

working together, always learning

the Practical Farmer

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On the cover



Jerry Peckumn, left, and son Tom pause for a picture in the thick of harvest.

(Photo courtesy of Jane Peckumn Fiscus)

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the Practical Farmer helps keep farmers and friends of farmers in touch with one another and through informative articles on the latest on-farm research, demonstration and observation to help all types of farming operations become profitable while caring for the land that sustains them. Provided as a member benefit to PFI supporters, *the Practical Farmer* also update members on PFI programming and news.

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(Back issues are available upon request.)



From the Director

Our Vision: Spread the Word

Practical Farmers of Iowa has a wonderful vision (repeated each issue on the back of your newsletter). Sometimes, after miles of seeing no people, no livestock and few farmsteads in the Iowa countryside, it seems our state is moving relentlessly away from that vision. But then I arrive at a PFI farm like the Gilberts' farm near Eldora.

The Gilberts' pork tasting field day in September was perfect. We celebrated food that was fresh and flavorful – straight out of the garden and prepared by Bev and her crew. A couple of the beginning farmers who raised the pork were there and received feedback on their meat. Niman Ranch representatives gave a fascinating presentation on the company's grading standards. Neighbors were in attendance, as were three generations of the Gilbert family and many PFI members.

I left with a full belly and a satisfied mind.

We need Gilbert-type farms all over Iowa. Change usually happens on the local level, and we don't have enough members or activity in all local areas of the state (roughly county level or smaller). So our strategy

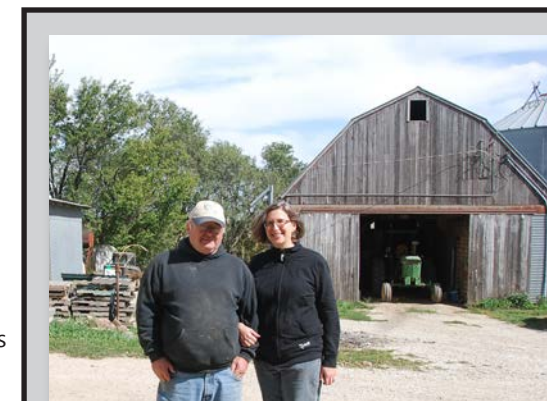
should be to increase our membership numbers, but not at rates we cannot sustain or, with stretching, accommodate with our programming. All while focusing like a laser on our vision, mission and values.

You may remember that we cited the Gilbert farm in an article a year ago as an example of a resilient farm. Heaven knows the Gilberts' farm has been tested in recent years by flooding, hail, drought, low milk prices and escalating input costs. And still it is a thriving one making a living for several generations. John Gilbert says they manage the farm's risk by:

- Working with nature to time when calves and pigs are born
- Selecting livestock and crop varieties that are hardy with minimal inputs
- Choosing breeding stock with calm dispositions for easier handling
- Relying first on on-farm resources
- Being financially cautious and managing risks with insurance whenever possible.

Important Board Change

On behalf of your PFI board, I hope you will attend the Business Meeting at the next annual conference. We have new articles of incorporation to approve, and also will explain some bylaw changes as well. A significant one: One farmer board member will now be elected from each of our five districts (instead of two from each district), and five farmers will be elected at large. Why the change? Since Practical Farmers started, our farmer membership has grown dramatically in the diversity of its enterprises and farming styles. We need the flexibility of choosing board members at-large, so that we can make sure we have men and women; conventional and organic; and grazing, field crops and horticulture enterprises all represented on your PFI Board.



TOP: Longtime member (and informal advisor to the Executive Director) Vic Madsen with Teresa on the Madsen farm.

BOTTOM: Lori Lyon of Niman Ranch (left), Bev Gilbert (center) and Kate Gilbert (right) chat at the September field day on the Gilbert farm.

PFI Party: Making Things Affordable

It's too bad that conference centers charge so much for serving food. But they do, so we are trying something exciting at the annual conference that will make the meal affordable to everyone: A PFI party. We will provide the meat and buns, coffee, tea and table service. Everyone is encouraged to bring food or drink to share, and we should have plenty for everyone. There will be no admission charge for conference attendees.

We will see you at the conference Jan. 10-12 in Ames!

How to Raise Children So They Will Want to Work With You

by Joel Salatin

On April 17, 2012, a robust crowd gathered at the farm of Tom and Mary Cory to hear well-known Virginia farmer and author Joel Salatin give his insights on running small diversified farms. In the last issue, we included his thoughts on going full-time with your part-time farm; in this issue, we present the rest of his remarks.



Joel Salatin stands near his pastured chickens on his Polyface, Inc. farm in Swoope, Virginia

Our first rule is: independent businesses for our children. Not subsets of what we're doing, but something totally different that can be theirs.

Everyone wants to have their claim to fame. For me, it was my chickens. Two elderly matrons taught me everything I know about marketing. I wouldn't trade that experience for the world. I loved it. From 14 years old till I graduated high school, I was up every single Saturday at 4 o'clock to be there at the curb market at 6. That's the way I grew up.

When Teresa and I had kids, we wanted the same thing for them. My son, Daniel, started with a rabbit business. Some friends of ours were moving from country

to town and the new landlord wouldn't let them bring their rabbits. So Daniel said, "Well I think I'd like to have rabbits." He was eight. These friends gave Daniel their three rabbits and we built them a shelter. Ever the entrepreneur, he said, "Well, I'll see what I can do with these." So we put a little word in the newsletter that spring that Daniel was doing rabbits.

Daniel has had his rabbit business for 23 years now. It very well may be the largest commercial flock of rabbits in the country that is forage-based, line-bred with no outside genetics, and raised with no medications and no vaccines. Now he sells more breeding stock than he does meat rabbits, and for a lot more money.

I think we've really destroyed a lot of the soul of our youth in this country when the greatest pleasure in life is being the greatest points-getter on a Gameboy game instead of being affirmed in true self-worth by a craft or service that we present to the world. It's tragic in our culture that we have used child labor laws to essentially criminalize, marginalize and demonize all of the useful chores and things children used do around the house to develop their own identity and self-worth and their own person as productive members of society. I think as we start down this path, we need

In two weeks he had an order for 150 rabbits, and that's pretty quick even for rabbits! It took him more than a year to fill that order. One of the greatest benefits of a direct-market farm is that it creates these synergistic enterprise opportunities for children to work in the farm.

Everyone wants a kingdom to rule. We all need our perch to sing on! Our kids need that as well. We need to give them autonomy over certain age-appropriate tasks. . . They need to run it as their business and if it succeeds or fails, it's up to them.

Joel Salatin

We need to get to where we excite young people with opportunity to come into the family business. We need to create a path so it's not just Mom and Dad's farm, but the children become equal stakeholders.

Joel Salatin

to think about creating these opportunities for our kids, to encourage this self-reliance and doing meaningful work. Not menial work, but meaningful work. . . .

On our farm, we really separate work from chores. . . . You shouldn't get paid for making your bed, taking out the trash, hanging up your clothes and washing dishes. That's what you do because you're a member of society. If we give our kids an allowance and pay them for every little thing they do, it can make them think that society owes them a living for breathing. And that's not healthy. But we also want them to have a healthy sense of self-worth.

. . . . This is very important: When you're working with your kids or when you want them to do something, do not create time-oriented tasks. Never say, "Go practice the piano for 30 minutes." Instead, sit down and say, "What are you working on? When you get it to a certain place of proficiency, you can quit." That's task-oriented, not time-oriented.

Time-oriented tasking teaches dawdling. If there's no incentive for performance or function, all you teach is laziness, negligence and sloth. What we've got to do is incentivize complete performance. Never say, "Go pull weeds for an hour." Go out and take some surveyor's tape and say, "We're going to pull weeds from here to here." Mark out the task and say, "When you get them pulled, you can be done." That way you provide age-appropriate incentive, whether it's reading a story, or free

time, or building a fort in the woods. So you key every task to a completion.

One of the funniest stories for me started when Daniel was still in diapers. He's maybe a year-and-a-half old and he's playing with his Tonka

truck in the dirt while I'm digging a fence post hole. He says he's thirsty, and I said, "No Daniel, we can't take a drink until I've finished another fence post hole. That's my reward for completing my task." So he grew up that way.

Later he became friends with a neighbor boy. They wanted to build a fort, so they headed over into the woods the first morning to start the project. Around 11:30 we get a call from the neighbor lady saying, "What is wrong with your son? He won't let our Phillip have a drink until they finish the wall on the fort!"

Believe me, more is caught than taught.

. . . . Everyone wants a kingdom to rule. We all need our perch to sing on! Our kids need that as well. We need to give them autonomy over certain age-appropriate tasks. They need to own it. They need to run it as their business and if it succeeds or fails, it's up to them. It won't take too many failures for them to realize real quick that they need to step up to the plate. But if we sit here and nag at them and assume they won't become responsible, guess what? They won't become responsible.



