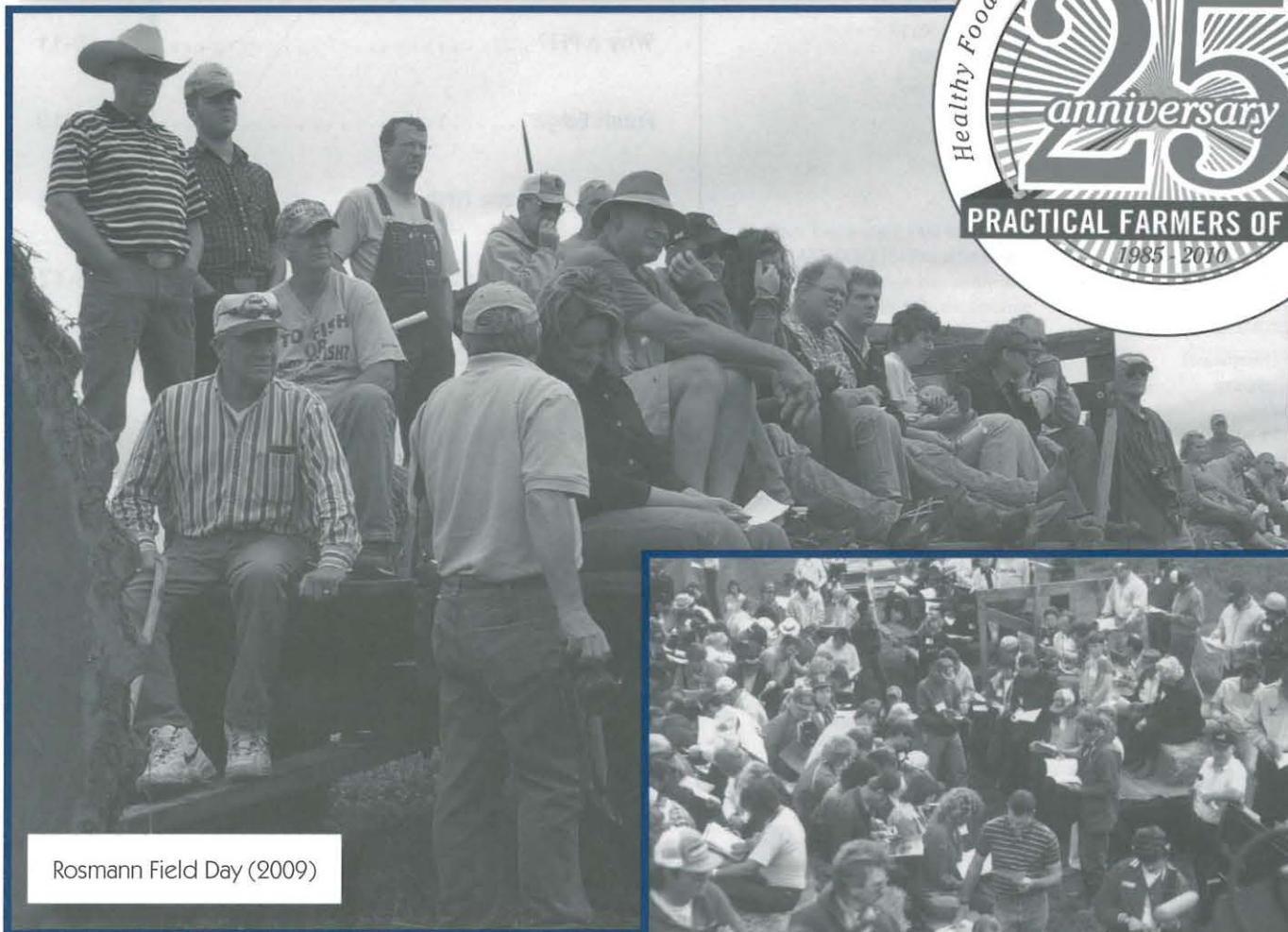


the **Practical Farmer**

A Newsletter of Practical Farmers of Iowa • Vol. 25, #1 • Winter 2010



Rosmann Field Day (2009)



Thompson Field Day (1988)

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Cover: From Dick and Sharon Thompson's 1988 field day, to Ron and Maria Rosmann's 2009 field day, and all points in between, PFI members have logged a lot of hours on their tractors sharing their farming practices with others.



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For the Next Generation



This spot is now under over two feet of snow! Teresa Opheim enjoys a sunny moment with Thea, daughter of Mike Natvig and Amy Miller, at Earl Hafner's 2009 field day.

Happy 25th Anniversary to Practical Farmers of Iowa! It was wonderful to see so many of you at the conference, and a special treat to have our founders Dick and Sharon Thompson and Larry Kallem there to celebrate with us.

Thanks to the 175 members who sent in their member surveys this year. **You sure are thinking about the Next Generation.** A focus on beginning farmers is the current PFI program you value most—and your highest ranked priority for our future programming. You will be excited to learn more and support PFI's new Jubilee campaign to fund a Next Generation Savings Incentive Program: With this program, we all will help our beginning farmers develop the skills and save the nest eggs they need to succeed at farming.

Along with the Next Generation program, business planning and market development help, soil and water quality, fruit and vegetable programming, and saving energy/money on the farm round out your top five priorities for future PFI programming.

"Field Days are very important, but I can't seem to get away to take advantage of them," several of you reported. That's why we're adding online events that you can view without taking the time and expense of traveling to field days. Visit our website to view a video on building a hoophouse (filmed at Laura Krouse's hoophouse raising

last April) and "farminars" on choosing an enterprise, developing a marketing strategy, estate planning, niche pork farm tours, and more.

If you're not already, I'd like to give you gentle encouragement to join our online PFI community. So much information and networking is being shared! That's why the listserv is your third most popular networking tool. To join the listserv, send an email to sally@practicalfarmers.org. However: There is no substitute for face-to-face meetings—and you agree. Field Days and the annual conference are your favorite networking tools.

(By the way, 76 percent of you report that you have high-speed Internet, 15 percent have dial-up, and 9 percent have no Internet at all.)

On behalf of the PFI staff: We are proud so many of you report that we listen to our members. That is our goal. Thank you for your support of PFI staff and of Practical Farmers of Iowa. Onward to the next 25 years!

Teresa Opheim
Executive Director

Please support PFI's new campaign

to fund a Savings Incentive Program.

Contact Luke Gran to find out how.



Featured farm dog: Tipper earns her keep on the farm. Here she helps Greg Koether herd sheep.

Annual Conference 2010



1



4



2



5



3

Over 350 attended Jubilee! 1) Dan, Lorna and Torray Wilson chat with Bonnie Beard; 2) People congregate at dinner to feast on a delicious local menu; 3) Megan Sickels, Beth Wilber, Chris Corbin, and Kim Smith listen as farmers detail pros and cons of different marketing avenues; 4) Donna Prizgintas and Andrew Dunham discuss food and farming; 5) Lorinda Cory cruises with one shoe on and one shoe off through the Exhibit Hall with mom Mary and brother James; 6) Patly Clary-Sage of Frontier was one of many gracious sponsors that contributed to a record sponsorship year and beautiful Exhibit Hall; 7) Julie and Mike Donaghy have a candid conversation; 8) Donna Prizgintas and Joyce Lock demonstrate how to cook healthy local foods; 9) Jill Beebout and Cedar Johnson share a laugh; 10) Ron and Maria Rosmann receive the Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award; 11) Jeff Kling, Deb Tidwell, and Mike Natvig discuss farm policy; 12) Mark Runquist and Linda Barnes share the love.



6

Annual Conference 2010



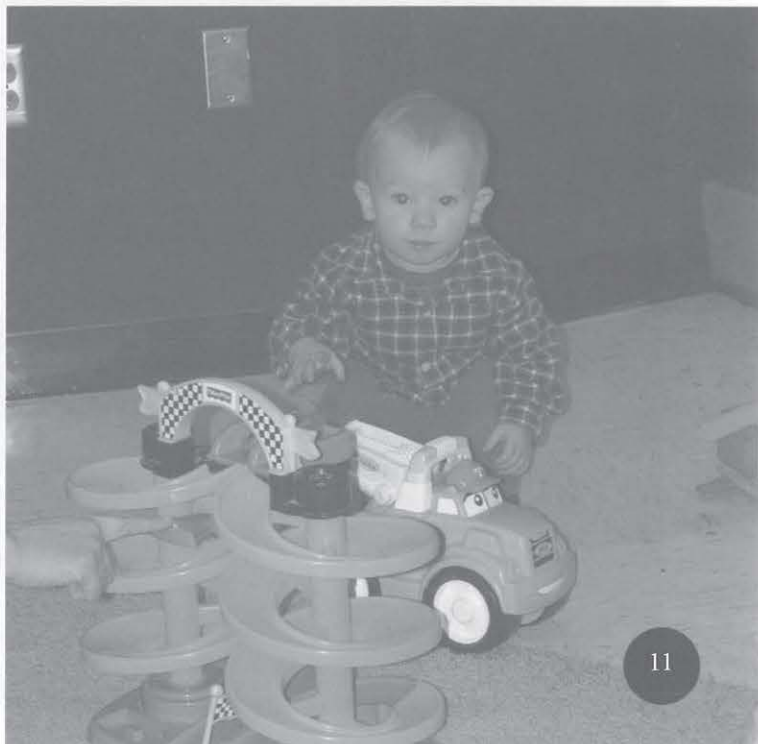
2010 Annual Conference



1) Veg heads Rob Faux, Mark Quee, Sean Skeehan, and Andrew Dunham share stories; 2) Rick and Stacy Hartmann are very happy to make it to the conference after their road was plowed; 3) Tom and Irene Frantzen thank Dick and Sharon Thompson and Larry Kallem for creating Practical Farmers of Iowa 25 years go; 4) Scott Weinberg, Francis Blake, and Dan Specht enjoy listening to Gearld Fry in "What's Your Beef?" on Friday afternoon; 5) Gary Zimmer talks about the complexity of soils beyond N, P, and K with JoAn van Balen; 6) Attendees flock to James Nisly's Organic Greens at Saturday lunch; 7) Jerry Carlson, Jeri Neal, Andrew Hug, Francis Thicke, and Aaron Woolf think predicting life 25 years from now is fun! 8) Phil Damery takes a serious approach to pondering our world in 25 years; 9) Kayla Koether, dressed in garb older than her, offers a young person's view on the future of agriculture; 10) Eric Franzenburg, Rich Pirog, and Nina Biensen talk shop between sessions; 11) Gabe Bahrenfusse misses his friends that attended the conference last year, but still finds fun at the conference.



