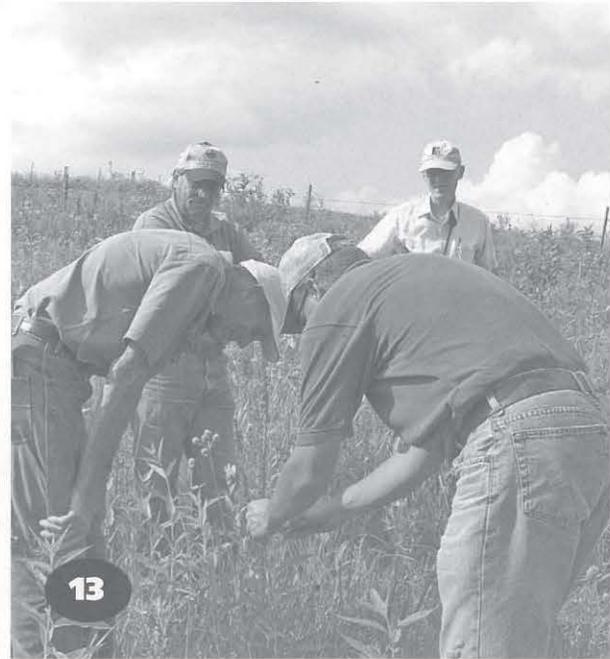


9

This year Practical Farmers of Iowa hosted over 30 field days. Despite high gas prices, attendance was strong. Topics were diverse and conversation was constructive. Thank you to farmer hosts and all who attended! We look forward to next year. As always, we want to host field days that benefit you, our members. If you have ideas for a field day or would like to host one on your farm, contact our office.

Youth were abundant this year at our field days. 1) Brian and Cheryl Ness and Miriam, the youngest member of their family, talk with Tammy Faux at Rob and Tammy's field day near Tripoli; 2) Mike DeCook talks to the crowd while Laura tends to baby Wyatt and toddler Josh at the DeCook field day; 3) Grace German pets Sweetpea at the German farm near Holstein; 4) Suzanne Costello shows their new baby Jacob to PFI's Cedar Johnson; 5) A little fan wisely reads the PFI Field Day guide at the Hermans' field day.

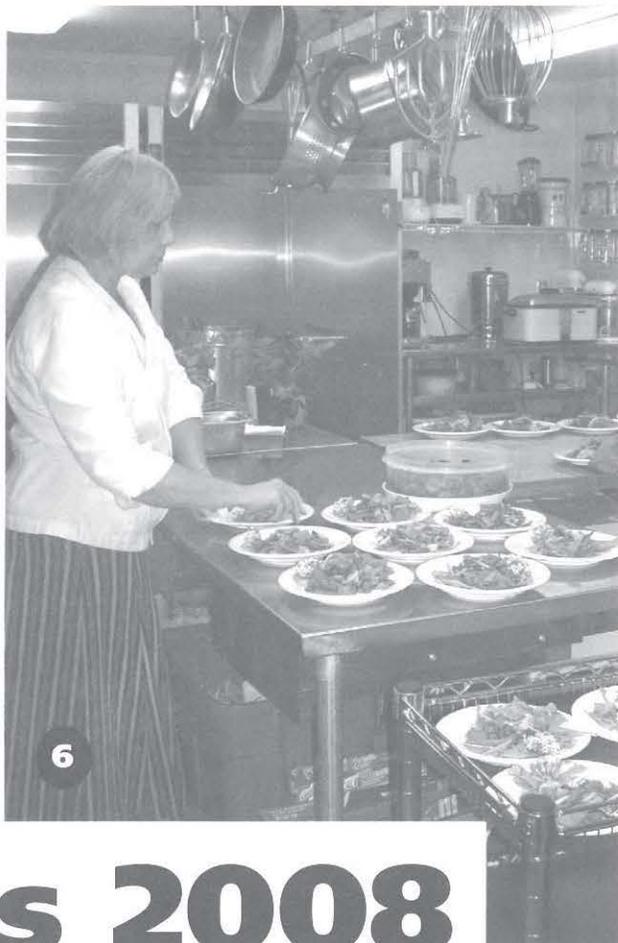
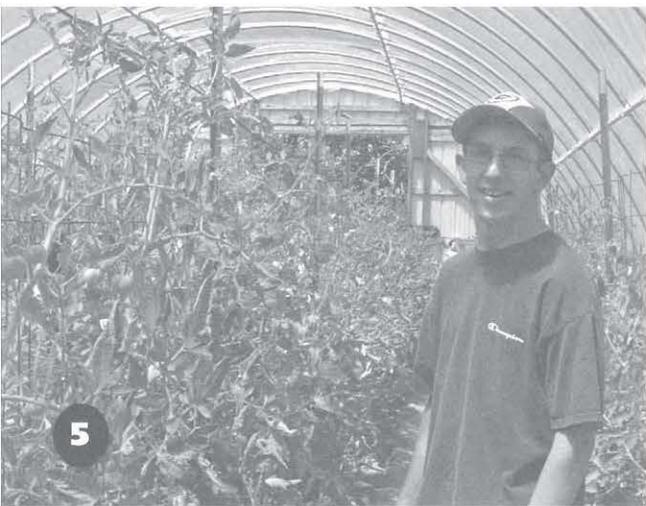
6 the Practical Farmer



6) Samuel Maibach herds his cows back to pasture; 7) Janice Marquardt acquaints herself with one of Francis Thicke's friendly cows; 8) Look at that tall corn! Breeding Corn for Sustainable agriculture showcases exotic corn varieties.

Meat—This year Practical Farmers of Iowa held a field day at the ISU Meat Lab. Attendees learned about meat evaluation and watched as lab employees fabricated an animal; 9) Dan Specht dons lab protection before the meat lab tour; 10) Jonathon Campbell wheels out the State Fair champ and Dan Specht's grass-fed cow to compare the difference between grass and grain fed animals; 11) Joe Cordray uses a bandsaw to make meat cuts; 12) Julie and Mike Donaghy admire Ken Henrichsen's sorghum-sudangrass; 13) Field day attendees identify species in Ron's Dunphy's prairie remnant; 14) Ethan Brue shows samples of sorghum "beer" and distilled alcohol.

Field Days 2008

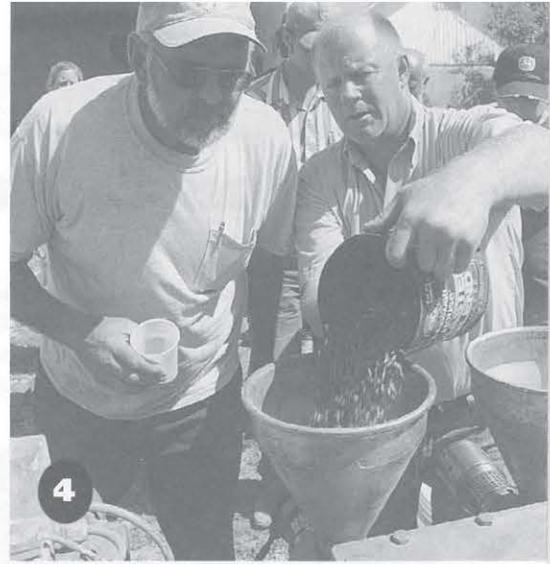


Field Days 2008

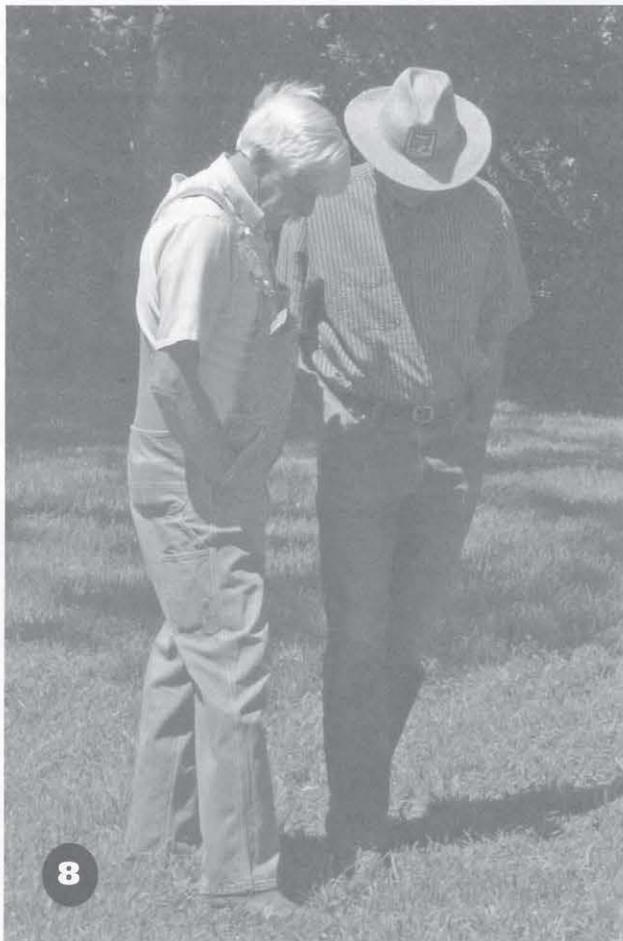




3



4



8



9



Farmer to farmer learning

The number one reason people belong to Practical Farmers of Iowa is for networking. What better way to network than PFI Field Days?