Joel Salatin (bottom left) with his family.

We've got to get away from being fussy parents. Skill will come. The way they drive straight nails at 16 is to let them drive bent nails at 12. The way they learn how to make patterns and dresses and crank out stuff at 16 is because of a bunch of crooked stitches at 10. We need to be careful. If you don't know if you're a fussy parent, ask your spouse and they'll tell you.

I've had my come-uppance a couple of times. We can be all excited about the farm and the cows and about the garden and all that, but you know what? If the family is broken, the whole thing is broken. We've got to be quick to praise and slow to create judgment.

We need to get to where we excite those young people with opportunity to come into the family business. We need to create a path so it's not just Mom and Dad's farm, but the children become equal stakeholders. The joy of our life now is I know I can go away for two weeks on a speaking circuit, and I know that Daniel is going to take care of every single thing and make every single decision in every single crisis exactly the way I would make that decision. And if it's over his head, he'll call me and ask me for my advice.

There's nothing like an old geezer having a young buck ask for his advice. ■

Romancing the Children: The Wilsons bring another generation back to the farm

by Teresa Opheim

Dan and Lorna Wilson have aspirations that provide the path for their farming journey:

- ~ We want to have life in abundance, to the fullest, overflowing.
- ~ We want to enjoy life more by having time and financial margins.
- ~ We want to be known for our integrity.
- ~ We want our children to reach their full potential.
- ~ We desire to leave this world at a ripe old age with our families rooted and grounded in the Bible.

The Wilsons have been members of Practical Farmers since the early days, when the organization was “a group of people sitting around in a circle, with kids running around.” Their five children are now grown, but daughter April is the only one who doesn’t live nearby. Robin and Faye live in a farmhouse down the road; Faye helps out on the farm and Robin has an off-farm job. Jaron, the youngest, is an electrician’s apprentice, farms part-time, and lives at home. Torray and his wife, Erin, and now daughter Audrey, farm with Dan and Lorna.

It’s a good thing the Wilsons have a lot of labor available, because they are managing many enterprises: organic corn, beans, barley, oats, and rye; beef, pork, chicken and lamb; bakery goods and vegetables; and organic milk being sold, for the time being, on the commodity market.

Dan joined the PFI board in 2007, and now is in line to be the board president in 2013. He also serves on PFI’s Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Labor4Learning Committee, which has developed a program that will help farmers find (and pay for) labor while giving aspiring farmers on-farm experience.

He’s eager to help beginning farmers get started, as he did at the Leitz field day this year, where he shared pasture farrowing tips, such as how to orient the huts (to the southeast so they capture the early morning sun) and which bedding to choose (oat

straw or ground corn cobs, not corn stalks that can lacerate the piglets). Dan has also delighted in mentoring Cherokee beginner Nathan Anderson, an enrollee in PFI’s Savings Incentive Program.

Making Way for the Next Generation

Dan has become somewhat of a national celebrity on humanely raising pigs, having given media interviews on the subject to public radio, the Rodale Institute website and local publications. He also serves on Niman Ranch’s farmer advisory committee. However, he says pigs may be a diminish-

ing part of the farm’s future. Why? Because his children’s interests lie elsewhere. “To romance the children back to the farm,” Dan says, “they need to be able to follow their passion.” For Torray, that passion is grazing. Since he graduated from Dordt College and returned to farm, the Wilsons have turned 180 acres of crop ground into pasture, where Torray cares for 200 ewes in a rotational grazing system.

Dairying is the passion for Erin Wilson, Torray’s wife and the daughter of long-time PFI members Dan and Bonnie Beard of Decorah. After Erin and Torray married and decided to settle on the Wilson Farm, Dan Beard brought more than 30 heifers to add to their existing 12 head so that the young couple could start their milking herd. At their recent field day, the Wilsons showed off their brand-new milking parlor – complete with solar water heating – that they are proud to say they built themselves.

“Torray and Erin keep financial records for their dairy and sheep operations, and they provide the fuel and electricity for their operations,” Dan says. “Lorna and I provide

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This page, clockwise from left: 1) Dan in the milking parlor; 2) Dan and the beginning farmer he is mentoring, Nathan Anderson, at Drew and Dean Leitz’s field day; 3) the Wilsons take a lunch break: Torray, Dan, Lorna, Erin and of course, Audrey is center stage.

Opposite page: Dan, content holding granddaughter Audrey.



the equipment. We’re getting them up and running now, then will figure division of resources even more.”

.....
“To romance the children back to the farm, they need to be able to follow their passion.”

Dan Wilson

Dan takes the lead on the hogs and the 300 acres of row crops (with help from Jaron). A former certifier for MOSA (Midwest Organic Services Association), Erin keeps the organic certification for the farm. Lorna is the farm’s accountant and she also cares for the chickens and garden, and heads the direct marketing. The Wilsons sell meat, bakery items and vegetables at farmers markets and offer online and phone sales as well. In addition, they sell some pork to Niman Ranch, and also sell some lamb on the commodity market.

Torray, Erin, Lorna, Dan and sometimes Jaron (and little Audrey) have lunch together during the week, where they coordinate chores and do the planning. There is a master calendar on the refrigerator that helps the family keep tabs on all their tasks and also includes concerns and lingering jobs, such as “clean up farm,” “mulch” or “haul steel.” They also have a “fun box”, a

reminder that family members need time to play.

They are avid followers of holistic management, which helps them ensure that their decisions are socially, environmentally and economically sound. The aspirations at the beginning of this article are part of their holistic goal. Torray and Erin have even become holistic management trainers.

A Ripe Old Age

It was 1972 when Dan moved back to farm with his dad, Ernie. Three years later, brother Colin joined the farming operation (Colin has since become a missionary in Haiti). Ernie retired in 1986 at age 62, in poor health, and died in 2005. “After he retired, our dad ran errands for us, hauled grain, drove the bailer. He was always ready to move pigs,” Dan says. “We went 100 percent ridge-till when he retired. We had played with it before. We also got rid of four-row and went to eight-row.”

Dan’s mother, Beth, a long-time PFI member well known in the Iowa Quaker community, celebrated her 80th birthday this year at a Labor Day gathering. Three generations of Wilsons used the occasion to begin working on the thorny questions of farm succession. “We had a mess on our hands. There were mistakes made in recording Dad’s will. Mom has a life estate in the land, but for years we thought

she owned it outright,” Dan says. “Now we are in the process of putting the 640 acres of family land in an LLC. Our goal is to have everything set up by the end of the year. The lawyer we are working with has 12 families all needing to do the same thing sooner rather than later.”

Where do Dan and Lorna want to be in 20 years?

Says Dan: “I want to have as many kids back as possible. I want to take my walker out to inspect my beef cow herd,” which he describes as fellow grazier “Steve Reinert’s rejects.”

Says Lorna: “I want to have a retirement garden, not a big one. I want to be like Sharon Thompson. She is settled and always so pleasant. She knows what she wants to do. And I want to be a grandma over and over again.” ■



How Grade A Garlic Won the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon

by Sally Worley

It's easy to miss Grade A Gardens in Johnston unless you know to look for it. Upon arrival, the Johnston suburbs withdraw into the background, giving an impression of rural life, and the farm is abuzz with energy.

Jordan Clasen grew up one mile from Grade A Gardens, which is located on Paul and Lori Rottenberg's 10-acre Johnston residence. Jordan has known Paul and Lori for years. The land is on a hill where the sun hits the plot early and the tree line breaks the wind, creating a sheltered environment. Eight acres of the ground has been farmed conventionally for 30 years.

Paul and Lori tired of mowing their lawn, and knew of Jordan's interests of expanding his Grade A Grass (wheat-grass) into other crops, so asked if he wanted to plant some crops on their property. Jordan: "Shortly after, the city started a road on the south side of the property with future plans to develop the land. Financially, the land is worth more than what I pay an acre in rent, but the Rottenbergs aren't too excited about the idea." Lori's dad was a farmer, and she liked the idea of helping a young farmer get started.

Jordan feels the rental agreement is stable for the foreseeable future. The Rottenbergs are making investments that support a horticulture operation: Historically on well water, last winter the couple embarked on a project that entailed ripping up their front yard to get on city water. They then dug a six-foot trench from the house to the gardens to create a well pump.

The Farm Plan

This year Jordan raised tomatoes, garlic, watermelon, potatoes, carrots, broccoli and greens, which included spinach, kale, arugula and his lettuce blend. The property has some heritage apple trees that produced a bumper crop this year. Thomas Burkhead, another Johnston native, planted

about 500 chiles on the property. Jordan used row cover to extend his broccoli and greens season into the fall.