2010 Annual Conference



Farm Transitions

Honor the Past, Make Choices for the Future

Luke Gran



Dunphy Family Photo: Susan, Ron, Colton, Todd, Dottie, Amy, and Barbara (Dottie's Mother)

Paper Lunch

In Union County, southwest Iowa, pressure from two decades of farm depression was lifting. The banker told a farm family a neighbor's 80 acre farm was available, and the bank would loan money on a signature, with only a small down payment.

The farmers had no money at all and the family agonized over this for several days. One day, the men came in for lunch and there on the table was \$1,000. A great-uncle had placed it there, and it was enough to get the loan.

This example from the Dunphy family, like many farm

families, demonstrates the history of sacrifices made to extend the legacy of the farm another generation.

Ron began farming in 1972. Uncle Ed Hanrahan assisted his start-up in the form of a personal sale on contract of animals and his own share of machinery.

In 1973, at age 57, Ron's father Gene retired to allow Ron's brother, Tom "T.L." Dunphy to farm. Today, Ron remembers this with tears of appreciation, "with a decade of earning potential remaining, that's a big sacrifice. He wasn't thinking of himself."

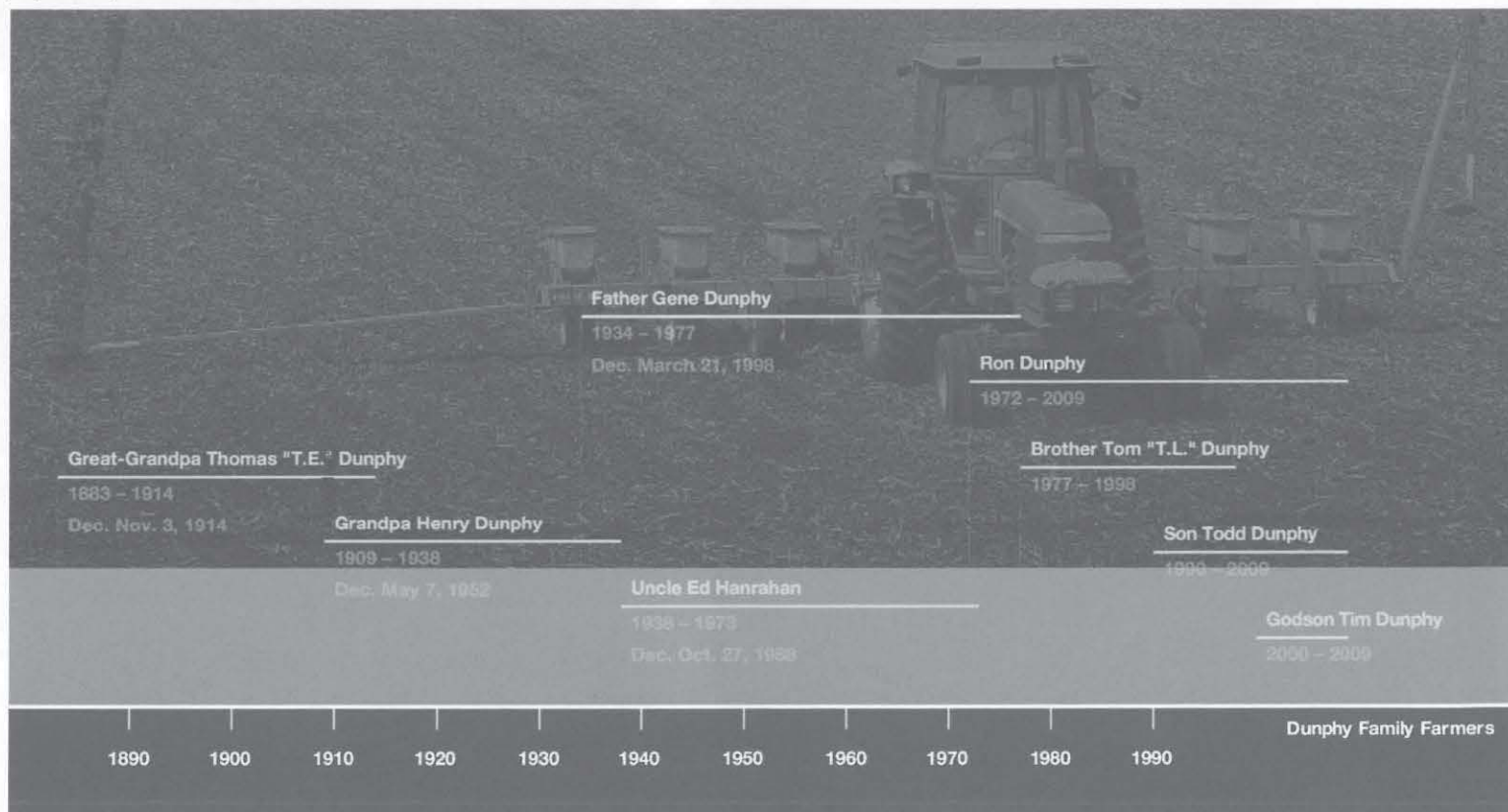
In the late 1980's the farm was again poised to transition to the next generation. Ron's son Todd, who had found suit-and-tie work in California, decided, "I gotta go back to Iowa and farm, it's what I want to do." Todd's girlfriend at the time, Susan, didn't foresee life on the farm, so Todd returned home to Iowa, alone.

Six months later, they were engaged and after the wedding, Susan left everything behind to be with her husband.

Dunphy Farming Today

Ron Dunphy has been retiring over the past few years as his son Todd and nephew Tim have come into the operation. His operations included over 1,000 acres rowcrops (some organic), 150 head of cattle, hogs, and experiments from marshalling a regional feeder cattle cooperative, to growing hybrid seed corn (by hand), and even giant pumpkins for

Dunphy Family Timeline



Des Moines folks.

The family farm is held by the heirs of the Gene Dunphy and Ed Hanrahan estates as “undivided interests.” This legal term means all co-owners bear collective responsibility to land use or sales and pay equal shares in its income, gain, or loss. Tim and Todd own their own land in addition to tenant farming the family farm.

Todd got his start in 1988, working with his Uncle Tom and getting paid a salary. “I pulled my 401k out early, paid the penalty, and put it into cows,” remembers Todd, “and that has worked out well.” Soon, Todd was managing two chicken houses for Campbell’s Soup®. He owns 300 acres, half of which is in pasture, and has built up his cow/calf herd to 100 cows. By 2000, Todd was set-up with diversified agricultural enterprises including rowcrop (some organic), chickens, cattle, and their valuable manure.

“I saw Ron’s passion for farming and followed him.”

Tim Dunphy

Ron characterizes his godson Tim Dunphy, and his wife Allison as “great, bright, hard working young people.” Tim joined the family farm working for Ron in 2000. His start was buying cows in partnership while using Ron’s equipment for some custom haying (mow, rake, and bale). Ron paid Tim hourly, which was recorded daily, and sometimes paid in grain.

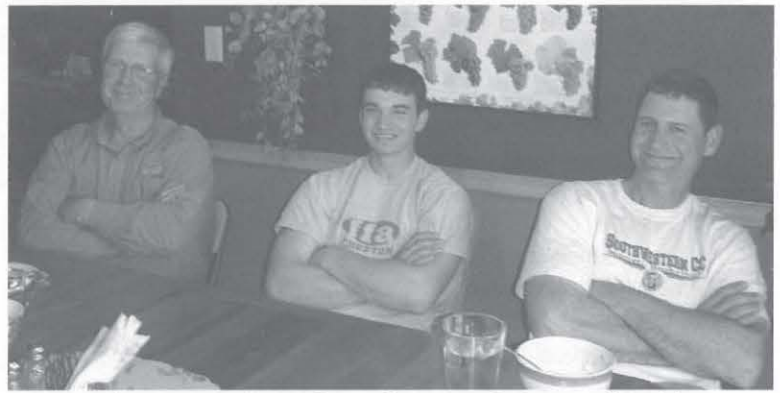
Tim works with the crop and animal production as owner and will buy Ron’s hog confinements this year, completing the transition of farm assets to the next generation. There is a lot of mutual respect and a good relationship exists between them. At Ron’s retirement party, Tim stood up and said “I saw Ron’s passion for farming and followed him.”

A “Do What It Takes” Lifestyle

Ron acknowledges the help he received to get started, but “I’d say the big reason we are here is that we were willing to do what it takes. We’ve lived simply, I’ve bought two new trucks all my life,” pointing over his shoulder to a shiny white pick-up, just a few weeks old.

It was clear in talking with Todd Dunphy that it takes strong stomachs to compete in commodity markets. “We pick up birds every day,” explains Todd, referring to the birds that are dead on the floor, a common issue in large chicken houses.

With these pains, there can be significant gains. “Those chicken houses were expensive to put up 19 years ago, but looking back, they have provided consistent payback, helped



Three generations of Dunphys: Ron, Colton, and Todd

pay our mortgage, helped me buy new equipment and more land,” says Todd. Having a good relationship with grain brokers, with whose help wise future grain selling decisions are made, has helped the farm through volatile price swings.