1) John Wesselius explains the intricacies of his hoophouse; 2) Gail Nonnecke (center front) talks about weed control in raspberries at Angela Tedesco's field day; 3) The classroom moves outdoors at Jerry Peckum's farm; 4) Gary Laydon watches as Kim Odden feeds the dual-expeller press, capable of 50 gallons in 24 hours; 5) Clint Brown shows off his tall July tomatoes; 6) Donna Prizgintas plates up delicious food at the garlic fest; 7) Craig Griffieon shows turnips interplanted for grazing; 8) Ron Muth and Dan Wilson ponder serious matters at the Buy Fresh, Buy Local field day; 9) Eric Franzenburg talks with gusto about his favorite tractor for transplanting; 10) Richard Black's vineyard is a peaceful place to learn; 11) Rick Hartmann talks to the crowd about his efficient farm practices.

Are You Curious?

Teresa Opheim

PFI farmers are! Check out what 40 of your fellow farm families are investigating this year as part of PFI's Cooperators' Program. Results on these projects will be posted on the PFI website as they become available: www.practicalfarmers.org



following his corn harvest this fall. (His neighbor will be planting right behind the combine.) In the spring, Jerry will mechanically kill the rye and plant corn again. Next fall at corn harvest, corn yield will be taken from the cover crop and non-cover crop treatments to see the effect.

Devan Green, who farms near Conrad, and Jefferson farmer **Jim Funcke** are planting cover crops this fall. They will examine: What is the cover crop's effect on the following year's crop yield? Is there time to plant a fall cover crop around fall harvest? In the spring, how do we manage the cover crop? Can it be grazed, killed mechanically or with an herbicide and how does that affect the following year's crop? PFI, partnering with the Iowa Learning Farm, wants cooperators who can plant cover in the same spot every fall for the next three to five years. Contact Sarah Carlson at sarah@practicalfarmers.org or (515)232-5661 for more information.

If you planted a cover crop: *We want your management information! We've developed a simple observation sheet to gather data about establishing and managing different cover crops. This will help answer your many questions and create more fool-proof ways to manage cover crops. Contact Sarah. See <http://www.mccc.msu.edu> for more on cover crops.*

Chicken Feed

Methionine and lysine are proteins that help ensure poultry development, good weight gain and more. Currently methionine is fed synthetically or by over-feeding soybean meal, which is expensive. **Cindy Madsen** is exploring a natural methionine option. In the first feeding trial: Diet One fed husband Vic's conventional corn and Diet Two fed a high methionine corn to chickens. No supplemental methionine was fed during the trial. First feeding results show that high-methionine corn has promise. Cindy's next trial will test how much a high methionine corn can compensate for decreased soybean meal in the diet.

Open-Pollinated Corn

This year **Ron Brunk** and **Earl Hafner** cultivated and maintained a trial investigating the yield of potential corn breeding stock, such as varieties bred for higher protein and higher carotene. Ron also grew out seed to make it available for future experiments. **Dan Specht** continued to select and replant open-pollinated corn that is well adapted to his environment. **John Gilbert** planted a high-methionine corn trial, and the **Grifficons** opened their farm for USDA researchers to plant a hybrid cross from improved lines.

Cover Crops

Jerry Peckum is investigating the ability to establish a cover crop in a corn-on-corn system. Nitrogen uptake and biomass growth in the spring will be measured. He is planting 'wheeler' rye



Dan Specht displayed some of his open-pollinated corn varieties at his field day this summer.

Water Quality Monitoring

Brian Hayward, who farms with Don Adams and Nan Bonfils at Full Circle Farm, was trained this year by IOWATER, the state's volunteer water monitoring program. He took 18 samples from two sites on the farm to learn if there are differences in sedimentation, nitrogen and phosphorus levels. Other PFI members participating as water monitoring cooperators include: **Bruce and Derek Carney**, **Autumn and Laramie Ogden**, **Mike and Laura DeCook**, and **Greg and Kayla Koether**. They have all received IOWATER training and are monitoring water themselves or working with IOWATER volunteers.

In addition, **Jerry Peckumn** had automatic samplers installed on two tile lines to compare water quality on a primarily row-crop area and his mixed row-crop and pasture. He measured nitrogen and phosphorus levels, especially following rainfall events.

Finally, Greg Koether and Jerry Peckumn shared their thoughts on water quality monitoring at a Clean Water Network meeting in Dubuque this summer. They were interviewed for several media stories about their farming practices and their effect on water quality.

Raising Niche Pork

Tom and Irene Frantzen, Dan and Lorna Wilson, John and Bernie Kenyon, Tim and Deleana Roseland, Steve and Christy Howe, Martin and Barb Kramer, Ron Mardeson, and the **Allee Farm** with **Lyle Rossiter** are working with PFI staff to develop virtual farm tours. These tours, which will be broadcast on the web (watch the PFI website for a schedule), will focus on issues such as feed management, facility designs, and manure handling systems.

In addition, **Larry Miller, Tom Miller,** and **Mark and Valerie Olson** opened their farms this summer to Field Days that explored how to retrofit pork facilities for niche production. Finally, 27 farms provided data again this year for a project on the productivity and costs of farrow-to-finish niche pork farms.

Tomato Support Systems

It was a lousy tomato season for many, but three families went ahead with their project to explore different tomato support systems. **Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf, Jill Beebout and Sean Skeehan,** and **Rob and Tammy Faux** all took data in an attempt to find the best tomato training structures for keeping disease pressure at a minimum in heirloom tomatoes.

Grassland Bird Habitat

Ron Dunphy, working with a variety of experts, is implementing a plan to improve quail habitat on his farm. **Ryan Marquardt** is developing a plan to improve grassland bird habitat on his farm



Susan Jutz, pictured here speaking to a crowd at her June field day, is working to find effective seed treatments for organic growers.

and also the farms of **Bill and Mary Kimble,** and **Mike and Laura DeCook.**

Oat Crown Rust

Verlan Van Wyk, Dan Wilson, and **Mike Natvig** planted four different treatments and collected yields on oat varieties that have different resistance to crown rust of oat. For the last three years, the mixture of the three varieties has resisted rust better than the individual varieties by themselves, and it usually yielded better even when rust wasn't a factor.

Seed Treatments

Testing in the lab has shown that certain plant-derived oils can inhibit seed-pathogenic fungi. **Susan Jutz** and **Norm McCoy** compared peas treated with and without essential oils treatments. Susan also included in her trial seed treated with the commercial product Natural II. **Ron Dunphy** and **Ken Choquette** compared soybeans treated with and without the essential oils.



Karl Dallefeld is tracking his herd closely in order to collect comprehensive data performance on grass-fed beef

Grazing Production Data

Tom German, Torray Wilson, Bruce Carney, and **Karl Dallefeld** will compile their grazing records this fall, including animal weights and stock days per acre, as well as "the story" of the production systems, such as animal moves, stock density, species type, rainfall, and supplemental feeding. This information will be shared with grazing cluster participants. *If you're interested in being involved and you have data, contact Tom at (712)830-3281.*

In addition to these projects, PFI members are involved in a variety of other studies with university researchers. What a busy and curious group!

Do you want to be a PFI Cooperator? PFI Cooperators are farmers who conduct on-farm research and demonstration on their farms. Those projects can include: randomized and replicated trials, completed in conjunction with researchers; on-farm demonstration; and monitoring and data-collection projects. The PFI Cooperators' Meeting, where farmers set their priorities, will be held Feb. 5 and 6, 2009, in Ames. If you might be interested in being a cooperator and did not attend last year's Cooperators' Meeting, please contact Sarah Carlson at sarah@practicalfarmers.org or (515)232-5661.