Jordan is enrolled in Practical Farmers' Savings Incentive Plan and is planning for the future development of Grade A Gardens. For now, he works full-time as produce manager for Gateway Market.

Currently, Jordan markets to Gateway Market in Des Moines, Wheatfield Cooperative in Ames, and Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market. Paul Rottenberg's commitment to Jordan couples with his desire to bring more local, organic produce to Des Moines consumers. Paul is president of Orchestrate Hospitality, the company that operates prime Des Moines restaurants such as Centro, Django, Gateway Market, Raccoon River Brewing Company, South Union Bakery and Zombie Burger. Jordan and Paul are both interested in getting local food to those restaurants.

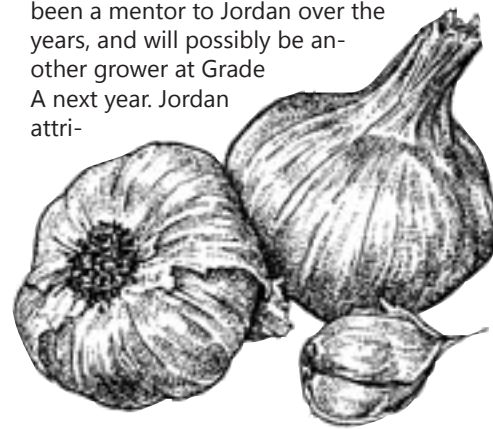
"It would be great for those restaurants to be able to serve food that was raised within 15 miles," Jordan says. "Ideally, chefs and servers will come out on a regular basis, so they understand what goes into raising the food, and they know what's in season and what's coming up."

Two years ago, Grade A Gardens raised roughly 5,000 heads of garlic. This year Jordan produced 15,000 and is aiming for 20,000-30,000 next year. Jordan sold 25 pounds of seed garlic this year and would like to expand that market. "I'd like to be able to sell garlic 365 days a year, from spring garlic to scapes to cured bulbs," he says, adding he would also like to scale up his production of greens and carrots. "I did pretty good with both of those crops this year, and they have a good market." As Jordan expands his business, he plans to scale back his Gateway Market hours and ramp up farming hours until he is farming full-time.

Farm expansion plans are in the works. Cultivated bed area continues to grow. Jordan has applied for high tunnel cost-share through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and he hopes to construct a high tunnel on the property this fall. The 8 acres that had been farmed conventionally are finishing their second year of organic transition. The long-term plan is to have 8 acres in organic specialty crops.

Thomas Burkhead, fellow Savings Incentive Program enrollee and long-time friend of Jordan's, farms on land near Rockwell City and raises some crops at Grade A Gardens as well. He is compensated to staff the Grade A farmers market booth. Thomas and Jordan help each other with production, each keeping revenue from their own crops.

John Whitson, Sunrise Produce, has been a mentor to Jordan over the years, and will possibly be another grower at Grade A next year. Jordan attri-



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butes a lot of his production knowledge to John as well as his other mentor, Larry Cleverley. "Without their help I would not be growing garlic," he says. "I look to carry it on for a number of years."

How Jordan grows Grade A Garlic

"The soil was good to begin with. It had been grass for 30 years," Jordan explains. If time allows, he plants a cover crop before garlic.

Deep Tilling. Jordan first tills the garlic ground fairly deep. He then hooks on a tiller/furrower attachment to his BCS walk-behind tractor to build raised beds before planting. "I want something well-drained," he says. "The raised beds also save us from bending over when weeding." After the beds are formed, he adds Sustane, a certified organic fertilizer, and lightly tills the beds.

Once the beds are prepped, planting begins. "I like to plant heaviest around the full moon in October." Cloves are planted 8 to 12 inches deep, 8 inches apart, 26 inches between rows, in 6-foot beds.

Hand Planting. Every garlic clove is planted by hand. Jordan: "With deep-tilling, planting goes fairly quick. I want to stay true to planting by hand. It produces high-quality garlic in neat rows. Although fairly labor intensive, you can pack a lot of garlic into an acre, so it can be pretty lucrative."



Thomas Burkhead (left) and Jordan Clasen display Jordan's award-winning Chesnok Red, which was the blue-ribbon award winner at the 2012 Iowa State Fair.

"I want to stay true to planting by hand. It produces high-quality garlic in neat rows."

Jordan Clasen

Jordan then covers garlic beds with a layer of straw: "The straw keeps weeds down in the spring and during winter acts as a blanket, especially winters like last year where there was little snow."

Weeding & Feeding. Garlic is one of the first crops to emerge in the spring, coming up before many weeds. Once the garlic is 2 to 3 inches tall, Jordan weeds the garlic beds. He then foliar feeds the garlic using a backpack sprayer filled with Neptune's Harvest fish seaweed blend fertilizer. Jordan: "It's pretty stinky, but a job that needs to be done."

Jordan repeats the weeding/foliar spraying process when the garlic is between 6 and 8 inches tall, and a third time when the plants are approximately 1 foot tall. "Once the garlic is about a foot tall, the garlic

does a pretty good job of drowning out weeds."

Harvesting and marketing begins late spring. "We're looking to cater to people as long as the garlic season can go," Jordan says. "First we harvest early-spring garlic. There is no better flavor than the mild and flavorful early-spring garlic. Then we roll into the scape season."

When Thomas and Jordan started their garlic ventures a couple years ago, garlic scapes – the edible curly shoots of garlic bulbs that sprout late May and early June – weren't well known. Thomas: "People at market didn't know what they were. This year we sold out. It's fun to watch the market evolve."

Multiple Varieties. Jordan plants different garlic varieties to extend his garlic bulb harvest: "We plant a Turban which is an early harvester. We also plant a lot of softnecks that have a long shelf life." Jordan hopes to sell garlic through January or February this season, and plans to plant enough to store until May in future seasons. His state fair garlic is Chesnok Red – and the large, firm, red-tinted heads are worthy frontrunners. Larry Cleverley got Jordan fond of variety German Porcelain. Jordan is cultivating a wild variety that has been growing on the Rottenberg property for years; he may have his own home strain one of these years.

Well-Timed Harvest. Jordan starts garlic harvest when there are five green leaves left. "A healthy plant has 12 to 13 green leaves. They start dying back one at a time. When there's 40 percent green leaves left, you harvest. Each leaf represents a wrapper around a bulb. Those wrappers provide storage protection."

Digging & Grading. Jordan hand-digs his garlic, grades them into small, medium and large categories, and hangs them in the shed in bunches of 10. A fan provides ventilation. Jordan: "I would really like to knock

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Grade A Garlic (cont'd)

◀ (Continued from page 9)

out a couple windows and install a cooler to control the temperature. In the future we'd like to build a pack shed and barn, facilities more ideal for long-term storage and drying."

Curing & Cleaning. The garlic hangs in the shed until cured and sold. Garlic is cleaned for delivery at a shaded table underneath the apple trees. "We snip off the stalk and peel back layers until we find one that's nice and pretty," Jordan says. "We don't go too deep to expose cloves, it won't store well."

As Jordan continues to scale up his garlic operation, he is planning to purchase a garlic peeling machine so he can offer chefs ready-to-use gourmet garlic cloves.

Phytoplasma

This year, like many garlic growers across the Midwest, Grade A Garlic was infected with a phytoplasma commonly known as Aster Yellows. Jordan: "I would estimate that 35 percent of our crop was affected by Phytoplasma, whether it was reduced size, not holding up in storage, or a complete meltdown in the field before maturity."

Phytoplasma is a common bacterium that leafhoppers spread to a multitude of plants. It is seen in the Midwest regularly, but not in garlic. "With the warm winter, garlic emerged early," Jordan says. "Leafhoppers arrived and garlic was the only green thing to feed on."

Since this is the first time Phytoplasma has been documented in Midwest garlic, it is unknown if afflicted bulbs will carry the bacterium over to the next spring or if the bacterium will die over the winter. Jordan is purchasing half his seed stock from Washington State to be safe. The half he is planting from his seed stock he will treat according to suggestions from Washington garlic growers. "Diatomaceous Earth is supposed to control Phytoplasma," he says. Jordan plans to spread Diatomaceous Earth on the soil in the fall when he preps the beds. He will then soak his seed garlic in water and roll each one in Diatomaceous Earth before planting.



Jordan and his dog, Rupert.

Thomas Burkhead's mentor, Rick Hartmann, is also testing some of his infected garlic for nematodes. Thomas: "Rick said symptoms are almost identical between nematodes and Phytoplasma, and he doesn't want to assume it is Phytoplasma because nematodes may be more problematic for future garlic production."