Exploration

“For both of my sons it was understood from an early age their education would extend through college and it would be necessary to work for somebody else before they could come back to the farm,” says Ron Dunphy. He sold insurance in the Twin Cities for years before coming back to farm in 1972.

“Our request to both of our boys was if you end up here, on this Dunphy land, that’s great. but you will not start out here,” says Dottie Dunphy.

The encouragement for exploration in the family is so strong that it has extended to their hired employee, Kyle. “We tell him ‘Get out of here, get off to college, the longer you wait the harder it is to leave,’” says Todd. “We hate to lose him, he does great work, it’s not in our best interest to see him go, but it’s best for him in the long run.”

Role of Women in Succession

In the Dunphy family, as in many families, the women have quite a challenging arrangement. As Dottie puts it “We’ll take care of the social things in life, the home, family, and you [the men] do the farming, the physical work...not only will we do that, we will provide some of the income.”

Dottie has always been very supportive in assisting with farm marriages, in which farm women traditionally cope with long work hours and a lack of time from partners to share family duties including childcare. Dottie supports her daughter and niece with counsel. “We laughingly call it the farmer attitude,” understanding their husband’s value system.

Susan’s role in farm transition has changed much over the past 19 years. Year one was caring for calves and occasionally driving tractors. Her role quickly developed into financial management. “Never had I dreamed of being

Why a PFI?

After 25 years of field days, on-farm trials, conferences, and other cooperator projects, some things stay the same: the ideas on which PFI was founded.

On December 13, 1985, Practical Farmers of Iowa held its first winter meeting at the Gateway Center in Ames. "December 13 was one of the coldest days of the winter, and at least one car didn't want to go home when it was all over," according to a report in the first *Practical Farmer* newsletter. "The fifty-or-so hardy people who made it to Ames not only selected the first regular board of directors from among the members, they came away with an

earful of information," including Sharon Thompson talking about hog production without antibiotics.

Before that first annual conference, however, Dick and Sharon Thompson and Larry Kallem had laid the foundations for this internationally recognized group dedicated to farmers learning from each other. Core original members such as Vic Madsen, Ron Rosmann, and Tom Frantzen soon articulated the ideas that guide PFI to this day: a focus on the practical, on sharing information, encouraging others to explore, and more.



Dick Thompson helps create PFI's guiding documents at an early board meeting

Idea: Focus on the Practical

Maybe we should have named the group 'usable' instead of 'practical' farmers of Iowa. We were looking for information that's usable, information that can be applied.

-- Dick Thompson

Idea: Share and Promote

On Feb. 21-22, 1986, the first PFI Board of Directors "took steps to set the course of the organization," as a PFI newsletter reported, and set the priorities... The board felt the priorities are the following:

A. Finding and sharing ways to profitably reduce the use of such purchased inputs as herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers and antibiotics—both to lower production costs and to maintain a healthy environment.

B. Promotion of conservation and improvement of the land, through: 1. rotations and cover crops; 2. residue handling and tillage systems; 3. manure handling in livestock systems; 4. avoiding unnecessary compaction and maintaining good soil structure.

-- *The Practical Farmer* (Spring 1986)

Idea: Strengthen Culture in Agriculture

The common basis of all PFI activities is the development and preservation of agricultural skills. These skills are what form the "culture" in agriculture. If we work together, we can shape them into a diverse, productive, and creative portion of our society.

-- Tom Frantzen

Idea: Help People Develop Farms and Communities

PFI can do nitrogen tests, but it also has to have communication and community.

We sometimes underestimate the power of examples and of practicing what we preach. Many members are developing farming systems by putting together practices proven by our research plots. The resulting farming systems have dramatic profit potential compared to conventional corn and soybeans. We feel PFI serves best by helping people develop their farms and communities.

-- Vic Madsen

Idea: Serve a Broad Spectrum of Farmers

PFI should strive to appeal to as broad a spectrum of farmers as possible, from purely organic growers to those who haven't begun to reduce inputs.

-- *The Practical Farmer* (Spring 1986)



Tom Frantzen makes a point at a 1988 talk



Sharon Thompson poses with Rick Exner and Sady Garcia, a visiting agronomist from Peru

Idea: Work Toward Stewardship, Improved Farm Net Income

The time is ripe to capitalize on the concern throughout the state for clean drinking water and improved farm net income. These two issues have attracted the attention of newspapers, radio, and television, and should by now be concerning state officials. Through friendly exposure we can plant a seed in the minds of these officials; then, when they are seeking solutions to problems of chemical abuse in agriculture, they may remember us as a source of constructive information.

-- *The Practical Farmer* (Fall 1986)

Idea: Encourage Individual Experimentation

It is important for agricultural science to be open to ideas. The agricultural scientific establishment has a proud record of accomplishment in generating ideas. But American agriculture also has a rich tradition of the individual tinkerer, inventor, and general innovator sometimes ahead of the scientific establishment



Cindy and Vic Madsen with sons Eric (left) and Mark

in originating ideas. Many such persons are experimenting with alternative ways to grow crops, husband animals, conserve the soil, use fewer inputs, and protect the quality of food and water.

-- Dick Thompson

Idea: Stay Open

We don't have it all figured out. We're always learning. That's what PFI is about. There are two different opinions with everything, so it's best to be open.

-- Sharon Thompson



Ron Rosmann talks grazing at a field day

Idea: Look at The Whole Picture

We always have to keep in perspective the whole picture; by that I mean the fabric of our whole society and where we may be heading.

Here is a partial list of what I think the ingredients of sustainable agriculture should be:

- ❖ Diversified crop and livestock operation
- ❖ Lower fertilizer and pesticide inputs
- ❖ Fairly labor-intensive
- ❖ Not too large
- ❖ Utilizing "appropriate sizes and types" of technology
- ❖ Employs water and soil stewardship principles
- ❖ Is family and community centered
- ❖ Relies more on self-ingenuity and experience for answers to farming problems
- ❖ Children partake in responsibilities on the farm
- ❖ There should be closeness to God and nature
- ❖ There should be a fair economic return for labor and production
- ❖ A large plant and animal species gene pool should be maintained

Some of the intended results of these ingredients would include:

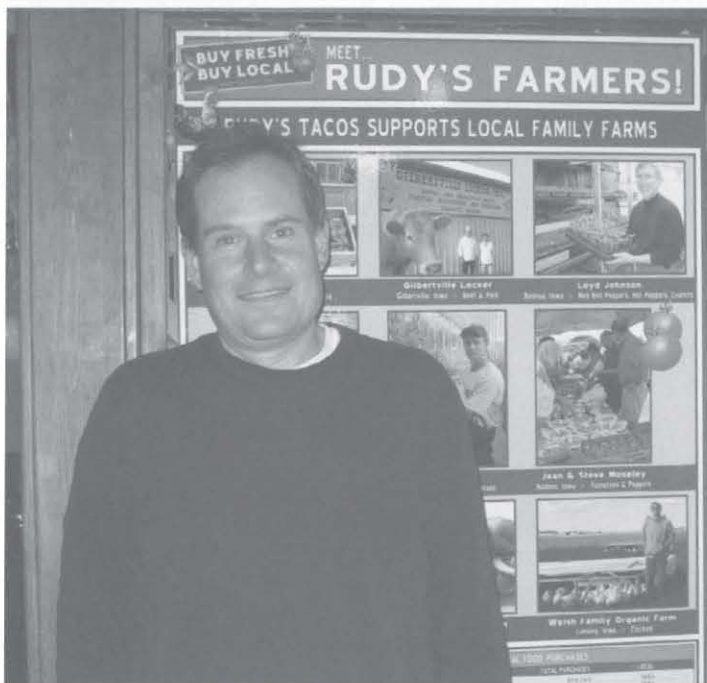
- ❖ Widespread ownership of land and resources
- ❖ Better soil and water quality
- ❖ Would help farmers maintain control over their own lives
- ❖ Foster a sense of rootedness in both the land and the community
- ❖ Maintains and improves quality of live
- ❖ Is a system that will last

-- Ron Rosmann

Fresh Edge

Local is more than a slang word for this small Iowa restaurant

Sally Worley



Barry Eastman

Rudy's Tacos in Waterloo features the typical fare you expect from a Mexican restaurant—tacos, burritos, chips and salsa—offered at reasonable prices. One key component, however, is atypical: the ingredients are predominantly local. It all began in 1996 with a free-range chicken and a neighborly conversation.

Barry Eastman, owner of Rudy's Tacos, happens to be the neighbor of Kamyar Enshayan, director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE). In 1996 Kamyar was working hard to bring local food to the region as coordinator for the first Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign in Iowa. One day Kamyar and Barry struck up a yard-side conversation. Kamyar asked Barry if there was any food he was looking for and having a hard time finding. "I had been reading a lot about free-range chickens, how much better they taste," Barry said. Kamyar made routes between Rudy's Tacos and Welsh Organic Farm in Lansing. "They brought me a couple birds, I cooked them up, and their taste blew me away. I just went crazy from there, switching everything over to local."

Barry takes purchasing local seriously. In 2008, 72% of his ingredients came from local farms. After he sampled Welsh's chickens, Barry put an ad in local papers requesting local tomatoes. "People hauled in tomatoes like crazy. A fresh tomato is so much better than the stuff off the truck." Barry also holds in high regard the fresh cilantro and peppers that go into his dishes.

Ordering is a bit more involved than having everything delivered on one truck, but Barry thinks the effort is a small price to pay for the return. "The end result is you have better product, which makes the overall restaurant better." Barry orders from about a dozen producers. The 28% that he does not buy local includes produce out

of season and items he is not able to find on the local market.

Barry's ordering method is simple: the telephone. It sounds cumbersome with a dozen producers, but Barry claims it isn't. He has established relationships with farmers who supply his restaurant, and has purchased food from some of the same farmers from the beginning of his local food journey. Rudy's Tacos' menu doesn't change, and he uses the same product each week. This simplifies the order and delivery process: "We set up a schedule and they just come and deliver it. A lot of times I don't even see them. They leave a bill and I send a check."