Practical Farmers of Iowa gratefully thanks the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture for its support of the PFI Cooperators' Program. We also thank the following who support our program: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wallace Genetic Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Ceres Foundation, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, USDA SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education), and the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Summer Camp



Coordinator Mike Havlick leads campers through the "Web of Life"



Dick and Sharon Thompson cut corn stalks for the cows



Come and get

One Last Hurrah!

Cedar Johnson

That's what PFI Camp felt like this summer for all of us who were able to sneak it in before school started and cool weather hit. We soaked up the last days of summer, making the most of the warm weather by swimming, canoeing, and, of course, playing in the creek. Evening campfires were actually welcomed warmth, and the darkness added even more drama to "Honey, I love you" and other games.

I was impressed with how wholeheartedly the campers took advantage of the chances to explore The Wonder Under Us, discovering

spiders, stars, and something that started with the first letter of their name. Many of them also discovered that they were capable of more than they thought they were on the climbing wall and archery range. This is always a more likely discovery among encouraging friends, which are never in short supply at PFI Camp. Even though camp was rescheduled this year, due to flooding at the Y-Camp and across the state in June, we had a great group of old and new friends.

Another fun discovery was that bashful cows can be won over with corn stalks! PFI co-founders Dick and Sharon Thompson welcomed the campers onto their farm, and showed them how to cut and feed corn stalks to their cows. We also explored some of the wilder parts of their farm and found a grasshopper captured in a spider web. All lessons in the web

of life that Y-Camp naturalist Mike Havlick taught them much about.

A special 'hats off' to the counselors this year! Nikki and Carissa came all the way from Wisconsin and Minnesota, bringing fun games and cooking the hair on their knuckles off every day to feed the hungry campers. And PFI's own Jake Armstrong was the pied piper of Hawkeye cabin, inventing games and providing great leadership as the sole male counselor of 13 young boys!

Thanks to all the farmers who donated or provided food this year. We enjoyed a bountiful harvest at the end of a hard summer for many of you.



Grant Franzenburg climbs the wall



Daniel Huber enjoys a piggy back ride from dad Gary at the Thompson Farm



Digital scavenger hunt: Find so letter as your first name—Cc



It! Campers feed corn stalks to the cows.



2008 Campers—Back row: Dan Jaynes, Jake Armstrong, Carissa Tomlinson, Nikki Mueller, Jacob Bierschenk, Mitchell Hanson, Collin Leffel, Jeremy Cable, Cole Thompson, Brice Hodnefield, Grant Franzenburg, and Jeremy Griffith. Front row: Cedar Johnson, Teresa Opheim, Allair Taiber, Anshuman Dash, Paul Opheim, Gil Taiber, Daniel Huber, Peter Jaynes, and Karly Tomlinson.

Farmers who supplied food for camp:

- ❖ Vic and Cindy Madsen, Audubon
- ❖ Duane and Norine Black, Ames
- ❖ Dean and Judy Henry, Nevada
- ❖ Gary Guthrie, Nevada
- ❖ Jeff and Jill Burkhardt, Woodward
- ❖ Robert and Maureen Hanson, La Porte City
- ❖ Jill Beebout and Sean Skeeahan, Chariton
- ❖ Craig and LaVon Griffieon, Ankeny
- ❖ Steve and Teresa Paul, Laurel
- ❖ Sean Sullivan, Des Moines



Rich Schuler and his telescope put stars in the campers' eyes



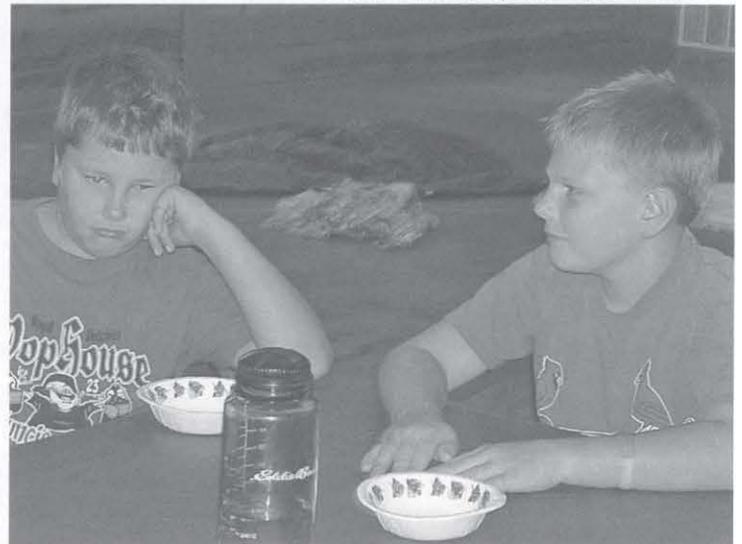
Ready, Aim, Archery! Grant Franzenburg, Jeremy Griffith, Paul Opheim, and Anshuman Dash point and shoot.



Something that starts with the same... in Leffel poses over the creek



Karly Tomlinson writes a thank you to Kelli Miller for donating to PFI's silent auction that raises camp funds



Mitchell Hanson and Jeremy Cable wonder: Where is breakfast?

Your Farm a Hundred Years From Now: Will It Be There?

Teresa Opheim

PFI farmers have put a great deal of insight and sweat into improving their farms. If you joined us for any of our Field Days this season, you saw the results.

Yet, I wonder: Will your farms be around 100 years from now? Will they still be grand examples of how to make a piece of land profitable and diverse?

Yes, they will! But only with some thought, likely some soul searching—and action.

Poking around, I'm finding that a lot of PFI members need to develop or update their wills. I do too. Why is it so hard for us to get serious about estate planning? Because immediate and mundane details always seem to come first? Because terms like "probate" and "estate tax" seem so complicated? Or because, despite all evidence to the contrary, we don't want to admit we will die?

The answer is probably a combination of all these reasons. Add to that: Many of us have trouble communicating with our families about what matters most: our hopes, dreams—and our money.

To do nothing is to leave strangers in charge. As Roger McEowen, author of the Iowa State University Extension guide "Estate Planning" says, "Everyone has an estate plan—either you use



Will your farms be around 100 years from now? Will they still be grand examples of how to make a piece of land profitable and diverse?

a qualified attorney to help you develop one. Or you let the State of Iowa do it for you."

Million-Dollar Questions

According to Omaha attorney Joe Hawbaker, thinking about your farm's future means thinking through the following questions:

- ❖ What do you want to happen to the farm after you die?
- ❖ Will it be sold and the money divided among heirs?
- ❖ Will one or more of your grown children take over?
- ❖ What about the other kids?
- ❖ Will the farm have to be sold to pay for long-term care?
- ❖ What about slowing down?
- ❖ Will the farm pay for your retirement if you are not running the show?
- ❖ If one of your children chooses to farm, can the farm support both your retirement and that child's livelihood?
- ❖ Should you simply sell it all now?
- ❖ Do you sell machinery and livestock, and then simply rent out the land?

These are questions that most of us cannot answer in one afternoon. For many, it may take years to ponder what would be the

Help is On the Way

- ❖ If you're bringing in a new generation to the family farm, please attend the PFI Next Generation training December 11 and 12. The Beginning Farmer Center will be there to offer consultations on estate and financial planning.
- ❖ Roger McEowen, director of the Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation, will discuss *Continuing Your Farm When You're Gone* at the PFI Annual Conference on January 10.
- ❖ Also at the PFI Annual Conference, the Beginning Farmer Center will be available for consultations. Contact Suzi Bernhard at the PFI office at (515)232-5661 to make an appointment.

best transition plan, and even longer to put that plan into place.

A will is important, because it names heirs, nominates an executor, and appoints guardians for dependents. However, a good estate plan is broader, and should accomplish at least four goals, according to American Farmland Trust. Your plan should:

1. Provide a framework for a smooth transition of farm ownership and management.
2. Reduce high inheritance taxes on land made more valuable by inflation and non-farm development pressure.
3. Provide for the financial security and peace of mind of all the family members, even those who leave the operation.
4. Resolve business operation and management issues, transfer assets, and develop the next generation's management capacity.

Farm and Non-Farm Siblings

"You hear stories about zero planning and many siblings," says PFI farmer Tom Frantzen. "I have one in my family. My brother-in-law and his brother were partners in a dairy. That dairy died two weeks ago because their father didn't have an estate plan and the farm was split up when he died. It's a tragedy."

How to distribute assets to all children—to those who stayed to farm and also to those who left—has been a thorny issue for a

reasons, it makes sense to start transferring operating assets as soon as both generations are comfortable with the commitment, says Hawbaker. You can work out business operation and management issues as the transition occurs.