Credit for Jordan's path to becoming a successful farmer is certainly due to the Rottenbergs, who have provided land to rent, restaurant connections and shared values. Credit is also due to farming experts like Larry Cleverley and John Whitson. However, Jordan's hard work, passion, talent and enthusiasm all shine through, bringing radiance to this budding farm business. ■

Connect with Grade A Gardens on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grade-A-Gardens/206562360024>

Scaling Up: Full report now available online

The purpose of this report is to summarize perspectives from growers and buyers on barriers and benefits to wholesale marketing of local fruits and vegetables. Based on buyer and grower feedback, the report outlines strategies to overcome these barriers.



Growers specified barriers including keeping production on par with demand and efficiency; adapting to wholesale prices and requirements; and business planning and management. Top bottlenecks for buyers include: product availability in-season; seasonal production in Iowa's climate; dependable wholesale volume; product sizing and grading; food safety training for producers; access to "ready to use" processed local produce; producer liability insurance; and product packaging. Buyers desire a local food purchasing system that acts more like "the standard one."

Strategies to overcome these barriers include enhanced collaboration; efforts to help growers bridge the gap between retail and wholesale production abilities; eliminating variability for growers and buyers; better transportation and delivery systems; and more fruit and vegetable processing infrastructure.

The report was funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Local Food and Farm Initiative, a statewide program led by Craig Chase, interim Marketing and Food Systems Initiative program leader for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. ■

Read the entire report online at http://bit.ly/PFI_ScalingUp_Report

Looking for 3rd-crop row cropper cooperators

Are you growing cover crops to harvest the seed in 2013? Have you thought about the potential savings on inputs by adding a third crop?

PFI wants to recruit farmers to measure the potential nitrogen savings when transitioning from a two-year corn-bean

system to a third crop intercropped with a nitrogen fixing legume. As Tom Frantzen says: "Diversity leads to stability and stability leads to security."

For more information, contact Sarah Carlson at sarah@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661. ■



Craig Fleischman is participating in an on-farm trial comparing a two-year crop rotation with a three-year rotation of oats / red clover, soybeans and corn.

Leave A Legacy



"By giving a gift of land to PFI, I will be helping a vital and ethical organization continue its work."

Helen D. Gunderson

There are ways to provide for your loved ones AND leave a legacy for Practical Farmers of Iowa. You can do both, and it's easy.

- Designate a portion of your retirement plan for PFI
- Leave a life insurance policy
- Make a gift through your will
- Make a gift now and receive income for life with a charitable gift annuity.

Many such gifts can help you and your family today as well as help our mission years into the future. You can put some in place today without affecting your cash flow during your lifetime.

Want to learn more? Contact Teresa Opheim, Executive Director, 515.232.5661 or teresa@practicalfarmers.org.

* Important: Consult with your own legal and financial advisors before making any planned gift. *

Become a lifetime member

Thanks to your feedback, PFI is pleased to now offer a lifetime membership option. For a one-time payment of \$1,000, you will:

- Receive all the benefits of standard membership, including annual conference discounts, access to our email discussion lists, and the ability to be paid to host a field day or conduct research.
- Lock in current membership rates. The one-time fee to become a lifetime member (currently \$1,000) will increase as our standard membership rates increase. By committing today, you won't be affected by those price changes.
- Avoid the hassle of renewing annually. As a lifetime member, we'll never bother you with renewal notices again.
- Gain special recognition in the Practical Farmers of Iowa annual report and on the website.
- Receive a framed certificate of lifetime membership to display proudly in your home.

To sign up, contact Patrick at patrick@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661, or visit our secure membership payment page at <http://practicalfarmers.org/join-pfi.html>. ■

Feed value of non-GMO corn

by Drake Larsen

Corn is bought, sold and generally thought about in terms of bushel per acre. However, for livestock producers mixing feed rations with grain, it isn't so much the bulk, but rather what makes up that bushel that really plays to the bottom line. While corn yields have increased steadily since the 1950's – from less than 50 bushel per acre to more than 170 bushels per acre today – grain quality and nutrient content have not followed suit. Specific fractions of protein, starch, and essential amino acids have changed, for better and for worse, but farm-prepared rations have not necessarily changed from standard expectations.

Practical Farmer John Gilbert of Hardin County participated in a 2011 PFI trial that sought to assess feed value of non-GMO corn. He explains that in the commodity market, quantity (yield) is all that matters – but that “when your livelihood depends on producing quality meat, you have to consider a balance between quantity and quality in livestock feed.”

Gilbert's family farm consists of a dairy herd, raising pork for Niman Ranch, and 600 acres of row crops for cash grain and on-farm feed production. “Over the years we were disappointed,” Gilbert says. “Feed values were going down and we never even bothered to test. We assumed [protein levels] were around 9 percent, and then we find out [from the local feed mill] it's maybe seven.” This surprising discov-

ery, along with his philosophy that “we are never too old to keep learning,” led Gilbert to take part in the PFI on-farm research project looking at yield and quality of non-GMO corn.

Study Design

The research was conducted last year on two farms – Gilbert's and a farm in western Ohio – and consisted of a randomized strip design that tested 12 varieties of non-GMO corn (8 varieties in Iowa, 4 in Ohio). Corn was planted on May 4 in Iowa and June 1 in Ohio. On the Gilbert farm the corn was raised conventionally, while the Ohio farm was managed organically. Yields varied across varieties at the Gilbert farm and were lower than the county average for Hardin County, owing to a lower corn suitability rating (CSR) value on the

research parcel. Yields at the Ohio site were average for the county, and there was no statistical difference across varieties.

After harvest, an aggregate sample was taken for each hybrid type and tested for protein, oil and the amino acids lysine, methionine and cysteine.

Results

Overall, the study found that grain quality – that is to say nutrient content – is likely not as high as traditional estimates suggest; only one variety met the 9 percent protein benchmark traditionally used for calculating feed rations. Additionally, protein yields per acre were highly varied across the hybrids. Protein levels for the varieties tested at the Gilbert farm ranged from 423 lb/acre to 792 lb/acre. With protein value estimated at \$0.34/lb (using calculations based on the protein in soybean meal), the bottom-line is significant: Variation of this magnitude translates to more than \$100 in protein value per acre depending on variety.

These results are useful to Gilbert and other livestock producers feeding animals with their own grain. Higher protein values mean less dependence on supplemental products such as soybean meal. “The goal is a more balanced feed,” Gilbert explains. “Having feeds with more nutrition is important to our profitability. The more feed value we get from our crops, the less we have to buy.”

Ultimately, more testing is needed to determine grain quality, the best varieties to be grown for animal feed, and the average values of quality components contained in today's grain varieties. Additional research is also needed to determine the reasons for the quality differences found – were the differences agronomic, genetic or both. In the future, Gilbert hopes to conduct further research on soybean nutrient quality as well.

Read the full research report at: www.practicalfarmers.org/programs/Field-Crops.php.

For more information on non-GMO seed availability, see Sarah Carlson's article on the next page (pg. 13) of this newsletter. ■



John Gilbert posing with some cows on his farm in Hardin County.

Non-GMO & organic seed companies

by Sarah Carlson

Like John Gilbert, other Practical Farmers of Iowa members have tested corn hybrids and soybean varieties with various types of labels: conventional, organic and traited. Some farmers have tested corn hybrids versus open-pollinated populations.

At last year's Cooperators' Meeting, during John Gilbert's presentation about his on-farm research project, Dick Thompson talked about a demonstration project he was starting. Dick was planning to test his cows' response to corn-stalks baled from plants that had similar genetics but differed in whether they had GMO traits. From his initial tests with the squirrel feeders, he said squirrels “couldn't make up their minds.” But what he and others at the Cooperators' Meeting were really saying is that a culture of curiosity is important for every farm no matter what type of production system is being used.

For farmers interested in finding organic and conventional (non-traited/non-GMO) corn hybrids and soybean varieties, looking to your current seed sales representative may only offer you a limited selection. Practical Farmers began compiling a more comprehensive listing of seed companies that offer conventional and/or organic corn hybrids and soybean varieties, some of which may not be as well known.