Barry does not have unexpected holes in his menu: "My guys are good about giving me a heads up when they are going to be done with tomatoes, or when frost is coming and supply is going to run out." He has multiple producers for certain items, and they keep each other informed and give each other lead times. "These farmers are small business owners like me. They treat it like a business and want to keep the relationship going."

Having a set menu simplifies the ordering process, but ingredients from week to week are not flexible. Rudy's goes through 1000 pounds of cheese and 300 pounds of tomatoes each week. The

RUDY'S 2008 LOCAL FOOD PURCHASES

PRODUCT	LOCAL PURCHASES	TOTAL PURCHASES	% LOCAL
BEEF	\$70,769	\$70,769	100%
CHICKEN	\$30,004	\$30,004	100%
PORK	\$936	\$936	100%
CHEESE	\$46,719	\$46,719	100%
TOMATOES	\$17,129	\$19,670	87%
ONIONS	\$750	\$1,753	43%
PEPPERS	\$545	\$1,032	53%
CILANTRO	\$167	\$281	59%
ICE CREAM	\$679	\$2,719	25%
SOUR CREAM	\$4,547	\$4,547	100%
FLOWERS	\$1,250	\$1,250	100%
SOY OIL	\$11,369	\$11,369	100%
TORTILLAS	\$2,730	\$5,714	48%
OTHER	\$0	\$62,374	0%
TOTAL	\$187,594	\$259,137	72%

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**BUY FRESH
BUY LOCAL**

“As a restaurant operator we’re trying to put out the best product that we can. Using fresh local ingredients really gives you an advantage.”

closest Rudy could source enough cheese to meet this demand was Wisconsin. Rudy can source tomatoes for much of the year, but has not been able to sustain tomatoes year-round. “I had a guy that was providing tomatoes in the winter, but he quit a few years ago because he couldn’t afford to heat his greenhouse and I couldn’t afford to pay five dollars a pound for tomatoes.” Barry remains on the lookout for more local options to fill in his entire menu.

Barry’s food purchasing prices have increased, but “the quality more than made up for it.” His customers notice how fresh the ingredients are: “I get a lot of John Deere guys in here. A lot of them comment that they remember eating chicken like what I cook up when they were a kid. That’s cool.”

Barry feels that he gets more from the food with the local purchases: “There was quite an increase in the chicken price, but the yield from the bird made it a wash. When you crack open a corporate bird, there’s not much in there—there’s a lot of gray matter that’s not so good. But the free range bird is solid meat.” He has definitely

noticed a difference in quality: “Quality is top notch with local. I have more quality issues with conventional food.”

Barry says his local food gives him an edge. “As a restaurant operator we’re trying to put out the best product that we can. Using fresh local ingredients really gives you an advantage. Look at all the chains that keep opening and all the competition in restaurants. They just keep coming. The big chains aren’t going to do local.” PFI member Carolyn Adolphs, producer and loyal customer, agrees. “His restaurant is a little hole in the wall, but it is unique in that the food is excellent. When you go in on Friday you have to wait in line, and it is in a location where you don’t expect to wait in line.”

Barry urges others to purchase from local growers. “A family restaurant with breakfast, lunch, and dinner could go crazy with it. If a restaurant would serve local eggs and bacon, it would blow everybody away, and would be so easy to do.”

Carolyn Adolph supplies other restaurants with local product and finds Barry easy to work with. “He’ll call you when he needs something and he works with me on the price.”

How has Carolyn entered the back doors of other restaurants? “First of all, have a reliable, good product. Be persistent. This isn’t a farmer’s market where they come to you. You have to take your product to them, and you can’t be shy. Call every week, or email, or show up at the door. Once they get to know you, just a call or email is sufficient.”

Carolyn says about Barry: “He believes in buying local. You don’t have to talk him into it.”

“If a little Mexican place can pull this off, anybody can do it,” say Barry.

RUDY'S INVESTS IN LOCAL FOOD & FARM BUSINESSES

YEAR	LOCAL FOODS PURCHASES
1998	\$97,726
1999	\$126,699
2000	\$123,108
2001	\$142,940
2002	\$120,535
2003	\$130,207
2004	\$166,253
2005	\$160,028
2006	\$156,168
2007	\$167,790
2008	\$187,594
TOTAL	\$1,579,048

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**BUY FRESH
BUY LOCAL**



Carolyn Adolphs raises and sells vegetables with her husband Ken near Traer. They market to restaurants, including Rudy’s Tacos, as well as through a farmer’s market.

Cover Crops are Fifth

Sarah Carlson

"The fall is a busy time, even in a normal year," said Daniel Davidson, farmer and Data Transmission Network (DTN) agronomist and journalist from Nebraska. Farmers have hefty to-do lists: "Harvest, handling grain, fall fertility and fall tillage are priorities and cover crops come in a distant 5th."

It is **tough** to get a cover crop established in the fall. Most of you probably harvested your corn and soybeans abnormally late last year. The opportunity to plant a fall cover crop following corn grain harvest this year was next to impossible. If you did get something planted, good for you! If you didn't get a winter cover crop planted and your head hurts when you see uncovered soil all winter long, perhaps start your cover crop planning earlier.

The best cover crop stands in the fall and spring are planted early, by mid-September, into a nice seedbed either tilled or no-tilled and coinciding with rainfall. Early nice seed bed opportunities include: corn silage, corn or soybean seed acres, a small grain, or vegetables.

If the majority of your acres are in one of these "early"



Cover crop planted following corn silage harvest next to a field with no cover crop in NE IA.

production systems you are lucky and have a larger window for fall planting. But 23 million acres worth of farms in Iowa harvest corn and soybeans late in the fall. Although winter rye and wheat have been characterized as having the best "anti-freeze" of all the winter cover crops, they still need some heat units and sunlight to provide sufficient fall growth. Managing Cover Crops Profitably, the encyclopedia of cover crops, reports that rye's minimum germination temperature is 34 degrees fahrenheit. If you frost seed rye later in the fall, you miss the window for fall growth, but can still get ample spring growth.

Observations from other farmers provide feedback to consider when planning cover crops for your farm.

Although winter rye and wheat have been characterized as having the best "anti-freeze" of all the winter cover crops, they still need some heat units and sunlight to provide sufficient fall growth.

Overseeding Observations

This year several farmers worked with aerial applicators, planes that load up cover crop seed and then fly it into standing corn or soybean acres in early to mid-September to overseed their cover crops. Tillage radish, winter rye, winter wheat, and mixes of cover crop species were all tested using airplanes this past fall. Some stands established well. Other farmers used high-clearance equipment like PFI's Hagie Highboy (available for use, contact Sarah) or modified de-tasseling machines to overseed. These **pre-harvest planting methods** work well but are not perfect. The seed can fall onto the soil surface and germinate under the canopy given the proper soil moisture but the crop canopy shades the cover crop. Or in the case of corn, seed will fall into the whorl or leaf axils and not reach the soil until later in the fall or even the next spring.

Cover Crops in Short Season Plantings

Steve Groff from Cedar Meadow Farm in Pennsylvania talks widely about the value of cover crops, especially the famous tillage radish. He says that "working some shorter season varieties into the farming system will help increase cover crop establishment in the fall. Improved soil to seed contact and no competition for light from the standing corn or soybeans will improve the establishment of cover crops like tillage radish. Weighing your options and deciding on a cover crop plan will improve your chances of a well established, nutrient holding, soil improving fall cover crop.

Cover Cropping Plan

Taking time this winter to design your *Cover Cropping Plan* can help you plan for improved staggering of fall harvest, schedule pre-harvest cover crop planting methods, and will increase your chances of successfully establishing cover crops. When scheduling cover crops into your system, take a moment to answer these questions:

- ❖ Could a % of your farmed land be planted to a **shorter season** corn or soybean?
- ❖ Could a % of your farmed land be **over-seeded** into

standing corn or soybeans?

- ❖ Could a % of your farmed land **not** have a cover crop?
- ❖ How can those percentages shift to include more cover crops each year?



Cheri Zagurski at Data Transmission Network holds a tillage radish tuber harvested in early December in NE Nebraska.

One Farmer's Cover Crop Plan

Some farmers harvested thousands of tubers like the one pictured above. Daniel Davidson, DTN agronomist who also farms in northeast Nebraska in Stanton County, planted two pounds of oilseed radish with German millet for a hay crop July 15th following winter wheat harvest. This tuber was harvested in November.

Top 5 Reasons to Add Cover Crops:

1. They are an "in-field" practice--an investment account for the farmer; as opposed to "out-of-field" (wetlands, buffers, etc) which are a subsidy from the farmer.
2. They are possible in any farming system (hort crops, seed beans/corn, silage, corn/bean, grain, and more).
3. They suck up precious N before it leaches out of the soil.
4. They hold soil in place through the winter and keep P on the farm which would have left with soil.
5. They are precision nutrient placement vehicles and allow crop roots to go deeper.

Davidson has been testing cover crops after corn and soybeans for several years now and has learned a few lessons. Aerial seeding doesn't work well in his operation. He prefers to drill the seed after the crop is harvested, sometimes as late as early December if the soil is still fit. He recognizes that the earlier he seeds, the more fall and spring growth he will get. After his full season corn is harvested, he realizes his window for fall growth has closed and all he can expect after a frost seeding is spring growth. Davidson feels that the benefits he gets even after a late fall seeding are worth it.

Davidson's future Cover Cropping Plan:

- ❖ Designate about 50% of farm to shorter season crops to get a jumpstart on planting cover crops with a drill.
- ❖ Do not overseed into standing crops: "I have tried it in corn and soybeans with poor results, plus I can't find a pilot to do it."
- ❖ 25 to 30% of land remains uncovered: "Ideally nothing would remain uncovered but lack of time doesn't allow me to get it all done in the fall when using a 15 foot drill."