One of those issues is choosing the most appropriate form of business organization, whether it is a sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation. For Jerry Peckumn and his son Tom, who joined the farming operation last year, that relationship is sole proprietorship—for now. After Tom graduated from Iowa State and moved back to the farm, father and son decided what a good starting salary would be. Jerry pays half of that salary in wages; Tom has to figure out how to make the rest. He has use of Jerry's machinery to make money—"quite an advantage," Jerry says, "but I want him to farm."

"My farming operation is completely separate," says Jerry. "All management decisions I discuss with Tom—herbicide purchases, buying machinery; we discuss marketing options, although we market separately. Tom's bidding cash rent on some land. He'll have to work into my planting and harvesting schedule.

"As Tom's operation grows in either acres, cattle, custom work, or maybe nonfarm enterprises, we will have to work out a different arrangement. We need to have a written agreement in order to remember what we agreed to as the operation changes," says Jerry.

-Continued on page 23-

Estate planning may seem to be about "death," but it can also be about smoothing the transition for you and future generations—while you're both healthy and strong.

long, long time. According to Attorney Hawbaker, "Many parents struggle against the deep-seated idea that fair is equal. Yet they know in some cases that the farm or ranch will not succeed if it is divided up or if the farming heir has to buy out the interests of his or her siblings. Record high land values and tight cash flows make the decisions more difficult: The farm may be worth a lot of money, were it to be sold, but the strength of its cash flow does not match its market value."

Hawbaker adds: If one child wants to farm and others don't, perhaps there are other assets for the non-farm kids, such as life insurance, investments, annuities or stocks.

For the Living

Estate planning may seem to be about "death," but it can also be about smoothing the transition for you and your future generation—while you're both healthy and strong. Estate planning allows you to evaluate your present business arrangements and decide whether those arrangements will work for the future. For tax and other



Jerry and Tom Peckumn are putting plans in place to make Tom's transition back to the farm after college as smooth as possible

Food Storage:

An Old Practice Regains its Place in Season Extension

Sally Worley

When people consider season extension, high tunnels often come to mind. However, there is another form of season extension capturing the attention of members of Practical Farmers of Iowa: root cellars.

Root cellars are not a new idea: they were the primary way to store food throughout the winter before the advent of refrigerators. However, they are newly popular. David Hade of Iowa Home Crafters recently built a root cellar for the new home of Don Adams and Nan Bonfils. Hade says his to-do list is suddenly full of root cellars.

“Four of our customers have seen the Bonfils/Adams house and now want root cellars. We have added them to their construction plans.”

Root cellars make common sense. They don’t require additional energy inputs, and under the right conditions, they have the ability to keep storage vegetables until spring. For eaters, root cellars provide local food throughout the year. For farmers, they provide income during the winter.

Food storage comes in many shapes and sizes. Here are a few pointers to consider for a longer shelf life.

Plan

Before you plan a food storage area, you need to know what you are going to store. Different fruits and vegetables require specific storage conditions. Table 1 shows storage requirements for many winter keepers. Since storage requirements vary, your plan may include different storage areas, or crops that will store well together.

How much should you grow? That will depend on your marketing, as well as your storage area, garden square footage, and income goals.

Scheduling for food storage is different as well. Many gardens will have spring planting for their main season crops, and summer planting for storage crops. For example, plant potatoes at the traditional Good Friday schedule to enjoy potatoes during the summer. Plant potatoes in July to store and market in the fall and winter.

Before you plant food to sell in a new season, it is wise to find a potential market and set income goals.

Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf of One Step at a Time Gardens have a fall and winter share to complement their main season community supported agriculture (CSA) program. They offer customers a Thanksgiving box for their feast in November, and a December winter keeper’s box. They plan for these disbursements along with their main season garden planning. “It’s another tab on our spreadsheet, and the seed, scheduling and square foot areas all get added to the farm plan,” Jan Libbey noted.

This year Jan’s and Tim’s market target was 30 of each share. They sell their Thanksgiving box as a “multitude of variety to supply a family with food for the Thanksgiving celebration” for \$60. Their December box has less variety at a larger quantity to keep people supplied for a good part of the winter for \$100. These two market goals add a potential \$4,800 to their farm income without extending the season that they grow in.

Jan and Tim store their items in their walk-in cooler along with winter squash on a trailer in the barn. They do have energy costs for storing their fall items in the cooler, but it is mouse-proof, has the right climatic conditions, and suits their storage needs quite fine.

There are various market possibilities for the winter. CSA winter shares, winter farmer’s markets, and grocery store sales are all good candidates. If you do not have the capacity or interest to store vegetables on your farm, market them to customers at the end of the growing season and give them the storing responsibility, along with a few home storage tips. Food storage can easily be adapted for small spaces in and out of the home. Jan and Tim provide storage tips for their customers: “Never assume the recipient is well versed at storage,” said Jan.

Table 1. Ideal Temperature and Relative Humidity for Storage

Cool and very moist	Cold and moist	Cool and Dry
32-40 F, 90-95 % RH	32-40 F, 80-90% RH	32-50 F, 60-70% RH
Carrots	Potatoes	Garlic
Beets	Cabbage	Onions
Parsnips	Cauliflower	Green soybeans
Rutabagas	Apples	
Turnips	Grapes	Moderately warm and Dry
Celery	Oranges	50-60 F, 60-70% RH
Chinese Cabbage	Pears	Dry hot peppers
Celeriac	Quince	Pumpkins
Salsify	Endive, escarole	Winter squash
Scorzonera	Grapefruit	Sweet Potatoes
Winter Radishes		Green Tomatoes
Kohlrabi	Cool and moist	
Leeks	40-50 F, 85-90% RH	
Collards	Cucumbers	
Broccoli	Sweet peppers	
Brussels Sprouts	Cantaloupe	
Horseradish	Watermelon	
Jerusalem Artichokes	Eggplant	
Hamburg-rooted Parsley	Ripe Tomatoes	

Adapted from *Root Cellaring*, Mike and Nancy Bubel

Store

There are many options to successfully store food in the fall and winter. You don't have to have the "ideal" storage conditions, but can make a good food storage space in many situations. Storage is possible outdoors, in outbuildings already present on the farmstead or home, in a separate root cellar structure, and in the house.

It is important to store the right items at the right time. Many late harvesters hold well in the field during cool weather. Store items that are picked at peak maturity and that are healthy. Food with rot or nicks and bruises should be eaten rather than stored. Select varieties for winter storage that are good keepers. For example, Kennebec is a good potato for storage, but Cascade is a poor keeper.

Don Adams and Nan Bonfils' new root cellar adheres to the ground rules in Table 2. They constructed a room in the basement that is insulated from the rest of the house. Says David Hade, their builder: "We didn't insulate underneath the floor so the temperature of the earth would come up through the slab. We treated the area like an outside space, and insulated the house from the root cellar.



Don Adams and Nan Bonfils store apples and sweet potatoes in their root cellar

Table 2. Ground rules to consider when creating a food storage area:

1. Temperature: Consider the needs of the food you want to store (see table 1). Keep a thermometer in your storage area to make sure the climate is appropriate for the food being stored. Root cellars are designed to borrow and keep the cold. They borrow cold by being dug into the ground, through a cold air duct, window, or exhaust pipe. Insulation keeps cold.

2. Humidity: Again consider the needs of your storage items (table 1). A hygrometer measures humidity and should be placed in the area to help monitor conditions. Earth floors create natural humidity. If your area is too dry for ideal storage conditions, you can spray the floor with water, add pans of water to the area, or pack the food in moist sand or sawdust. If it is too wet, increase ventilation or put shallow pans of limestone in the area to help absorb water.

3. Ventilation: Good ventilation is important in regulating temperature and humidity. Ventilation also helps to minimize food odors and the effect of ethylene gas. Certain foods, for instance apples, release ethylene gas that may promote ripening, deterioration, and sprouting in other foods stored in the area. To help ventilation, it is ideal for a storage area to have both an air intake and outlet. Ideally, the intake is situated low and the outlet situated high on opposite sides of the room for maximum air flow.

4. Accessibility: The easier it is to get into a root cellar, the more useful it will be. Things to consider: where the storage area is situated to the house or packing area, ease of entering, accessibility barricades in winter, such as snow or ice.

5. Darkness: A root cellar should be dark to prevent deterioration and sprouting of fruits and vegetables. It is okay to use a light when you are taking food in and out of the space, but keep light out of the storage area when not in use.

We also brought in a fresh air vent and an exhaust vent."