A list of those companies is included here. We are always looking to add to the list. Contact Sarah Carlson with companies that are missing. Finally, like John Gilbert and the other 204 farmers who have conducted trials with Practical Farmers of Iowa since 1987, if you would like to experiment with a new corn hybrid or soybean variety in a strip trial before planting it on a larger number of acres, please sign up for an on-farm research project and be a part of citizen science through PFI's Cooperators' Program. Contact Sarah Carlson for more information. ■

Seed Companies Selling Non-GMO or Organic Corn Hybrids and Soybean Varieties

Albert Lea Seed House
Mac Ehrhardt
1414 W Main St
Albert Lea MN 56007
(507) 373-3161
mac@alseed.com

American Organic
Art Scheele
P.O. Box 385
Warren, IL 61087
(866) 471-9465
(815) 266-4010 (cell)
(815) 788-4000 (fax)
art@american-organic.com

**Becks Hybrids/
Great Harvest Organics**
Kent Gremel
6767 E 276th St
Atlanta IN 46031
(800) YES-Beck
(317) 984-6685 (GHO)
(317) 416-9078 (fax)
kgremel@beckshybrids.com

Blue River Hybrids
Maury Johnson
27087 Timber Road
Kelley, IA 50134
(800) 370-7979
maury@blueriverorgseed.com

Brownseed Genetics
Charles Brown
N 1279 530 St PO Box 7
Bay City WI 54723
(715) 594-3355
(715) 594-3390 (fax)
cbrown@brownseed.com

eMerge Genetics
4401 Westown Parkway, Suite 225
West Des Moines IA 50266
(866) 769-7200
www.emergegenetics.com

Genetic Enterprises Int.
Alix V. Paez
6165 Crabapple Lane
Johnston IA 50131
(515) 278-1170
paezgei@mchsi.com

Green Prairie Specialists
John Hostetler
1431 Illinois Hwy 92
Tampico IL 61283
(815) 499-3477
(815) 438-2020 (fax)

Lord's Seed
John Larimar
6825N 375E Howe IN 46746
(260) 562-2233
(260) 562-3022 (fax)
jlarimer@lordsseed.com

Mark Seed Co.
Mike Goudie
823 W.2nd St. Perry IA 50220
(515) 465-2122
mike@markseed.com

Masters Choice
Jeremy Lake
3010 St. Rt.146 E. Anna IL 62906
(217) 370-2783
jeremy@seedcorn.com

Prairie Hybrids
27445 Hurd Rd
Deer Grove, IL 61243
(815) 438-7815

*** Know of other seed companies that should be listed?**

Contact Sarah Carlson
sarah@practicalfarmers.org
(515) 232-5661

Conference to focus on "Soil and Soul" Join us January 10-12, 2013

Good soil and soul: Practical Farmers aims to build both. Come to the 2013 Annual Conference and learn how the soil sustains life. Explore how different farming systems and practices help build the soil and the communities of plants, animals and people who depend on the soil. Special this year: View soil samples provided by PFI farmers. It's no secret that the soul of our conference is the interaction among attendees. Come make new friends and visit with old ones! Here is a snapshot of what you can expect at this year's conference.

Keynote Address

"THE SOIL FOOD WEB"

Elaine Ingham, chief scientist, Rodale Institute



Dr. Elaine Ingham is a world-renowned soil microbiologist who, for more than three decades, has helped thousands of individuals and companies improve their agricultural practices through a deeper understanding of what soil health really means. In 1996, Elaine founded Soil Foodweb, Inc., an international group of soil biology laboratories that analyzes soils for microbial life. The revelations about soil quality distilled through the efforts of her work and these labs have helped farmers all over the world grow more resilient crops through a deeper understanding of their soil and efforts to improve it.

In this keynote, Dr. Ingham will take the audience on a safari deep into the soil to introduce the reasons why a thriving soil community matters. What is the soil food

web? Why do the battles and alliances among bugs and bacteria, plants and protozoa, fungi, worms and other soil-dwelling species help plants grow? Which plants benefit from which interactions? What easy, simple and inexpensive management practices can help raise the most nutritious food? Why do predator-prey interactions benefit plant health? Managing soil life can be done in many ways, and Dr. Ingham will discuss compost, cover crops, fertilizers and no-till farming practices so that growers at any scale can choose the practices they are most comfortable with to improve the quality and health of their soil – and thus, their plants.

Three Short Courses

Due to the popularity of last year's short course, we scheduled three for this year (Jan 10-11):

1). Composting Done Right

This class will help participants understand the science behind making good compost while teaching the step-by-step process of building the right compost pile. Taught by Elaine Ingham, Chief Scientist at the Rodale Institute.

2). Fearless Farm Finances

Learn to systematically understand and manage farm financial decisions. Aspiring, beginning and experienced farmers should plan to attend. Taught by Chris Blanchard, Flying Rutabaga Works and Rock Spring Farm, and Craig Chase, Iowa State University Extension.

3). Tractors 101

Includes hands-on shop demonstration and practice regarding tractor operation, attachments and maintenance. Staff at Iowa State University Agricultural Engineering/Agronomy Research Farms will serve as instructors.

Business Meeting

Join us at 5 p.m. Friday for the latest on Practical Farmers of Iowa's programming, finances, staffing and more. It's important that you come – we will be approving new articles of incorporation for the organization.



PFI Potluck Party

A FREE event to celebrate another successful year of growth for Practical Farmers of Iowa! We will provide meat and buns, coffee, tea and table service, and you bring something to share. Please note: There are limited outlets for crockpots. Potluck Party Hosts include Donna Prizgintas, LaVon Griffieon, and Tomoko Ogawa.

Breakfast Meetings

Join us for a FREE Saturday morning breakfast and stimulating discussion on one of the following topics: **1).** Health insurance for rural Iowans; **2).** Value-added row crops; **3).** Vegetable/meat/dairy/poultry subscription services; **4).** Combined supply orders for fruit/vegetable farmers; **5).** How to purchase local foods; **6).** Beginning farmers; **7).** PFI's on-farm energy work; **8).** Breakfast with Greg Judy; **9).** Immigrant/refugee farmers; and **10).** Soil and Water Conservation District work.

WANTED: Posters

Member posters are a tradition at the PFI Annual Conference! Bring a poster about anything that would interest members – share your farm, your research and demonstration projects, your lessons learned! Just check the box on the registration form. No proprietary products, please.



Friday Workshops

Leasing Land and Custom Grazing

In cooperation with the Iowa Beef Center and the Iowa Forage and Grassland Council, learn about leasing land arrangements and the benefits of custom grazing. Greg Judy and wife, Jan, run a grazing operation on 1,400 acres of leased land comprising 10 farms.

Making Organic Small Grains Profitable

Planting methods, soil-bed preparation, harvesting, post-harvest handling, new milling technologies and creative farm-to-market ideas. Klaas Martens farms in upstate New York on about 1,400 acres of organic corn, small grains, peas and beans.

Profitability – and the Good Life – with Produce

Paul and Sandy Arnold will detail their labor efficiencies, production systems, soil management and mulching/weed control. The Arnolds have operated Pleasant Valley Farm in Argyle, New York, since 1988.



Smooth Generational Transfer

The Frantzens will update us on their farm succession progress. Grazier and consultant Jim Munsch will discuss financial and legal considerations and tell his farm's succession story. Clinical psychologist Mike Rosmann will discuss psychological issues families may face.

Lovin' Local Foods

Farmer Larry Cleverley, Food Writer Jim Duncan and Chef George Formaro will discuss local foods in central Iowa's dining scene. Add your own stories and exchange ideas for increasing the consumption of local foods across the state. Includes recipe sharing and a tasting.

Conservation for Corn and Soybeans

Iowa Learning Farms has arranged for an afternoon of speakers on nitrogen science and technology, drainage water management, re-saturating riparian buffers in tile-drained landscapes, and woodchip bioreactors for edge-of-field nitrate reductions.

Saturday Workshops

- Willow Lake Farm: A Case Study in Conservation
- Organics: Latest Research, Market Update
- Mob Grazing
- Profitability through Simple Recordkeeping, Season Extension
- Compost Tea and Extract
- Iowa 2050: Pathways to a Sustainable Future
- Providing On-Farm Habitat
- High Tunnel Production: The Basics
- Beginners Talk with Experts: Livestock Enterprises
- Successful Strip-Till Management and Beyond
- Precision Farming and Organic Crops
- La Quercia and Artisan Delicacies
- Soils and Food: Discussion on the Keynote Address
- Cover Crops 101
- Succotash Swine
- Multi-Species Grazing
- You Built the Farm – Now Hire Good People!
- Growing Tasty Tomatoes



THANK YOU to:





Top left: Alice McGary (center, pointing), speaks to attendees at the pesticide drift monitoring field day she hosted, May 31, which featured hands-on training from the Pesticide Action Network.

Top right: Jacob Myers (far right, with mic) speaks to nearly 50 attendees at his June 13 "Pasturing with Patience" field day. Jacob and his wife, Sarah, manage a 40-head herd using holistic practices and adaptive pasture management.