Practices that help increase cover cropping on his farm:

- ❖ Plant 105 day corn compared to 110 to 115
- ❖ Harvest in September at 18% moisture and let air dry or harvest at 20% and dry with heat
- ❖ Plant 2.5 maturity group (MG) soybeans compared to 2.8-3.2 MG
- ❖ Rye is only option for a late seeding

Davidson: "Early soybeans haven't yielded much different. Corn is more worrisome. But I have seen some strong yielding 103-105 day corn hybrids in our area of NE Nebraska that perform equally to full-season hybrids. Sometimes I will harvest corn early at 20% moisture and put it in a drier. This helps spread out harvest and also allow for planting rye or tillage radish sooner."

Cover crops cannot be business as usual. *Johnny's Selected Seeds* catalog sums up the worth of cover crops accurately: "They are an investment in your gardens or fields that will pay future dividends of healthier, more productive cash crops."

If you are interested in testing shorter season hybrids with cover crop combinations contact Sarah about the possibility of participating in a 2010 Cooperators' Project. Look for results from past PFI Cover Crop Cooperators' projects on the website and as handouts at the Cooperators' Meeting February 11-12. Contact Sarah if you are interested in attending or have an idea for a project this year.

Upcoming Cover Crop Event:

Midwest Cover Crops Council Conference
Ames, IA March 2-4, 2010



What the Climate Change?

Elwynn Taylor, Iowa State University Extension Climatologist

What an "Old-time" winter! Yes, the past three winters have folks taking winter seriously, again. Some say, "This has been like winters were when I was a child." There is no doubt about it, the Midwest is feeling the decadal scale cycling of winter harshness. When conditions (known as the North Atlantic Oscillation) shifted in the early 1980s the Midwest winters became relatively mild and the return shift in 2006 seems to be right in line for a decade or so when the winters will resemble those we remember from 20+ years back. There is still variation and there will be a mix of years, but the average will likely demonstrate a definite shift.

Changing climate is nothing new to us. In fact it is almost ignored. I have heard a lot of growers credit "improved crops" for recent good performance under our Midwest weather conditions. Some of the credit is well deserved, but the weather since 1996 has definitely been on the favorable side of the 23 years that preceded the mid-90s. During the years since we started keeping corn yield records (1865) we have seen four cycles of a series of erratic yields followed by an interval of consistent crop yield. The U.S. corn yield is a good example (Figure 1).

Many aspects of weather impact plant growth and development. Temperature is the major player more often than any other factor (including precipitation). The dramatic reduction in number of hot (93F or above) days appears to have a major impact on crop yield consistency (Figure 2).

I do not feel that it is likely that the run of consistent crop yields across Iowa and most of the Corn Belt will continue indefinitely. However, it is not simple to discriminate between a long-term change and the decadal scale cycles of the natural climate. Cycles have a way of over-shadowing a trend that may be recently established. The long term shift in the nature of

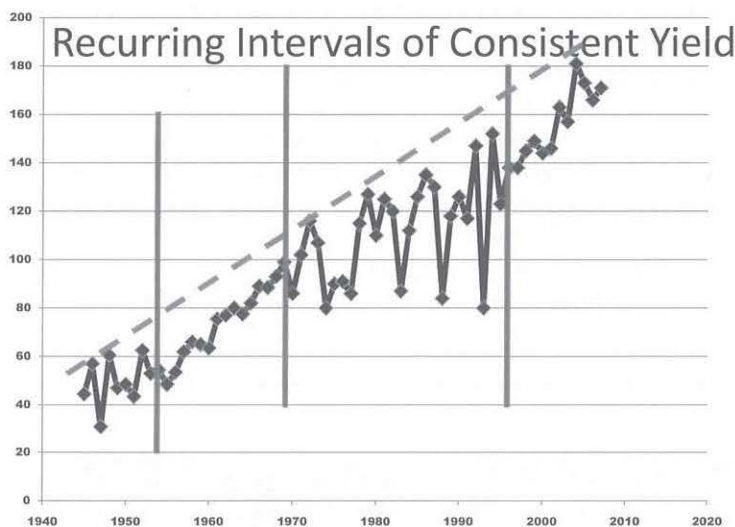


Figure 1. Iowa annual corn yield (bu/acre) since 1945. The consistent yields in the 1960s and since 1996 appear to be related to a well established climate cycle that impacts the U.S. Corn Belt.

The occurrence of flooding in Iowa has increased approximately 6-fold since 1950.

Midwest precipitation may be part of a cycle or an indicator of a planet-wide climate change associated with the growing excess of atmospheric Carbon Dioxide. Some very excellent research at Iowa State University (Dr. Wm Gutowski) indicates that general warming near the Gulf of Mexico will result in a substantial increase in Midwest precipitation. The heart of the "man-made" climate change issue stems from the increasing greenhouse gas in the atmosphere connected with world energy consumption.

Measurements show that there has been a rather close relationship between atmospheric Carbon Dioxide and the Earth's temperature. Since the beginning of extensive use of fossil fuel the amount of atmospheric Carbon Dioxide has exceeded the ratio expected from ice-core data over the past 100,000 years (Figure 3). There are other thermally opaque gases (greenhouse gases), but carbon dioxide is the major "constant" opaque atmospheric component (water vapor is considered a variable opaque gas). Thermally opaque gas has the effect of lifting the radiating surface of the Earth to form a functional virtual surface some distance above the terrestrial/marine surface resulting in increased

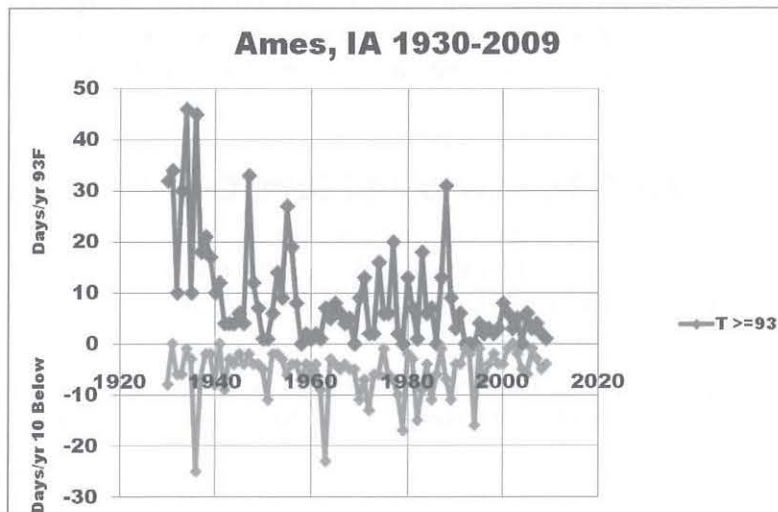


Figure 2. The number of hot days (above 92F) has diminished substantially since the 1930s in central Iowa. The intervals from 1957-1973 and since 1996 are associated with consistent crop yields (figure 1). Also the diminished number of very cold (colder than -10F) since 1996 is shown in the figure. Like data for all Iowa counties are at <http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/climodat/index.phtml> (select "Histograms").

temperature (lapse rate related) near the terrestrial/marine surface. The behavior of the virtual radiating surface is difficult to assess but the potential for induction of serious climate shifts is a very legitimate concern.

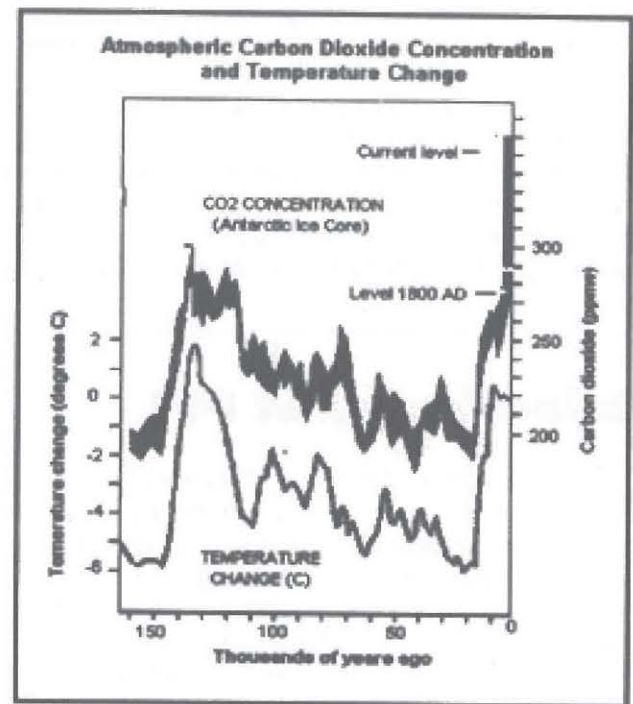
The increase in precipitation resulting from a warmer atmosphere is greater than the increase in evaporation from the land (evapotranspiration) I compute for the same increase in atmospheric temperature. Accordingly we would anticipate that moisture will be in excess more often than we currently experience. Iowa climate records show that the average number of days during the year with measurable precipitation has effectively doubled during the past 120 or so years (Herzmann, 2008), and the average annual precipitation has increased by about 10% since 1950. The increase in "wet" days per year is not a benefit to folks that need some rain free intervals to cure hay or conduct numerous other activities that benefit from a brief dry period. Because the increased amount of precipitation adds to the excess moisture, that which exceeds the requirements for optimal crop growth and development, the occurrence of flooding in Iowa has increased approximately 6-fold since 1950. The increase of flooding has resulted in floods at the "100-year" level likely to repeat at a "17-year" period (as have been observed in much of the state since 1993).