Says Don: "The root cellar was not a lot of added cost, and having this storage area is common sense. It is another form of a pantry to store fresh food into the winter." An excavated root cellar is ideal because the ground acts as natural insulation and you can create a nice large space. If you are building a new structure, consider creating a space with separate rooms to keep different conditions for items that prefer varying climates. How large should a newly constructed root cellar be? Don and Nan used the footprint of their house plan to decide; the root cellar conforms to the size of the laundry room above. To determine the size of your cellar, consider space available as well as storage goals. According to *Root Cellaring*, a 5' by 8' root cellar will store 30 bushels of food. If you have ample room, bigger is better to ensure ample storage as you continue to add to your food storage markets.

While excavating a new root cellar is ideal in many cases, for some it is too intensive of a project. It is possible to employ food storage techniques to a smaller space with less work. Many food storage endeavors remain outdoors.

-Continued on page 23-

"The root cellar was not a lot of added cost, and having this storage area is common sense."

Don Adams

Washington State farmer to speak on the “Biological Harvest”

Joel Huesby, a fourth-generation farmer who farms in Washington State, will be the keynote speaker for Practical Farmers of Iowa's 2009 Annual Conference. Joel speaks with great optimism about the future of agriculture and the tremendous opportunities for farming with the sun.

Joel's story will sound very familiar to Iowa farmers: His family started using pesticides and fertilizers extensively in the 1950s. The chemicals, he writes, “allowed us to produce more for less,

but they masked negative effects, which have been generations in the making.” His family bought more land, spread more fertilizers, and increased their herds in size and number.

Then, in 1994, he decided that his “farm was a failure financially, ecologically, socially and personally. Something had to change.” He began a journey to turn the farm into something that he thought would better support his family, his community, and the land.

Today the Huesby farm is known as Thundering Hooves. Joel and his family have a pasture operation whereby they rotate cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, chickens and turkeys on pasture, and market the meats directly to a growing number of consumers. The Huesby's have processed 1,700 head of cattle, sheep, and pigs in the last 18 months. Joel will share information about their mobile abattoir at an afternoon session.

The Laws of Farming

Joel Huesby

There are physical laws, like the law of gravity. There are civil laws, which bring order to society and govern our relationships with each other. There are moral laws like “don't lie” and “don't kill.” There also are a number of laws that apply to farming. Here are a few:

The Law of Diversity: All life requires a rich diversity of food for best production. But “modern” agriculture focuses primarily on three fertilizer nutrients: Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potassium. These elements are not “lacking” at all but are unavailable to the chemically dependent plant/soil. The question is not “How much should you apply as artificial fertilizers?” But “How do I set up the conditions where these elements are made available to the plant when needed and in their most stable and usable form?” These are the very conditions modern farming manages against. How ironic! Diversity is nature's strength. Mono-cropping is modern agriculture's weakness.

The Law of Cover: The soil is meant to be covered. The earth will do anything to put her clothes back on once she is laid bare. This is one reason why weeds exist. If you don't cover her with plants of your own choosing, she will use plants of her own. Often times, if we observe how and where the weeds emerge, we may learn something of what the soil's needs may be.



The Law of Time-Tested Success: If it worked that way for millennia, it's a good bet it will work that way tomorrow. Decades of machines, technology, and modern practices cannot necessarily replace millennia of successful genetic and cultural evolution. Some evolutionary traits may have come into existence by accident, but they remained because they were successful. They remained because they could naturally reproduce and were efficient users of energy, nutrients and space, and could out-compete other species or outlast the predators.

See the complete essay at www.newfarm.org/features/0904/thunder-hooves

Graze, then Rest

Joel Huesby

Grass is meant to be grazed and then rested—not just rested. The grasslands that have been left idle through the Conservation Reserve Program are largely dying and decaying ecosystems. Productivity is low, minerals and nutrients are not being cycled, energy is trapped in old material, and community dynamics tend toward a few dominant species. There appear to be fewer birds and wildlife if you talk to the Old Timers. Weeds are invading and must be sprayed, mowed, or burned, and the remaining bunchgrass has become “wolfey”

or is dying out altogether.

We are not unlike grass. We are not meant to become stagnant or rested for too long! Think of the ruts and habits—the routines we so easily tend to settle into. Yes, we too can also become less productive and “wolfey” when we are not managed for grazing/pruning and rejuvenation.

Perhaps this path of least resistance has led you to a ho-hum relationship with your spouse. When was the last time you had a meaningful night out talking and enjoying each other's company? Or perhaps the path has led you to depend excessively on tradition or ritual in your church or

faith life while neglecting a more personal relationship through devotion, prayer, and fellowship? Or perhaps in your professional circles and ag organizations, complacency sets in. Even your farm business may become less productive when it is not periodically challenged.

Yes, there are lessons to be learned from the grass!

Let's allow our lives to be “grazed” that our stored energy may benefit other living systems, that a few of our roots are pruned so that we may grow new roots in fresh soil, and that we are allowed to rest for a time...only to be grazed again.

You deserve a break together... You deserve a smooth farm transition...

Next Generation Fall 2008 Retreat

December 11, 2008 (10 a.m. start) to December 12, 2008 (1 p.m. end)

4-H Camp, Madrid, Iowa

Your commitment: Time, food to share, mileage to get there (no registration fee)

Please attend the full retreat with your family or transition partner.

Thursday, December 11

The program includes:

- ❖ Got Vision? Dreaming Your Future Farm
- ❖ Business Plan Basics
- ❖ Individual Values, Family Values
- ❖ Your Enterprises: What to add or strengthen? What information do you need? What decisions do you need to make?
- ❖ Your Work Force: Who does what around the farm? What are your family members' work abilities and needs?
- ❖ Also available: Individual business and estate planning consultations with the Beginning Farmer Center

Thursday evening:

- ❖ Relax, walk, share food and conversation, games
- ❖ Hear from PFI member Jerry Peckumn, and his son Tom on "Going Into Business Together: One Family's Story"

Friday, December 12

The program includes:

- ❖ Talkin' 'Bout My Generation: Meet with your own generation and decide what the other generation needs to know
- ❖ Great Expectations: Needs and Wants: How frugally do we want to live? How willing are you to have an off-farm job?
- ❖ Getting Down to Business: What legal relationship should you have? How do you limit your financial risk? How do you find long-term, low-interest loans?
- ❖ Group Help with Challenges
- ❖ Lunch, affirmations, and send off!

You will leave with:

- ❖ A better understanding and commitment to farming together
- ❖ A fun and meaningful time with your family
- ❖ A good start on portions of a business plan

Please note:

- ❖ It is not necessary to have attended PFI's previous Next Generation sessions to benefit fully from this retreat.
- ❖ "Building a Sustainable Business," a planning workbook, is provided for attendees, as are meals, snacks and lodging. Bring a dish and drink to share Thursday evening.
- ❖ Stipends are available to hire chore help while you're gone.
- ❖ Funded by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and members of Practical Farmers of Iowa

Helping with this programming:

- ❖ Craig Chase, Farm Management Specialist, ISU Extension
- ❖ Jerry Peckumn, PFI member transitioning his son into the farming business
- ❖ The Beginning Farmer Center
- ❖ PFI staff



Sam and Tom Beard have participated in the Next Generation program, along with dad Dan, mom Bonnie, sister Erin, and brother Parker. Tom has graduated from college and returned to the farm as a paid employee. He also raises corn and sheep on a separate farm. Erin works for MOSA and plans to farm. Sam and Parker are still in school, and foresee farming in their "adult" futures as well.

Cancelled: Harvest Party

Sally Worley

It is hard to find a more enriching experience than a farm tour. They encourage family bonding, being outdoors, exercise, and most of all, education. Farm tours educate about Iowa agriculture, community vitality, local food systems, and healthy eating choices. Sounds great—sign me up! However, are these tours, a glimpse into Iowa's rural landscape, threatened?

Susan Jutz of ZJ Farms near Solon certainly worries about the future of her farm tours—for good reason. This year,

“Farm tours are vital to the success of small farms as well as to communities.”

Susan Jutz

Johnson County Planning and Zoning Commission told Susan she would have to apply for a Conditional Use Permit for her harvest party. Thus, her ninth annual harvest party, scheduled for September 20, was cancelled. The agenda: farm tour, potluck, music, and children's activities.

The permit requires filling out an application. The approval can take up to several months, and the minimum fee is \$250. In addition, Susan was told that she might need to dust control her gravel road, which could cost up to \$2000. To cap off this surprise, planning and zoning personnel asked Susan if there would be alcohol at the harvest event. Susan commented that people sometimes bring a bottle of wine or six pack of beer if they so choose. They told her that she might then need to hire security for the event.