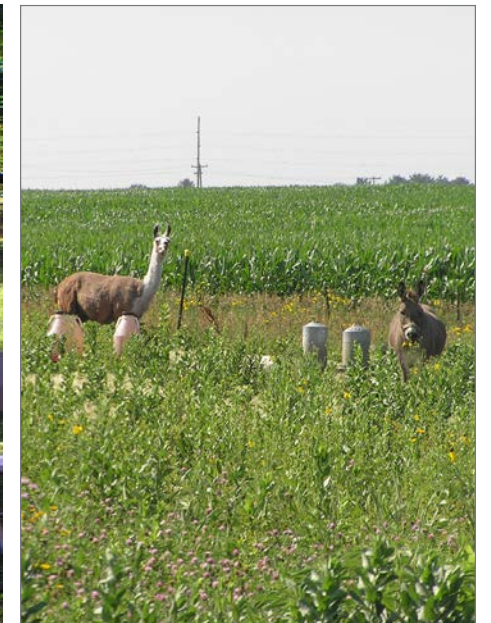
Middle left: Visitors to James and Julie Petersen's June 21 field day, "Co-Existing Cultures: Making Multiple Markets Work," enjoy the sunshine and verdant farm scenery as they are chauffeured, wagon-style, to one of the Petersens' fields. **Bottom left:** Multiple generations are involved in the family's farm, including Jim Petersen (right), his dad (middle) and son Justin.

Middle right: About 80 attendees at Susan Jutz's June 24 field day enjoy a delicious meal prepared by former ZJ Farms employee, Emily Silliman, and PFI grazier Dan Specht, of McGregor, who prepared tender beef short ribs.

Top row: 1). Visitors tour Jason Gomes' (far left), produce fields at his July 20th field day; **2).** Mike DeCook describes his family's oak savannah restoration project at his July 18th field day.

Middle row: 1). Bison try to cool off in a pond on the DeCook Ranch. **2).** PFI member Jason Jones (center, crouching) was one of more than 100 people at Chris Blanchard's (far left) July 15th field day.

Bottom row: 1). PFI members enjoy good conversation at the end of Mark and Connie Tjelmeland's July 7th field day. **2).** An alpaca and donkey seem just as curious about the human onlookers watching them at the Tjelmeland field day.





Counterclockwise, from top right: 1). PFI member Alix Paez (right) speaks with Stan Hott, Des Moines Feed, about non-GMO corn hybrids. **2).** Mark Peterson scoops ice into a cyclist's water bottle at the PFI refreshment stand along this summer's RAGBRAI course. **3).** Beginning farmer Drew Lietz speaks about his new Niman Ranch-oriented farrow-to-finish hog operation at his Aug. 1 field day.

4). Two cyclists enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables – provided by PFI members – at PFI's RAGBRAI stand.

5). More than two dozen guests braved drenching rain to attend Jeremy Peake's (third from left, in white shirt) Aug. 4th field day.

6). Scott Shriver's wife, Paula, grills lunch for guests at the Sept. 13th field day she and husband, Scott, hosted with Earl Cornelison.

7). Visitors to the Shriver farm look at buckwheat as a possible soil-improving late-summer cover crop.

8). Guests view some pastured chickens at Soper Farms.

9). A variety of blue corn bred by Alix Paez and his wife, Mary Jane. The vibrant color jumps out from the yellowing corn stalks.



Top left: It takes teamwork to heft a completed endwall at the High Tunnel Build, hosted this spring by TableTop Farm, near Nevada, April 23-24.

Top right: Mary Wills (right) speaks with fellow PFI apple grower Judy Henry at the Aug. 3rd Wills Family Orchard field day.

Above left: The rich soil on Kate Edwards' Wild Woods Farm, near Solon, impresses guests big and small at her Sept. 8th field day. This field was recently prepared for planting, as part of Kate's plan to expand her 2-acre wholesale and CSA vegetable farm next spring.

Above right: Visitors at the Soper Farms Sept. 26th field day, near Emmetsburg, examine watermelons growing in a field.

Right: Guests at Mark and Melanie (far right) Peterson's Aug. 7th field day examine a potted cover crop plant, including PFI members Paul Ackley (left, front) and Steve McGrew (center, red hat).

Bottom: A farm assistant demonstrates a custom-built highboy seeder designed by Jeff Olson – and showcased at his Aug. 9th field day – to oversee cover crops as an alternative to aerial seeding.



Insurance Report Summary

Health insurance: Perhaps the largest factor making many of us financially vulnerable; perhaps the largest barrier to PFI members' ability to farm full-time. As PFI staff and board, we hear frequently from members about the challenges of finding good, affordable health insurance. So frequently that we included "explore members' health insurance needs" in the PFI 2011-2014 Strategic Plan.

We started following up on our strategic plan directive by asking for your feedback on the 2012 Member Survey. Your responses painted a vivid picture of a real problem. Here are some sample quotes:

- "With the rate increases we've seen, we may drop insurance entirely."
- "Health insurance is a major cost for our household."
- "We have no insurance after my husband retires."
- "I want to farm full-time but leaving my job's health care benefits is a scary thought."
- "I have a high deductible policy for emergencies."
- "I cannot afford to go to the doctor despite some potentially serious health issues."

Also in the Member Survey, we asked: "What should be Practical Farmers of Iowa's role in addressing this problem?" Your responses were as varied as the PFI membership itself – see the pie chart accompanying this article. To help get started understanding the issues surrounding health care coverage, we also commissioned a report from rural health care expert Jon Bailey at the Center for Rural Affairs; much of the rest of this article includes information from Jon's report.

Overall, Iowa's farmers are covered by health insurance at a higher rate than Iowans in general – 93 percent of Iowa farmers have health insurance compared to 88 percent of all Iowans and 84 percent of all Americans¹.

However, the source of health insurance is different for farmers. A large number of farmers directly purchase health insurance on the non-group or individual market. In Iowa, 43 percent of farmers purchase health insurance on the individual market compared to about 9 percent of adults (19-64) nationally with private health insurance and compared to 7 percent of Iowa adults (19-64)². Significantly fewer

farmers in Iowa receive health insurance through employers than do Iowans in general: 52 percent of Iowa farmers and ranchers receive employer-provided health insurance compared to 67 percent of all Iowa adults (19-64) receiving health insurance from an employer and 59 percent of adults (19-64) nationally³.

In the PFI survey, 81 percent of members said they were covered by health insurance (again compared to 93 percent of Iowa farmers in general). Fifty percent of

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, *State Health Facts, 2012*; The Access Project. 2009. *Health Insurance, Health Care Costs, And Access to Care: How are Iowa Farmers and Ranchers faring Compared to Farmers and Ranchers in Other Great Plains States?* The Access Project: Boston, MA.

² Kaiser Family Foundation, *State Health Facts,*

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, *State Health Facts, 2012.*

by Teresa Opheim

those PFI members covered had insurance purchased through the individual market (compared to 43 percent of Iowa farmers in general).

In the PFI survey, we also asked about whole household coverage: 78 percent of members who responded said their entire household is covered by insurance. Parents had purchased insurance for 96 percent of their children. Only 18 percent of the entire household was covered by insurance purchased through the individual market.

The Wild West

The importance of the source of health insurance can be seen in data on health care costs. The median annual cost of health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs for Iowa farmers is \$6,800 (2007 data). However, that figure rises to \$10,500 (2007 data) for those purchasing insurance in the individual, non-group market.

The individual market has been called the "Wild West" of insurance markets – expensive with little if any regulation to protect consumers. Currently, and most importantly for many families having to purchase health insurance in the individual market, the chief differences with the group market are laws concerning acceptance of prospective policyholders and pre-existing conditions. Generally, in the group market the entire group is accepted no matter the health condition of individual members of the group. New

"I want to farm full-time, but leaving my job's health care benefits is a scary thought."

members of a group are accepted into group coverage under the same rules.

No such assurances exist in the individual market. A prospective policyholder or members of his or her family may be turned down for coverage due to a health condition or effectively priced out of a policy for health reasons. Such practices are scheduled to end or be relaxed for

(Continued on page 21) →

"I cannot afford to go to the doctor despite some potentially serious health issues."