We really do not know if the moisture pattern experienced during the past two or three years is cyclic and soon to revert to something typical of the 1960s or if it is a result of Climate Change and is with us to stay. If it is to be an on-going feature of our climate cities and farms can adapt. Still the great increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide remains as a man-made effect that is beyond the natural expectations. Efforts of our farm community to reduce the consumption of fossil based energy are, and will be, a challenge. Bio-fuel and local production of food and fiber is a substantial contribution to the effort. Perhaps we should have an award for "Food Produced and Distributed with No Fossils Consumed."

For 2010, we must live with a climate that could give a re-run of 2009. That is the forecast from the National Weather Service as

of Mid-December 2009. We do know that the soils are wet across the Corn Belt and that makes a wet spring more likely. Still we also know that the Midwest is "past due" for a hot and stressful year. One farmer said, "Expect both, that's what it did to me in '83."

Still the great increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide remains as a man-made effect that is beyond the natural expectations.



Source: Barnola et. al., Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 1997

Figure 3. Ice core observations of carbon dioxide show a consistent relationship to temperature that has deviated greatly since 1800s. Note the sudden increase after 1800. The rapid increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide is attributed to the consumption of fossil derived energy. Barnola, et.al. 1997

The average number of days during the year with measurable precipitation has effectively doubled during the past 120 or so years, and the average annual precipitation has increased by about 10% since 1950.

Logical Disconnections

Gordon Reeder

The news moves slowly around the office—if by news you mean farm journals. As the ex-intern, news reaches me last. This works since, as Edward Abbey says, “There is nothing older than the news.” Especially this weekend as I read the current *The Stockman Grass Farmer* published in February 2009. The article atop the fold profiled the inter-woven processes of grazer and cheese maker Jonathan White and his 200 acre New Jersey farm. Electronically programmed to identify gaps in a story, I am dubious of a true success. But I liked Mr. White’s profile and the backwards approach he took to his whole-farm health: he wanted to make great cheese so he began to milk cows. Was this a guy programmed like me?

When my wife and I argue she says, “Oh Really, Mr. 770?” referring my GRE score (out of 800) in logic. This is funny because my speech is as logical as a lobster and her response automatically means I won. But my score bothered me until I invented the perfect phrase to describe why, if not how, I scored so illogically: Logical Disconnections.

Logic, and this isn’t an Oxford English Dictionary definition, is the connecting of multiple points—it carries you from A to B to C. Logical disconnection is the ability to see the link between divergent things or even un-connected things, it bounces you from J to D to Z. A bad example is if you put an engine on a pair of wings you have an airplane. Genius. A worse example is: if you put an engine on a hot air balloon. Fiasco. In short, genius and madness and fiasco result from making connections, with depth, clarity, texture, that others have not.

In the new *Spokesman* I read about Bill Gates’ October visit to the World Food Prize. Gates is quoted as saying, “Some people insist on an ideal vision of the environment—divorced from people and their circumstances. They have tried to restrict the spread of biotechnology in sub-Saharan Africa without regard to how much hunger and poverty might be reduced by it, or what the farmers

The large players in the genius camp of Agriculture are pursuing roles they see as logical and beneficial, while the disaster camp view themselves similarly.

themselves might want.” This isn’t a logical disconnection, it’s disconnected logic—bad rhetoric. Gates takes a small and largely discounted environmental viewpoint and presents it as the only voice questioning biotechnology. When Gates then sweeps ideologies aside only his answers and assumptions remain. Right or wrong by purposefully undermining the scope of discussion his message of progress and philanthropy is diminished.

I tried explaining Logical Disconnection to Sarah Carlson, but she got it wrong. I was burning through the airplane analogy when Sarah interrupted, “This is how people feel about conventional agriculture. Some people think it is genius and some people think it’s disastrous.” I wasn’t talking about that at all! However her identification of the disconnections in the way people perceive logic is instructive. The large players in the genius camp of Agriculture are pursuing roles they see as logical and beneficial, while the disaster camp view themselves similarly. Like Bill Gates, their disconnects lie somewhat in the points connected (what they see as logical), but more so in the points they emphasize (what they demand is logical.?).

Stuck within my beautiful ability to connect random ideas in a logical fashion, scoring 770 on the GRE’s and babbling like an idiot, it seems to me the path is as important as the picture.

Philanthropy at PFI

In December Practical Farmers of Iowa was fortunate to have an extra employee for the month. Wells Fargo granted Mark Runquist one month leave paid so he could work for PFI. For the month he was here, Mark helped improve the website, researched and made recommendations for a new member database, provided technical support, and, as Suzi said, provided “general sanity assistance.” Thanks Mark, for your talents and time. Please return when you can so we can restore Suzi’s sanity.

When not working for Wells Fargo or volunteering at PFI, Mark raises children, vegetables, herbs, flowers, chickens, turkeys, sheep, geese, goats, a mini horse, and collects wind energy at High Hopes Gardens along with his wife, Linda Barnes.



Mark stocks his winter supply of food grown at High Hopes Gardens

New Farmers Create Visions

On December 11-12, 2009, PFI completed our spectacular Next Generation Retreat. In attendance were 27 fantastic farmer leaders and 4 facilitators.

Here is how participants summed up the retreat weekend spent together:

"Valuable and worthwhile stuff."

"All of the information that I am taking away from this retreat was so helpful."

"We are so thankful for PFI and the opportunity to learn and be inspired by the many stories of others doing what we want to do."

The farmers were divided into two groups based on their experience level. All farmers had ten years or less experience in their operation; most beginners had less than one year on their farm.

Nine farmers learned how to develop on-farm indicators of sustainability for their farms with Dr. Laura Lengnick and Dr. Susan Kask from Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC.

Eighteen farmer-planners identified their core values, and their vision for their farm operation. Shepherded with the guidance of Holistic Management Trainer and PFI member Margaret Smith, participants are on their way to forming a three part holistic goal and even greater



Participants and Facilitators at the Practical Farmers of Iowa Annual Next Generation Retreat

focus for their farm.

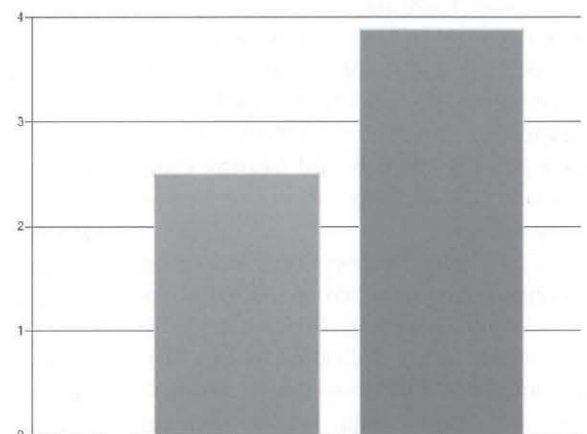
Planners analyzed a real-life farm marketing example and then identified their own products, unique qualities, and target customers. Ideas were shared for creating the ideal farm brochure, for demonstrating their farm and its enterprise products. Finally, they created a PFI exclusive "Pentaopoly Timeline," a five-year plan for success and shared their ideas with their supportive colleagues.

Participation, interaction, motivation, and farm planning excitement levels were high. Spirits ran higher and a friendly atmosphere enveloped the central Iowa retreat center.

With outstanding farmer members like those of Practical Farmers of Iowa and the great new ones coming along, there is much reason for Jubilation!



Melissa Dunham of Grinnell Heritage Farm learned how to develop on-farm sustainability indicators.



Average values of self-assessment of own Farm Plan before (left) and after (right) participation in the Next Generation Retreat.

Ron and Maria Rosmann Receive Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award

Ron and Maria Rosmann of rural Harlan have been farming together since they were married in 1978. Ron has been farming since graduating from Iowa State 1973, when he took over his parents' farm. Ron is a past president and founding board member of PFI, and both of them have been pillars of the organization since its beginnings 25 years ago.

Although Ron was "slow to be convinced to give up everything in conventional ag," their 600 acres have been pesticide free since 1983 and were certified organic in 1994. The Rosmanns have a six-year ridge till rotation of corn, soy, corn, small grain, and two years of hay. They also raise specialty crops like popcorn, and annual forages like turnips, hairy vetch, and buckwheat. The Rosmanns rotationally graze a spring and fall herd of 90 cows, and farrow to finish 40 sows.

Family is at the center of the Rosmanns life. They have raised three sons: David, 28, lives and works in Minneapolis; Daniel, 26, farms with Ron and Maria; and Mark, 23, has been in the Peace Corps in Honduras since June of 2009. "It is our hope," Maria said, "that whatever our sons do, they can take what they learned, the skills, values and diversity of the farm, and apply it to the rest of their lives."

Consistent spokespeople for Practical Farmers of Iowa, the Rosmanns have had more than 1,500 people visit their farm over the years to learn about their vision of "working with natural systems instead of relying solely on inputs—potentially dangerous inputs," said Ron. "If you have healthy animals and healthy crops you will have healthy foods and healthy communities."

The Rosmanns' diversity of ideas is not something they happened on suddenly: "You work on your strengths," Maria said. One of their strengths is a dedication to long-term learning and PFI's Cooperators' program. They were greatly influenced by Dick and Sharon Thompson. As Maria said, "They are always open to learning new things about



The Rosmanns—from left: David, pooch Casey (and cat!), Ron, Maria, Daniel, and Mark

their farm." Over the years the Rosmanns have done more than 40 research trials with Practical Farmers of Iowa. "We consider it our form of continuing education," Maria said. "Always learn. Never give up your chances to learn what your land can or cannot do. Ron is already planning what he'd like to learn next year."

Ron trusts on-farm research because the work is farmer-driven and takes place "in real life situations, and is practical in terms of design. It answers the questions, the basic economic questions, of farmers. Even today it is still informed by PFI's initial mission statement, 'Sustaining Economics, Natural Resources, and People.'"