If you have attended a farm tour (you

are reading this newsletter so you most likely have), it seems bizarre to mandate these requirements. Richard Dvorak, Planning and Zoning Administrator, cites the Johnson County Land Use Ordinance when applying this regulation. The purpose of the ordinance is to “promote the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare, to conserve the values of property throughout the County, to lessen or avoid congestion in public streets and highways, and to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewage, schools, parks, and other public requirements.” To read the entire ordinance, visit: <http://www.johnson-county.com/zoning/pdf/ordinance/code.pdf>.

Susan asked for clarification in writing of the reasons why her event needed a conditional use permit. Richard Dvorak sent her affirmation in writing, that “it is my opinion that you would need a Conditional Use Permit for any, and all farm tours, and your harvest activities party.” This means that the field day Practical Farmers of Iowa hosted on her farm last June should have had a permit. What are the possible impacts of this recent requirement: will all Johnson County agriculture events require permits? Technically, yes, if Richard Dvorak's “opinion” remains the standard in the county.

Will this become a statewide policy? If the policy was implemented state-wide, Practical Farmers of Iowa's field day agenda would be cut significantly. The organization could not afford to purchase permits all over the state. Other organizations and farmers would also have to decrease their farm events, greatly reducing the access to farms and their enriching experiences.

Susan's reaction: “We decided NOT to apply for a permit as I believe I would be setting a precedent that would put all farmers who wish to hold educational/celebratory events on their farm in a difficult if not impossible situation.” She also did not appeal the ruling. “Filling out an appeal will acknowledge what he is saying.”

Currently, Susan is working with allies, including Farm Bureau, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Local Foods Connection, and her

CSA members (she has some lawyers in her membership) to decide how to act. “It's a policy issue that needs to be resolved at a state level. Farm tours are vital to the success of small farms as well as to communities. The people upholding this position don't realize what the impact would be.”

Susan holds many events on her farm. She has classes from the University of Iowa come to her farm. “I teach people how economic development can build community. I am not promoting myself, but local business support. The people in the classes will not in turn buy from me. They will graduate from college and move away, and hopefully take with them the importance of putting money into local communities.”

Susan also says that “There are many similar on-farm events across the state and across the nation which are held on a regular basis. I have yet to speak with anyone who has been required to have a permit for one of these events.”

Richard Dvorak writes that Susan has “moved beyond normal agricultural uses into providing some kind of education on site, tourist tours...and special events.” However, in a state with such agricultural heritage and a strong history of farm events as a way to educate the public: Aren't farm tours an inherent part of a farm system?

Hopefully there is a happy ending. Ideally, the issue will be resolved and farm tours can continue in Johnson County like they traditionally have—free of charge, sans permit. Definitely, we keep you updated. In the meantime, if you have comments or questions, please contact Sally Worley at sally@practicalfarmers.org, (515)232-5661.



Susan looks over a sunflower field at Eric and Ann Franzenburgs' farm

Biofuels: Part of the solution—or the problem?

An excerpt from PFI's policy listserv

“First, we should stop subsidizing energy production. Because we subsidize energy of all kinds (including fossil fuels), we drive down energy costs, which encourages consumption rather than conservation...precisely the wrong signal. If we allow political power (the state) to pick winners and losers, we don't realize efficient market solutions. Second, we should impose a carbon tax (or cap and trade) on energy to give cleaner sources a competitive advantage without selecting exactly which ones win. Let wind, solar, geothermal, nuclear and fossil fuels duke it out on a carbon-neutral playing field. Third, with the money saved on subsidies and collected from a carbon tax, the state can build rail systems. The efficiency of a steel wheel on a steel rail on an engineered grade is astounding. In summary: stop subsidies, tax carbon and go rail.

“Putting aside the morality of burning food in a world with a billion hungry people, subsidized food burning (biofuel) is harmful ecologically and inefficient economically. And let's please stop this cellulosic ethanol nonsense. Cellulose is not “waste.” Cellulose is food, food for ruminants. Ruminants convert it to food for everyone: meat and milk, plus hide and wool and other products. Cellulose protects soil. Cellulose adds organic matter to soil. Cellulose BECOMES soil. There is no free lunch. Harvesting whole plants for ethanol will quickly reduce soil quality by depleting fertility, reducing organic matter and destroying soil structure.

“Biofuel policy has been very good for Iowa, at least in the short run, because the subsidies are a massive wealth transfer to us and a tariff protects us from competition. That's why Iowa politicians, most Iowans and Iowa State are such boosters of ethanol in all its subsidized glory. What I don't understand is why so many non-Corn Belt Americans don't see the biofuel swindle for what it is. Finally, and I know I'm a dreamer, but I'm sad that so few Iowans look beyond self interest and see that biofuels are bad for the earth and worship at the altar of pie-in-sky biofuel mythology.”

~ Keith Kuper

“I don't think we should dismiss cellulosic ethanol made from perennials so readily. First, Iowa has a massive investment in infrastructure for producing ethanol. It will not be easily abandoned, but it could be converted to making cellulosic ethanol from perennials. If we are going to grow crops to produce ethanol, why not try to find a sustainable way to do so? The research data I have seen indicate that if perennial prairie plants are harvested once per year, very late in the season, a lot of the nutrients will have been translocated back down into the crop roots, so it will not require a lot of fertilizer to grow perennial prairie plants for ethanol. Also, prairie plants produce about as much biomass below the ground

as above the ground, so it would be possible to remove the above-ground plant and still maintain or increase soil organic matter – and protect the soil from erosion and nutrient leaching.

“Keith also makes a good point about the morality of burning food when a billion people are hungry. However, the problem is that farming in Iowa has never really been about feeding people (although it makes a good slogan for a seed corn cap). If it had been, farmers would have thought twice about selling corn for ethanol instead of food – they didn't. Surplus corn in Iowa does not translate into fewer hungry people around the world in places without the cash to buy it. The hard facts are that hunger is caused by poverty and powerlessness to produce one's own food. In fact, the case has been made well that our subsidized surplus commodities have contributed to hunger by displacing subsistence farmers in foreign lands when we dump commodities on the world market at below the cost of production.”

~ Francis Thicke

“The massive investment in ethanol infrastructure would never have been made without massive subsidies from federal, state and local government plus mandates and protectionism (tariff). The investors in ethanol have had a free ride up to now. Should I feel sorry for them if they can't carry their own weight after the big boost they had to get started? If they convert to cellulosic, more power to them, just don't ask the government (us) to foot the bill. The market abhors a vacuum. If there is profit in cellulosic ethanol, it will be produced with no help from the taxpayer.

“Francis is probably right that a single late-season (or better yet, spring) cutting of perennial top growth would probably be far more sustainable than conventional corn production. Is it economically viable? Let's let the market decide. If we carbon taxed the huge energy input of conventional corn it probably would be. Come to think of it, if we carbon taxed, crop rotation/organic farming would be back in style and Iowa would lead the nation in beef production like it did when I was a kid.”

~ Keith Kuper

For more stimulating policy discussion, join the PFI policy listserv. Send an email to gordon@practicalfarmers.org to be added to the list.

PFI also has a general listserv (events, Q&A, items for sale, etc.), grazing listserv, and horticulture listserv. Email gordon@practicalfarmers.org to be added to any of these lists.

Home Marries Old and New Techniques

Don Adams and Nan Bonfils had three main goals when they designed their new house. "First we wanted it to be energy efficient and durable. We also wanted it to look like a new old house, to fit in with buildings in the community," said Don. With the help of David Hade and Iowa Home Crafters, they met their objectives. The floor plan of the living area is moderate size, but the openness makes the space feel abundant and welcoming. Materials used throughout the house are high quality, lending natural beauty and dependable craftsmanship.

The house incorporates efficiencies both state of the art and from the past, complex and simple. Here are some examples:

- ❖ The main heat source for the house is a wood furnace. The heat is circulated throughout the house via a duct system. There is not a conventional furnace.
- ❖ Solar hot water system
- ❖ Air conditioning through dehumidified earth loop
- ❖ Dual flush low flow toilets, with one handle for a full flush for solid wastes, and another handle for a reduced flush for liquid wastes.
- ❖ Windows are strategically placed

for good ventilation control.