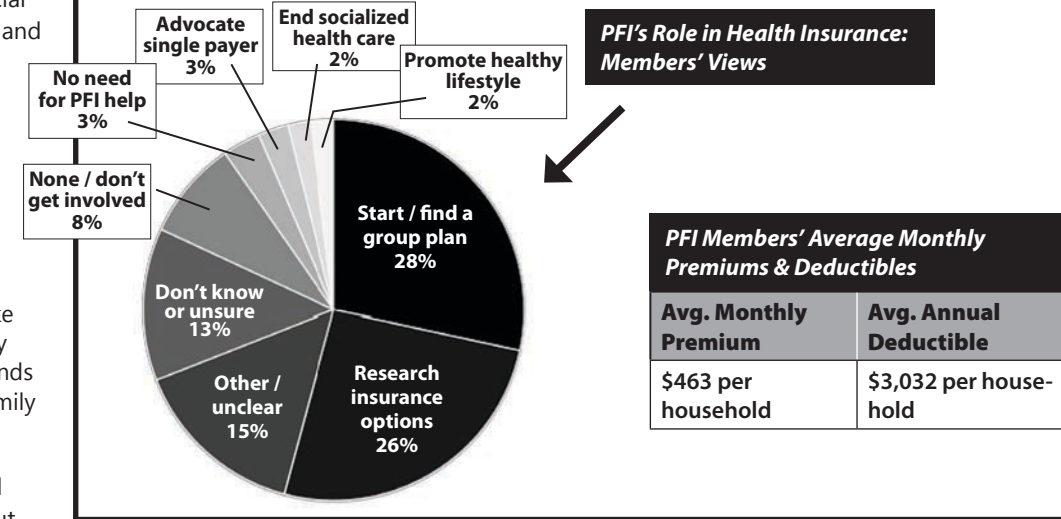
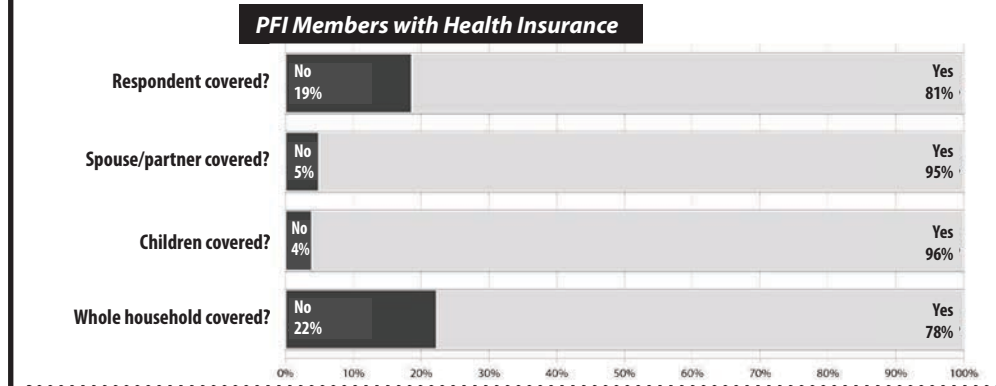
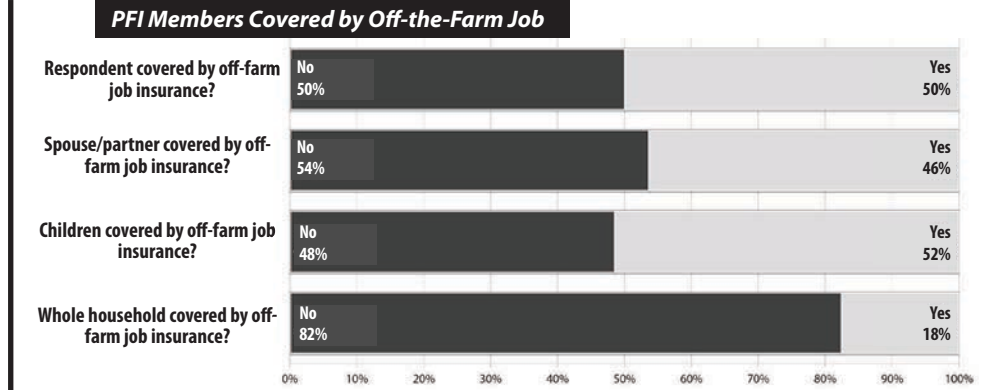
adults in 2014 pursuant to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Pre-existing condition exclusions for children (under 18) are already illegal under the Affordable Care Act.

Surveys also show health care costs have significant household and family consequences for Iowa's farmers. Forty-one percent spent 10 percent or more of their income on health care – a commonly accepted definition of being underinsured: insured but not enough to make up for significant out-of-pocket costs. These costs resulted in a series of poor financial outcomes for many Iowa farm families and households:

- 18 percent had health care expenses contribute to financial problems
- 12 percent had outstanding medical debt
- 20 percent drew down resources (like savings and retirement funds) to pay for health care, resulting in fewer funds for the farm operation and other family needs

In addition, poorer health care resulted for many individuals and families. About one in seven Iowa farmers and their family members (14 percent) delayed or did not seek needed care due to cost or medical debt already incurred. The PFI survey found that many PFI members are doing the same.

In the next issue we'll provide more information on group policies offered by organizations like Farmers Union and Midwest Members Health (a new cooperative option for Iowa), coming changes based on the Affordable Care Act, and Farm Bureau insurance. Many of you



Avg. Monthly Premium	Avg. Annual Deductible
\$463 per household	\$3,032 per household

report you have purchased your individual policies through Farm Bureau.

We are forming a task force to develop recommendations on whether Practical Farmers can and should have a role in helping its members secure better and more reasonably priced health care coverage.

An important note: Practical Farmers' role in this issue is not a policy one – we will not be advocating for strengthening or repealing the Affordable Care Act.

If you might be interested in serving on the taskforce or have additional feedback, let me know: (515) 232-5661 or teresa@practicalfarmers.org.

The full report is available to download at www.practicalfarmers.org/assets/pdf/CFRA_Report_2012.pdf.

Fall Farminars are back – mark your calendars for Tuesdays, Nov. 6 to Dec. 18

by Luke Gran

With harvest wrapping up and winter approaching, it's the perfect time to brush up on skills and focus on professional development – and what better way to do this than tuning in to Practical Farmers' FREE 2012 Fall Farminars!

This year's lineup will feature seven Fall Farminars **each Tuesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m., from Nov. 6 through Dec. 18**. All Farminars are presented by farmers, and many feature a beginning farmer learning from an experienced farmer. Farminars are live online and allow participants to ask questions of presenters in real-time.

To participate, go to: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar. Once you click the link to connect, you can sign in as "Guest." Pre-registration is not required – but if you register, you will receive a reminder email one week and one day before the Farminars you have registered to attend.

All Farminars are recorded and may be viewed from this site at a later date at no cost. Free audio podcasts are also available for download. ■

2012 FALL FARMINAR LINEUP

1). Nov. 6 – "Farmers as employers: legal responsibilities" – Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf, and Michael Staebell of the U.S. Department of Labor

Learn farmers' legal responsibilities for hiring farm employees. Two farmers will share their farm labor employment scenario and ask questions of a Labor Department director, who will also summarize Iowa farm labor laws.

2). Nov. 13 – "Profitable direct to consumer meat and dairy opportunities" – Terri Lawton and Cheryl Hopkins

Learn more strategies to market your own meats and dairy products directly to families in your community.

3). Nov. 20 – "Production in high tunnels: Salad greens, microgreens and more" – Paul and Alison Wiediger and Sara Hanson.

Hear how to grow higher quality salad greens and microgreens in a season-extending high tunnel.

4). Nov. 27 – "Drought recovery grazing: Ideas to get through the winter and plan for a resilient farm" – Jay Jung and Dan Specht

Are you keeping livestock through the drought? Hear from an experienced farmer on how to get through the winter and plan for next year. Learn how to build resilient soils with managed grazing and more.

5). Dec. 4 – "Poultry enterprise budgets: know your expenses and keep your profits" – Patrick Standley, Matt Russell and Karla Hanson

Learn how to price your poultry to ensure profits return to your farm.

6). Dec. 11 – "Beginning a crop and livestock farm: Equipment" – Brian Bagge and Jeff Olson

Are you wondering if you should buy that planter for your crops or the ripper for primary tillage? Hear perspectives from farmers about what equipment a beginner should own to make profits on a beginning farm.

7). Dec. 18 – "Pricing and marketing produce at farm stands and wholesale to grocers" – Atina Diffley

Learn how to price and better market your produce to increase retail and wholesale revenue.

Beginners: Get ready for Next Generation Retreat – Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, near Newton. Everyone is welcome!

Practical Farmers of Iowa will hold its fifth annual Next Generation Retreat on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2012, at the Christian Conference Center southeast of Newton, Iowa. All beginning farmers are welcome to attend, regardless of age, farm enterprise, location or size.

This year the retreat will feature multiple small-group, farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities. At the request of members, we have lengthened the amount of time for the retreat, and have planned structured

networking as well as ample unstructured free time.

The space is wonderful, with a newly designed hotel-style main lodge, several hang-out rooms and a four-season porch overlooking Iowa woodlands.

Staff member Tomoko Ogawa will prepare delicious meals featuring food from PFI farmers. A favorite retreat tradition is the Friday night potluck, where beginners share their favorite dishes with each other.

Cost is \$10 for PFI members and \$35 for non-members, plus lodging. On-site lodging is available for the first 42 registrants. Commuters are also welcome to register and attend without staying overnight. ■

Register by Nov. 15 at www.practicalfarmers.org/events/workshops.com or call (515) 232-5661

Pork Tasting reveals "best" vs. "popular" pork is not so cut-and-dry

by Tomoko Ogawa

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon in mid-September, farmers and friends of farmers gathered together at Gibralter Farms near Iowa Falls for a unique occasion – a blind tasting of six different pork samples side-by-side.