In 2010 Practical Farmers of Iowa is celebrating its 25th anniversary. As founding members, the Rosmanns are well positioned to envision their farm and PFI into the future. In 25 years Maria would "like to see the farm still organic and still affiliated with PFI. I'd like it to be a viable farm where another generation is continuing the practices Ron learned from his parents. To farm the Home Place, as they say."

For PFI, Ron would like to see "rural Iowa made up of lots of small and medium size farms, thriving communities based on a model of self sufficiency, local food, quality of life, and appropriate technology." Ron does not view his vision as nostalgia, but as a "new model without which there will be very few people left in rural Iowa." It is a model that the Rosmanns believe Practical Farmers have a large role in. "Having sustained huge growth and importance," Maria envisions, "PFI continues to help keep Iowa farmers profitable and environmentally sound."

Practical Farmers of Iowa congratulates Ron and Maria and thanks them for their contributions over the years and in the years to come!

Eating Local Longer with Golden Fork



Eating local winter long—Rich Schuler poses in the snow with their winter cache, which includes: squash, sweet potatoes, garlic, greens, blueberries, jams, honey, and meats.

Teresa Opheim and Rich Schuler won the Golden Fork Award in 2009 for purchasing the most local food through Farm to Folk in Ames. Justin and Heather Greenlee came in second, and Jan and Cornelia Flora took third place. Farm to Folk is a one-stop delivery system for buying food directly from local farmers. Fruit, vegetable, and dairy subscriptions are available, as is “a la carte” ordering of whatever products are available that week.

“We support Farm to Folk for the quality of the food we get. Our son is a picky eater, and he’s more likely to eat his fruits and vegetables if they are fresh and tasty,” First Place winner Opheim says. “Also, we want as much of our food dollar as possible to go to the farmer. These farmers work very hard to raise quality food and improve our community, and they deserve our support.”

Total receipts for Farm to Folk in Fiscal Year 2009 were \$82,380, according to Farm to Folk Coordinator Marilyn Andersen, who announced the winners at the group’s annual

gathering at The Berry Patch. Of this amount, \$72,100 – 87 percent -- went back to the farmers, and the rest was used to administer the delivery system.

In contrast, farmers receive only 20 cents of every dollar that consumers spend at the grocery store and at restaurants. For example, a farmer will return 38 cents on a pound of bacon that retails for \$2.99 and only 5 cents on a box of cereal retailing for \$2.49, according to the National Farmers Union.

Farm to Folk has 182 consumer members; 49 of those members were new this year. Farmers participating include: Small Potatoes Farm, Iowa Fresh Produce, Picket Fence Creamery, Full Circle Farm, Prairie Sky Homestead, the Berry Patch, Growing Harmony Farm, and Onion Creek Farm. Audubon Family Farms, Paul’s Grains, Grains of Wisdom and Wallace Farms also deliver to the Farm to Folk site.

For more information about Farm to Folk, visit www.farmtofolk.com.

Francis and Susan Thicke Receive Spencer Award

Long-time PFI members Francis and Susan Thicke produce skim, low-fat and whole milk in their on-farm organic dairy as well as yogurt and cheese, all of which is sold locally. And they’ve restored their 236-acre farm near Fairfield with deep-rooted perennials and legumes and rotationally graze their Jersey cows in new paddocks twice each day.

But what impresses Jennifer Steffen the most about the Thicks is how they use their farm to teach others about sustainable agriculture.

“I’m fortunate to have shared time with Francis and Susan on several occasions, including a master conservationist program offered by Iowa State University Extension,” said Steffen, who owns a farm in Van Buren County and represents the State Soil Conservation Committee on the Leopold Center Advisory Board.

“They kindly agreed to host our students and speak about their organic dairy operation, offering thoughtful conversation on different practices,” she said. “I overheard a question one of our students asked a young Radiance Dairy employee who had been helping with the tour. He was asked if he liked his job at Radiance Dairy ... his response was, ‘I love my job because Francis is such a good teacher.’”

Steffen presented the 2009 Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture to Francis and Susan Thicke during the Iowa Organic Conference in Ames in December. She said the couple’s business success, commitment to conservation and education that goes far beyond their farm gate led to their selection for the Spencer Award. The award is given to a farmer, educator

or group each year for contributions to sustainable family farms in Iowa.

Steffen said the Thicks have opened their farm for numerous tours, including a “Fairfield Tour of Sustainability.”

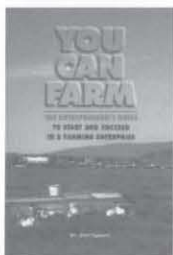
“The organizer reports that the people on the tour were absolutely fascinated with what they learned,” she said. “For most of them, sustainability was something that they were hearing about, but did not quite understand. They were able to show farming is part of the ecology.”

The award includes a \$1,000 cash prize, which surprisingly will not go toward farm expenses. “We’re looking forward to a little vacation, which we haven’t had in years,” Francis said.

Details about the award are on the Leopold Center web site: www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/spencer/spencer.htm



Francis and Susan Thicke : photo courtesy of the Leopold Center



Member Book Review

Reviewed by Janice Marquardt, Reasnor

You Can Farm, by Joel Salatin

When I first volunteered to write a book review, I was excited to have an excuse to read a new book that I hadn't even heard of before. I admit to at least mild chagrin when I was asked to review *You Can Farm* by Joel Salatin, because I read this book over 3 years ago and there was a copy sitting on my bookshelf. Not a new book for me at all! But then I sat down to leaf through it and found that I have a whole new perspective on this book now that we have been farming for 2.5 years. So with this relative "experience" behind me (yes, I am aware that 2.5 years is nothing compared to most PFI members) I am setting out to reevaluate Salatin's most multidirectional work.

As an 11-year-old book, *You Can Farm* is right on the edge of either fading into obscurity or becoming a classic. While this book is still relevant to deciding whether or not to begin farming, much of it is so dated that it does need to be taken with a grain of salt. Joel is not exactly a computer guru, and does argue that much can be done by hand faster than it can be put into a computer (chapter 6). However, I know that he has since hired someone to do his computer work and even Joel now has to be on the Internet. The Internet is far too important to modern direct-marketers to be discounted and would need an extensive chapter in any rewrite of this book. Other than this huge lack, the principles in *You Can*

Farm do still hold and the advice is generally useful and relevant.

A large portion of this book is dedicated to what I am calling "how to farm like Joel farms." This is all well and good for those who want to raise chickens, cattle, and a few other side livestock ventures with a small garden for extras. However, if the reader wants to do a vegetable CSA or a heavy agritourism enterprise, there is far less value. I would strongly recommend this book for anyone who is thinking about beginning farming, including children of farmers, college students, soon-to-be-retirees, etc. My husband and I enjoyed going through the "Ten Recipes for Failure" (we have 3 of the 10) and the "Ten Commandments for Succeeding on the Farm" (we have 6.5 of the 10). So while we are not over the hump, we know that like all farm books this one is not a 100% predictor of success or failure. Joel has a very easy-to-read style in all of his books, and this one has the broadest scope.

Bottom Line: While I would recommend it for anyone contemplating getting into farming from any starting point, I would recommend one of his other books such as *Holy Cows* and *Hog Heaven* (my personal favorite) for the average person who wants an excellent outline on the direct-market local farming philosophy.



Mark and Donald Gee

Young Member Spotlight

PFI members Mark (14) and Donald (11) Gee are making good use of land their family inherited from their grandparents, Gay and Lou Friestad. Mark and Donald have dubbed the 2/3 acre urban farm the Ag Experiment Station. Last year Donald and Mark grew primarily pumpkins, along with crops of gourds, squash, and watermelons.

After taking the Jacobsen Entrepreneurial Camp offered through the University of Iowa, Mark and Donald created a business plan for their pumpkin farm. Mark Gee: "It was really nice to have a plan. It helped us figure out what would be practical and what was unrealistic." The duo presented their plan to a panel of judges as part of the camp, and won a \$100 award.

Mark and Donald are excited to grow on their urban farm again in 2010. They have not decided what to grow yet. Donald: "We had bugs in our pumpkins and need to break they cycle."

Mark and Donald are learning more about their pest problems from Donald Lewis, entomologist from Iowa State, and are learning about producing crops from Norm McCoy, who also shares his Des Moines farmer's market booth with the Gee brothers.

New PFI Members—Welcome!

District 2

Garret Caryl, *Colo*
 Brian Hayward, *Madrid*
 Gary Steenblock, *Kanawha*
 Susan Wallace, *Ames*
 Troy Benjegerdos, *Ames*
 Richard and Carol Bork, *Ogden*
 Ray and Betty Coleman, *Toledo*
 Farm to Folk, Marilyn Andersen, *Story City*
 Caithlin Grieshop, *Melbourne*
 Gary Hammitt, *Vincent*
 Sally Hertz, *Nevada*
 Jennifer O'Neill, *Ames*
 Gordon and Katy Reeder, *Roland*
 Jacqueline Rhodes, *Marshalltown*
 Jennifer Roberts, *Boone*
 Kate Solko, *Ames*
 Ron Tigner, *Lehigh*
 Randy and Liz Hertz, *Nevada*

District 3

A&J Farms, Justin Grove, *Luana*
 Brian Sauer, *Decorah*
 Seed Savers, *Decorah*
 James Frantzen, *Elma*

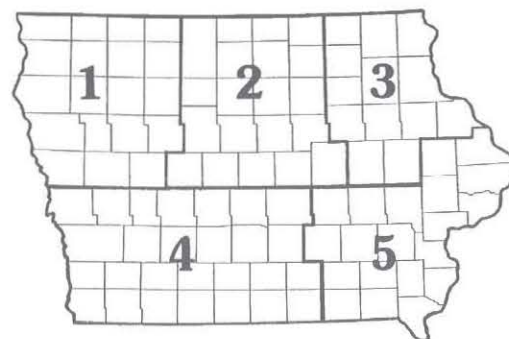
Todd and Karla Hanson, *Monona*
 Erik Sessions and Sara Peterson, *Decorah*
 Melissa Sharapova, *Cedar Rapids*