- ❖ Whole house rain water collection system
- ❖ Root cellar (see page 16 for more details on this)
- ❖ Canning kitchen in basement
- ❖ Universal design, barrier-free design that promotes accessibility for all people, throughout the home
- ❖ Hot water recycling system

The home has personal touches that add character. The master bathroom uses fixtures salvaged from the farm—for instance, the toilet paper holder is a rotary hoe spike. The closet doors in the basement are covered with heirloom quilts. The home was situated carefully as well. Iowa Home Crafters did not remove any trees from the building site and stayed away from the drip line of the standing trees. The back porch opens to an oak grove, and you get a glimpse of the pond through the trees. In this residence, old and new create a wonderful place to come home.

Attend the Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Conference to hear Don talk more about the details of his new home. For more information about energy efficient homes, you can also contact David Hade of Iowa Home Crafters at (515)290-5432.



Don displays insulation under the stairs. High performance insulation is installed throughout the house.



The house contains native wood floors and a custom built door. The wood for the door came from a tree at Nan and Don's Full Circle Farm.

Labor Needs?

Hire a New Iowan

The New Iowan Centers of Iowa Workforce Development can help you find much needed laborers. The New Iowan Center helps migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFW), and the farmers who employ them, get connected with each other.

PFI member Duane Black has used this service for the last two years with success. "It's free, you put your information online, and get results."

Simply contact your local Workforce office or call (800)562-4692 (JOB IOWA) for the New Iowan Center nearest you. More information may also be found on the web at <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/centers/newiowan/index.html>

Host a Foreign Farmer

The Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA) program connects foreign farmers with host farms in the U.S. MESA matches stewards from other countries with hosts in the U.S. through a "share and learn" method of farming. Hosts mentor and provide accommodations for the MESA stewards for a full season, and contribute monthly program fees that enable MESA to offer steward benefits, including: visa sponsorship, orientation and exit seminars, medical insurance, stipends, domestic travel and coordinator support.

If interested in more information contact the program directly at mesa@mesaprogram.org or (510)654-8858.



Want to talk about labor needs at the Annual Conference? Contact Sarah Carlson at sarah@practicalfarmers.org or (515)232-5661.

-Your Farm a Hundred Years From Now- continued from page 15

According to a study, "Farm Succession in Iowa," by John Baker and Mike Duffy of the Beginning Farmer Center, nearly one-third of Iowa farmers who responded claimed they intended never to retire; other feedback suggests that "current retirement decisions may lead to financial and familial conflict, particularly retirees' intentions to draw retirement income from the continued operation or sale of their farm," write Baker and Duffy.

Expectations were clear for Ron Dunphy, who farms near Creston. "There was always a meeting of the minds with my son and nephew: I would retire at 65." Ron has now sold his son, Todd, and nephew Tim Dunphy his farm and a swine-finishing unit. He still owns land he inherited from his ancestors, some of which his son and nephew will crop share.

"My dad retired when he was 57 so that my brother could farm. I didn't appreciate the sacrifice my dad had made in income to make that happen."

Ron wanted to do the same for his son. "At some point, though, the older generation needs to get out of the way. But I also realize that older people are scared of medical costs and need to build their nest. Succession has to be tailored to needs and desires."

If you have successes, concerns, or stories to tell about your family's estate planning efforts, I would love to hear them. I am very keen to see your legacies preserved! Contact me at teresa@practicalfarmers.org or (515)232-5661.



Ron Dunphy has sold his son and nephew his row crop and swine operations. He continues to graze cattle.

Web Resources

Beginning Farmer Center:
www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc

Joe Hawbaker, "Farm and Ranch Estate Planning: An Introduction," Center for Rural Affairs:
www.cfra.org

American Farmland Trust has info on farm transfer and estate planning:
www.farmlandinfo.org

Estate Planning Guide, by Roger McEowen: www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM993.pdf

In Future Issues:

- ❖ Keeping the Farm -- and the Conservation
- ❖ Land Values: Concentrating Wealth; Limiting Beginning Farmers

-Food Storage- continued from page 17

A few examples of outside storage include:

- ❖ Garden row storage: Mulching carrots or beets will keep them from freezing into winter.
- ❖ Hale bay fortress: Insulating with bales of hay on all sides will keep perishables viable for a longer period.
- ❖ Small tents help protect plants from cold wind and temperatures and trap in heat.
- ❖ Mounds of vegetables, such as potatoes, can be insulated with straw and soil, ventilated, covered in plastic and stored throughout the winter.
- ❖ An old refrigerator can be gutted and buried for storage.
- ❖ Earth pits require almost no materials and are a good way to keep hardy storers.

Many outbuildings such as a shed or garage have space that can be converted into a food storage area. Cartons, coolers, boxes and bins are a cheap way to add insulation. Sawdust and sand can add additional protection. Outbuildings with dirt floors are good candidates for an earth pit. The roof of the building will remove access issues of an outdoor earth pit when there is snow or ice on the ground.

Inside the home, there are nooks and crannies where food storage is possible. Some areas, such as attics and cellars, are already equipped for food storage. Attics are a good dry place to store squash and pumpkins. Many basement cellars in older houses were built

with an area where the floor was left as dirt for the purpose of food storage. If your basement is warm due to the furnace, insulate an area to better maintain temperature. There may be an unused guest room, closet, or window in the home that you can convert to a food storage area by turning off the heat source in that area and insulating it from the rest of the house.

Record

As with all farming ventures, record your costs and earnings from season extension through food storage. What crops make the most money? The least? Which are easiest to fit into the overall growing plan for the farm?

With a little planning, space, and common sense, food storage can provide farmers and their customers with healthy food throughout the winter—just like in the "old days."

Practical Farmers of Iowa plans to address food storage more at a field day in the spring of 2009. If you have experience with food storage, and can provide information on: varieties, structures, markets, budgeting, schedules, etc., please contact Sally Worley at (515)232-5661 or sally@practicalfarmers.org. If you are potentially interested in participating in a research and demonstration project in 2009 pertaining to root cellars, contact Sally for that as well.

Source: Bubel, Mike and Nancy. *Root Cellaring*. Storey Publishing, 1991.

Calendar

November

16th National Small Farm Trade Show and Conference, November 6-8, Boone County Fairgrounds, Columbia, MO. Conference offers a variety of seminars, talks, farmer forums, and demonstrations for the small farmer. For more information call (800)633-2535 or visit <http://www.smallfarmtoday.com/tradeshows/default.asp> to register.

Lecture by Tarla Peterson, November 6, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. 8 p.m. Peterson researches the intersections between communication, environmental policy and democracy. For more information visit: <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~ceah/seminars.htm>

Midwest Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health Forum, November 20-21, Radisson Quad City Plaza, Davenport, Iowa. Updated information on agricultural health and safety, collaboration among researchers, health-care professionals, agricultural producers and policy-makers. Cost: \$175 For more information contact Eileen Fisher at (319)335-4924 or visit <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/>

December

2008 Acres U.S.A Conference and Trade Show, December 4-6, Hyatt Regency St. Louis at Union Station, St. Louis, Missouri. Several hundred eco-minded individuals from around

the world gather together to tap the knowledge of some of agriculture's brightest minds. For more information visit: <http://www.acresusa.com>.

January

Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference, January 22-23, Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, MN. Address issues such as farm business management, marketing your products and on-farm bio energy options. For information please contact: River Country RC&D Council Inc. (715)834-9672 or visit: <http://www.rivercountryrcd.org/valad.html>

See a comprehensive list of events at www.practicalfarmers.org

New PFI Members- Welcome!

District 1

Del Brockshus, *Spencer*
Clint Brown, *Merrill*
Marvin and Ruth Duhn, *Emmetsburg*
Gary and Ann Holck, *Spencer*
Mike and Barb Johnson, *Spencer*
Gary Otto, *Cherokee*
John and Janna Wesselius, *Sioux Center*
Whiterock Conservancy, Emily Babin, *Coon Rapids*

District 2

Steve Banks, *Boone*
Sarah Carlson, *Ames*
Matthew Hoffman, *Ames*
Sarah Huffman, *Ames*
Peter Lundeen, *Ames*
Quakerdale Farm, Rob Talbot, *New Providence*
Carolyn and Andrew Ross, *Ogden*
Richard Schinnow, *Rock Falls*
Wholesome Harvest, Wende Elliott, *Colo*

District 3

Merwin and Frances Briggs, *Waverly*
Freeman Helmuth, *Independence*

Jim Kraus, *Luzerne*

District 4

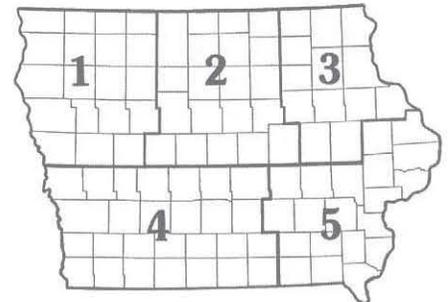
Todd Coffelt, *Urbandale*
Jan Craig, *Panora*
Susan Eriksen, *Waukee*
John Holveck, *Des Moines*
Edward Kinnick, *Bayard*
Dan Kopatich and Kim Gunnes, *Des Moines*
Tom Miller, *Norwalk*
Brian and Cheryl Ness, *Newton*
Alix and Mary Jane Paez, *Johnston*
Vaughn and Cindy Pittz, *Missouri Valley*
Jesse Robbins, *Indianola*
Greg Van Den Bergh, *Urbandale*
Ben Ray Yoder, *Moulton*

District 5

Nan Fawcett, *West Branch*
Greg and Darla Fenno, *Columbus Junction*
Michael and Bonnie Garvin, *North Liberty*
Calvin Groenendyk, *Leighton*
Wayne Humphreys, *Columbus Junction*
Zach Knutson, *Ottumwa*
Tom McDermott, *Camanche*
John A. Schrock, *Bloomfield*

District 6 (Outside of Iowa)

American Organic Seed, Art Acheele, *Warren, IL*
George and Anne Bird, *Holt, MI*
Chloe Diegel, *Vergennes, VT*
Brad and Leslea Hodgson, *Fountain, MN*
Garth and Johi Lloyd, *Arbela, MO*
North Central Regional-SARE, Joan Benjamin, *Lincoln, NE*
Frederick Rose, *Saint Paul, MN*



Cedar Johnson Bids Farewell

It has been an empowering experience working with such a thoughtful and creative group of people. I've learned so much from all of you and am thankful for the chance to work for an organization that is such a positive influence. I'm looking forward to the day that I can check "Farmer" on my PFI member information form. Until then, I'll enjoy raising up an invaluable part of our "Someday Acres," our firstborn son. Thanks for all you're doing to leave our land in a better condition for the next generation.



Cedar and Lewis Johnson
"Someday Acres," our firstborn son. Thanks for all you're doing to leave our land in a better condition for the next generation.

Iowa Food Cooperative is Now Taking Members

Jason Jones, Board President

The past couple of months have been a flurry of activity to get the co-op operational. In September the IFC board was formed. There are six board members, three consumers and three farmers, with all of the farmers being PFI members. I am currently serving as the President. Since then board members and other volunteers have been working to renovate the mall space.

Much has been accomplished to make the IFC active.

Over 60 members have joined the Iowa Food Coop. The cost of membership is \$50.00, with an annual renewal fee of \$10.00. To find out more about the Iowa Food Cooperative please visit the IFC website at www.iowafood.org. There you will find information on how the cooperative will

work. You can also join on-line.

If you have questions that the website does not answer please feel free to contact myself at (515)202-6473 or jjones@thehomestead.org or Gary Huber at (515)232-5661 or gary@practicalfarmers.org. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with you to strengthen Iowa's farms and local food resources.

Board Update

The PFI Board of Directors met on August 25th at the Iowa Arboretum to discuss the various issues at hand for PFI. Discussion included a preview for 2009, a review of the annual conference schedule and work on Strategic Plan 2009-2012.

At this time, it appears this coming year will be a very busy year (2009) for PFI with many opportunities to help farmers with various endeavors. Funding has been secured to help with grass-based livestock production, fruit and vegetable production, new farmers and the next generation farmers among other areas. The annual conference, being held in Marshalltown this year, has been pretty well finalized. This should be one more great annual conference with something for everyone and plenty of opportunity to connect with farmers conducting similar ventures on their farms. The board also continued work on the update of the Strategic Plan 2009-2012. We should be able to finalize the new plan by the annual conference in January.



Eric Franzenburg
President, Board of Directors

Greetings from PFI's new Membership Coordinator

Howdy Everybody,

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Suzi Bernhard. I am going to be taking over Cedar's position here at the office. Her shoes are going to be difficult to fill, but I will sure try!

I was raised in Monona, IA. While I was growing up, my Dad and I raised and sold vegetables at the farmers markets in Monona and McGregor. I also raised meat and purebred rabbits, and we had a smattering of other animals including poultry, goats, and Jacob sheep. Most of my summers were spent at the farmers market, mowing lawns with my Dad, and showing rabbits and goats at the Clayton County Fair. I was also very involved in my local 4-H club.

After high school I spent a year at Drake University, and then transferred to Iowa State University, where I studied Agricultural Business.

My classes ranged anywhere from Economic Optimization to Farm Business Management. I first encountered PFI at a field day in early fall 2006, and from there talked Teresa into letting me intern, which I continued through spring of 2008.

I am excited to be a part of the progressive things that are happening here at PFI. The members here are some of the neatest people that I have met, and everyone has great experience and opinions to share about everything under the sun. I can't wait to talk with you and get to know what you are passionate about!

Sincerely,
Suzi



From the Desk of Gordon Reeder, New Communications Intern



Gordon with his daughter Leila

A professional student in my 22nd year of academic pursuits, I have reached the legal age to drink in the classroom. I am enrolled in the new MFA program at Iowa State in Creative Writing and Environment.

Although not native to Iowa, I have long been interested in the complex contradictions of its natural beauty and the commercial burdens on its landscape.

I am a husband, father of 2 girls (0 and 2 years old), and a dog owner, therefore devoid of most free time. When I do have time to myself, it is spent trying to finish my thesis entitled, *Getting it Right, Doing it Wrong*, and keeping score of every Cubs game from the comfort of my sofa.

PFI Merchandise

Christmas is coming!

PFI T-shirts and hats make the perfect present for the sustainable farmer in your life.

Casual Cap—\$12

Khaki, Velcro closure, "Healthy Food, Diverse Farms, Vibrant Communities" tagline printed on back.



_____ QTY _____ \$

Farmer Cap—\$8

Summer style farmer cap with light denim cotton front and mesh back.



_____ QTY _____ \$

T-shirt—\$10

Heavyweight, 6.1 oz 100% cotton jersey in S, L-2XL. White with full-color Buy Fresh, Buy Local logo on front.



_____ QTY _____ SIZE _____ \$

Grocery Tote—\$10

Natural color 100% cotton canvas tote with full color Buy Fresh, Buy Local logo. Perfect for grocery shopping, or taking to the farmers market.



_____ QTY _____ \$

Practical Farmers of Iowa
PO Box 349
Ames, IA 50010
(515)232-5661
www.practicalfarmers.org



Notecards—\$6 for set of 8

Colorful, picturesque photos of Iowa's agricultural landscape by Jerry Dewitt

_____ QTY _____ \$

White PFI T-shirt, Size S-XL—\$15

PFI logo on front with tagline on back



_____ QTY _____ \$

Colored PFI T-shirt, available in gray, orange, and safety green, Size S-XL—\$15

Scenic landscape with Practical Farmers of Iowa caption on front of shirt



_____ QTY _____ \$

Subtotal: _____
S & H:* _____
Total: _____

***Shipping and Handling: \$3 for the first item, \$1 for each additional item**

Payment

- Check Payable to:
Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Credit Card
 - Mastercard
 - Visa

Card Number: _____
Expiration Date: _____
Signature: _____

Support Our Efforts ~ Sustain Our Work

This annual membership is a:

- new membership
- renewal

I am joining at the level of:

- Student—\$15
- Individual—\$25
- Farm or Household—\$35
- Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—\$50

My interest in joining PFI is primarily as a:

- farmer/grower
- non-farmer (You will have the opportunity to expand upon this when you receive your membership information form.)

Each membership includes one vote and one subscription to *The Practical Farmer*.

Sustain PFI

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

I would like to make a tax deductible donation to PFI in the amount of:

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

Individual or Farm or Organization Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Primary Phone (with area code): _____

Alternate Phone (with area code): _____

E-mail: _____

* For Farm/Household membership, please list names of persons included.

* For Organization membership, please list one or two contact persons.

Payment:

Total: \$_____ = \$_____ membership + \$_____ donation + \$_____ merchandise (from opposite page)

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

Credit Card Visa MasterCard

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

Our Vision for Iowa



Food that is celebrated
for its freshness
and flavor
and connection
to local farmers
to seasons
to hard work
and good stewardship



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



Communities that are alive
with diverse connections
between farmers and non-farmers;
places where commerce, cooperation, creativity
and spirituality are thriving;
places where the working landscape, the fresh air
and the clear water remind us of all that is good about Iowa



Practical Farmers of Iowa

137 Lynn Avenue, Suite 200

Ames, Iowa 50014

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Waterloo, IA
Permit No. 901

Healthy Food, Diverse Farms, Vibrant Communities