District 4

Lee Abramsohn, *Urbandale*
 Mary Margaret and Jim Gran, *Newton*
 Prairie Hill Farms, James Mathis, *Elkhart*
 Todd Russell, *Anita*
 Bryan and Joan Samuell, *New Virginia*
 Butcher Crick Farms, Jennie Smith, *Carlisle*
 Dennis and Connie Norton, *Bedford*
 Paula Feltner and Dr. Michael Eberle, *Des Moines*
 Nanette Hall, *Des Moines*
 Nate Looker, *Des Moines*
 Connie and Kim Schmett, *Clive*
 Jack Trowbridge, *Decatur*

District 5

Valerie Hammond, *Grinnell*
 Glenn and Linda Drowns, *Calamus*
 Kate Gilbert, *Muscataine*
 Kathy's Pumpkin Patch, Kathy Hohl, *Donnellson*



Fox Ridge Farm, Paul Rasch, *Solon*
 Mary and Kevin Somerville, *Oxford*
 Aaron Weivoda, *Iowa City*

District 6 (Outside of Iowa)

Marilyn Adam, *Stoddard, WI*
 Brenda Foster, *Mequon, WI*
 Jeffrey Miller, *Austin, TX*
 Paul Davis, *Encinitas, CA*
 Paulsen Family Farms, Duane Hovorka, *Elmwood, NE*
 Tim Kelley, *Elmo, MO*
 Brandee Marckmann, *San Francisco, CA*
 John Scanlan, *Canton, MS*
 Eric Walker, *Calhoun, GA*
 Tim Wilson, *Chicago, IL*

-Farm Transitions- continued from page 9

the financial person.” When the chicken houses were up and running she found herself negotiating flock settlements and hired hands; she also took charge of cattle recordkeeping and computerizing the accounting.

“Today I find myself asking ‘Can we buy more of our own land?’” Susan’s business sense demands the farm show cash flow projections on paper first. “A lot of farmers don’t do that, they get addicted and can’t stop.”

In Dottie’s experience, watching the empowerment of women on the farm has been a notable shift in a generation. In the 1980s, she and other farmwives were often excluded from participation in major farm decisions. When the market tanked and their names were on the loans, “a lot of women went to night shifts and working in factories. I don’t think they have ever gotten their credit because it was *their* paychecks that were putting food on the table and keeping the family together,” says Dottie.

Today, Dottie makes sure that Susan and Allison are at the table for all major farm decisions, asserting their opinions and continually offering their talents and gifts to the farm business.

Communication and Planning

For decades the family has had dinners and meetings

together to discuss farm operational and business planning decisions.

Ron has found wonderful legal counsel in Paul Stave for 45 years, as well as a great relationship with his CPA for tax advice. The retirement planning took years of patience and thoughtful contemplation. “More than farm retirement but life retirement planning was very helpful to Dad,” stresses Todd Dunphy.

On working with new partners in transition, Ron says “Usually the three of us respect the others’ needs and desires and try to accommodate that.”

Farm Retirement

Ron decided it was best to slowly retire as “tax consequences seem less severe if sold over a period of years.” He continues trying new things with a focus on conservation planning on parts of the family land. His prairie reconstruction will provide space for native biodiversity and forage for sustainable grazing. Along the edges of his woodlands he is focusing on quail habitat improvement. Ron encourages his grandson Colton with his Short Horn show cattle, and will maybe someday help him with another farm transition.

February

Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society Annual Winter Conference: February 9-11, Watertown, SD. Keynote speakers Tom Stearns, founder of High Mowing Organic Seeds, and Dr. Paul Dettloff, DVM, staff veterinarian for Organic Valley. For more information Chris Williamson, (573) 248-2530 or chris.williamson@mdc.mo.gov.

2010 Iowa Farmers' Market Workshop: February 20, Des Moines. This workshop provides training and information for farmers' market managers and vendors. Topics include food safety practices for growers and marketing advice for vendors. Advance registration recommended, but walk-ins welcome. For more information Ginny Gieseke (515) 277-6951 or vgieseke@q.com.

21st Annual Organic Farming Conference and Organic University: February 25-27,

La Crosse, WI. The largest organic farming conference in the country, organized annually by MOSES! For more information <http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html>.

Shivvers Memorial Lecture, Wisdom of the Last Farmer: February 28, Ames. David Mas Masumoto is a self-described "artist farmer," capturing the stories of family and the land through literature. For more information lectures@iastate.edu or (515) 294-9934.

March

5th Annual Midwest Cover Crops Council Workshop: March 3-4, Ames. Presentations and posters from across the Midwest and Great Lakes basin with information for growers, educators, researchers and agribusiness. For more information Sarah Carlson (515) 232-5661 or sarah@practicalfarmers.org.

Backyard Abundance Workshop: March 12-14, Iowa City. Because healthy ecosystems maintain, fertilize, and renew themselves naturally, mimicking them can help us create landscapes of high productivity. The result is a resilient, highly collaborative community that uses less energy and produces little pollution. Register online at www.backyardabundance.org

April

Apple Grafting Workshops: April 10-11, Decorah, IA. Instructor: Dan Bussey, Orchardist and cider maker; advisor and grafter for Heritage Farm's Historic Orchard; apple researcher and historian; author. Dan is a lifetime member of Seed Savers Exchange. \$30 Seed Savers Members (\$35 non-members) To register you must call 563.382-5990.

PFI Offers More Farminars

Do you want to network and learn without leaving your house and battling snowdrifts? Practical Farmers of Iowa has more farminars to offer to ramp up our winter programming. To register, visit www.practicalfarmers.org/farminars.

PFI Winter Farminars

Tuesday, February 9, 7:00-8:30 p.m., "Grow Vegetables Year-Round" with Adam Montri

Adam Montri will discuss how you can grow year round with low technology high tunnels in a cold climate. Adam produces food all year at Michigan State University's Student Organic Farm and Ten Hen Farms, his home farm that he operates with his wife Dru. He will provide detailed crop schedules. Adam is Outreach Specialist for Michigan State University.



Tom Wahl

Tuesday, February 16, 7:00-8:30 p.m., "Opportunities in Agroforestry" with Tom Wahl

Tom Wahl will overview the potential for various high value tree crops suitable for Iowa's climate, including cultural practices, production, prices, markets, pests and diseases. Tree fruits to discuss include chestnut, persimmon, heartnut, paw paw, and more. Tom and his wife Kathy

have grown high value tree crops since 1986 and also operate a small tree nursery.

PFI Spring Farminars

Practical Farmers of Iowa will offer a series of four spring farminars beginning March 2. The spring series will offer participants a "Fish Bowl" view of a beginning farmer learning from an experienced farmer. More details will be released about the spring series as the dates approach.

PFI Archived Farminars

Find archived farminars, including our full fall series and the first two of our winter series at www.practicalfarmers.org/farminars.

PFI Farminars are made possible by funding from the Ceres Foundation, the Wallace Genetic Foundation, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and individual donors to our Next Generation Campaign.

Virtual Pork Farm Tours and Niche Pork Discussion

Wednesday, February 3rd & Wednesday, February 10th, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Scott Sibbel Farm Tour

Thursday, March 25th, noon to 1:30 p.m.

Niche Pork Management Discussion

Sponsors for Pork Programming are Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Pork Industry Center, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Iowa Pork Producer Association, and Pork Niche Market Working Group.

Sustain the PFI Legacy

Remember Practical Farmers of Iowa in your will.



Practical Farmers of Iowa has flourished since its initial leaders came together in 1985. With your help, PFI will be around for generations to come.

A planned gift (such as a bequest or gift of stocks, bonds, cash, life insurance, or IRA) will:

- Direct your dollars to sustainable farmers, not taxes
- Simplify your estate plans
- Perhaps even increase your income.

Call Teresa Opheim at (515)232-5661 for more information.

PFI Camp 2009

Know Your Farmer!

PFI Summer Camp is a chance to get together with other kids and learn about farmers, why we need them, and what the world would be like without them. Come hear from farmers and get to do a little farming yourself! Farm kids come too! You will be able to offer tips on what the real farm life is like!

Plus:

- ❖ Swimming
- ❖ Soccer and field games
- ❖ Craft projects
- ❖ And more!

PFI camp is a family camp for people of all ages. Children 6 and under attend camp free, and must be accompanied by an adult. Teen counselors participating in the Youth Leadership Program, July 12-14, also attend summer camp free.

Scattergood is a Quaker boarding school and farm. Their facility offers dorms, meeting houses, an art center, a full size indoor gym, and lots of room to run and play!

For more information contact Suzi:
suzi@practicalfarmers.org, (515)232-5661



Summer Camp

When: July 14-17, 2010

Where: **New location**—located on a working farm!

- ❖ Scattergood Friends School, West Branch

Who: Ages 7-13, children 6 and under can attend with an adult

Youth Leadership Program

When: July 12-14, 2010

Where: **New location**—located on a working farm!

- ❖ Scattergood Friends School, West Branch

Who: Youth ages 14-18, come camp with friends and learn leadership skills for Summer Camp and beyond!

PFI Merchandise

Be a proud PFI member!

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 _____ \$



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 _____ \$



King Corn DVD—\$10

Learn about the fate of corn—and our food system

_____ QTY _____ \$



Subtotal: _____

S & H: _____

Total: _____

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

Practical Farmers of Iowa
137 Lynn Ave., Suite 200
Ames, IA 50014
(515)232-5661

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—\$35
☐ Farm or Household—\$45
☐ Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—\$75

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 ☐ \$_____

JOIN OUR GIFT OF THE MONTH CLUB

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

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

Practical Farmers of Iowa is a 501©3 organization Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you!

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 _____





Practical Farmers of Iowa

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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

Healthy Food, Diverse Farms, Vibrant Communities