Following last year's popular beef tasting, we passed the baton to pork to star in this year's tasting field day. We showcased six different pork shoulder roasts – four from different PFI producers, one from Organic Prairie (Organic Valley) and one from a grocery store.

The four PFI producers supplying pork included: Ethan and Rebecca Book (Crooked Gap Farm); Garrett and Rebecca Caryl (G-Man Farms); Craig and LaVon Griffieon (Griffieon Family Farm); and, of course, John and Bev Gilbert (Gibralter Farms). For our grocery pork entry, the only information I could gather was that hogs were raised either in the United States, Canada or Mexico according to USDA guidelines, and are slaughtered and packaged somewhere in the United States. We set the protocol on how to prepare the meat to treat each sample as equally as possible. Each roast was placed in an oven bag to preserve its juice, and each bag was set in an electric roaster at 300 degrees for

four hours. The roasts were seasoned only with salt (one-half teaspoon per pound).

Following the tour of the Gilberts' pig operation – but before the blind tasting – Lori Lyon, quality manager at Niman Ranch, discussed pork quality characteristics. Lori explained the different traits that Niman Ranch looks for to ensure high quality in its products. These traits include color, marbling, firmness and pH when meat is still raw; and flavor, juiciness, tenderness and texture when it's cooked.

pH, according to Lori, is the most important meat quality indicator, as it greatly influences the flavor and texture of pork. Higher pH makes meat darker, firmer and more flavorful meat, while lower pH makes meat paler, mushier and less flavorful. In terms of visual color of the loin muscle, a darker red-pink color is desirable.

Tasting Comments

.....
 “Best earthy boar”

 “Excellent flavor, texture and moisture”

 “Fatty but dry finish, very light color”

Marbling is an evaluation of the amount of intramuscular fat in the loin muscle. Higher marbling scores indicate superior eating quality traits, as higher scores usually mean more flavor and juiciness.

Tasters were not specifically asked to judge samples by these criteria, but just to be mindful as they sampled of these scientific traits used by the industry. Among the six samples we showcased, two were heritage breeds recognized by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. One was Red Wattle, from Garrett and Rebecca Caryl, the second was Hereford, from Ethan and Rebecca Book. Red Wattle originated in New Caledonia and is known for its rich flavor and tender texture. Hereford was



Ethan Book, right, samples pork with his two children.

developed in Iowa and Nebraska during the 1920s and is praised for its rich red color and well-marbled meat.

What the tasting event revealed was that, among attendees, taste was a strong factor in preference, and that industry measurements of quality were not always the most obvious or important among tasters. Pork that was "best" by official quality criteria was not always the most popular – and, as I noticed in my own sampling experience, taste preferences can be very subjective and personal. While we announced the two most "popular" pork samples during the tasting by tallying the number of people listing them as one of their top pork picks, people's opinions about their favorite samples, as well as their evaluations of each entry, varied widely, as you can see from some of the comments received.

While I was the only one who knew which pork was which – and found it hard to let my bias go when I tasted the different samples – I could detect big differences among all the samples. Also, as I collected information on each entry, I learned how many variables exist that would have impacted the flavors and textures of pork I tasted. ■

A chart highlighting the different characteristics of each entry is at <http://bit.ly/PorkTasting2012>



Angela and Donna Winburn ponder their pork ratings at this summer's tasting event.

PFI members discuss drought

by Patrick Burke

During this summer's severe drought, the Practical Farmers of Iowa email discussion lists were abuzz. The lists provided a valuable communication channel for farmers with drought-related questions, concerns or comments.

Farrowing outside in hot weather

In mid-July, member James Frantzen voiced his concern about farrowing hogs outdoors during the extreme hot weather Iowa was then experiencing. James wondered, "How do you farrow sows on pasture and provide enough water and shade, yet try your best to keep as many new pigs alive as possible?"



The Frantzen family has always farrowed outside – even during hot weather – by providing sows with plenty of shade, water and wet wallows. But they had recently lost a group of piglets when a sow farrowed in a wet wallow. Frantzen said they were planning to move the next group of sows indoors, to their winter farrowing barn, but wanted to know if PFI members had any other advice for him.

Member Jeff Klinge suggested keeping a frozen milk jug full of water with each sow. "They would usually keep their head right on it," Jeff replied.

Another member, Dana Haugli, suggested adjusting the feed mix. Dana suspected that too much concentrated feed mix can lead to crushing. For gestating sows in hot weather, he feeds a mix of 50 percent oat/whole-kernel corn and 50 percent green alfalfa/clover hay. "The sows are lean," he says, "but farrow much better than they did in the past when they were heavier."

Is fungicide necessary in dry weather?

Many PFI members observed fungicide being sprayed on fields across the state. On the PFI General list, a discussion ensued

about whether crops benefit from fungicide applications during a drought, when fungal infection is less likely to occur.

The discussion started when someone shared research that indicated applying fungicide to drought-stressed crops could actually reduce yields. This led to speculation that input salespeople might be pressuring farmers to apply fungicide unnecessarily.

One possible explanation was offered by PFI staffer Drake Larsen, who related a conversation he'd had with a corn and bean farmer who had applied fungicide. The farmer was concerned that his drought-stressed corn would be especially susceptible to even a small bit of fungus. "In this case," Larsen commented, "the farmer wasn't looking for a beneficial yield response; he was hedging a bet between a harvest and a crop failure."

Strange garlic

Joe Lynch, of Onion Creek Farm in Ames, wondered if anyone else had harvested "strange" garlic. Joe reported that, although the scapes looked normal, his garlic yellowed early and was wrinkly-looking and soft rather than hard.

In response, members across the state reported similar problems with their garlic crops. Many suspected it was a result of the strange weather. As Joe Monahan of Heavy Horses Farm put it, "Was it the mild winter, the early warm spring, the late freeze, the spring heat or the dry, windy weather?"

Member Grant Shultz reported that one-quarter of his garlic was planted in unamended soil and looked similar to what others were describing. The other three-quarters was planted in soil that was heavily amended with horse bedding compost. "That garlic looked great," Schultz said. He later speculated that some farmers' garlic may have been affected by a combination of drought conditions and a rare outbreak of aster yellows, a disease spread by leafhoppers.

(Note: Read more about growing garlic and aster yellows disease in the Horticulture article on pg. 8 of this issue. In the article, garlic grower Jordan Clasen talks about his experience with aster yellows and what he plans to do next year in response.)

Joe Lynch (left) with Steve Cannon



Livestock disaster provisions in the Farm Bill

On the PFI Policy list, members discussed whether disaster assistance should be extended to cover livestock in the upcoming Farm Bill.

Gary Maske, of Deep River, argued that farmers, like other business owners, should take precautions and prepare for potential disasters by purchasing insurance. "Other businesses strategize for contingencies," Maske commented, "but our farmers for the most part have not done so because of government subsidies."

Traci Bruckner, PFI member and chair of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, argued that because disaster assistance is already available for crops, it should be extended to cover grass-based livestock as well. "Why should we only think revenue protection is acceptable for people growing crops?" Bruckner.

Add your voice!

The PFI email discussion lists are a great way to learn from and network with other members. Four lists are available: General, Livestock, Horticulture and Policy. To join any or all of the lists, send an email to patrick@practicalfarmers.org or call (515) 232-5661. ■

Thinking like a "water farmer": Part Two

by Keith Schilling

Increasing climate variability coupled with higher demands for crop production are creating conditions ripe for rising flood risks and accelerating nutrient and sediment export from agricultural watersheds. In Part 1 of this series, Andy Johnson suggested that becoming a better "water farmer" could be an important insurance policy for farmers facing an unpredictable future. In this article, I expand on the concept of water farming to highlight how managing water yield from agricultural lands can be just as important as planting and harvesting.

Hydrology primer

Some background is needed first. We all know that when it rains, water runs off the landscape, flows downhill and enters the nearest stream, thus increasing the stream's flow and causing the stream stage (water level) to rise. When stream discharge over time is plotted on a graph, it's called a hydrograph (see Figure 1).

Streamflow is typically composed of two principal sources: **1**), the sustained ground-water discharge to a stream (*baseflow*) and **2**), the runoff delivered to a stream during a storm event (*stormflow*). It is this extra volume of water delivered during rainfall events that causes the stream stage to increase and floods to occur. The rapid surge in stream discharge during runoff is termed the "rising limb" of the hydrograph. The slower decrease in discharge after the event has ended is termed the "falling limb," or recession (see Figure 1).

Pollutant export is closely tied to the discharge hydrograph because water is the carrier of pollutants across the landscape. Pollutants like phosphorus and sediment, which are associated with surface soil processes, are carried to streams mainly with rainfall runoff – particularly during the rising limb of the hydrograph. On the other hand, nitrate easily leaches from soils and flows to streams with shallow groundwater and tile drainage. Nitrate concentrations in streams will actually decrease when it rains, because surface runoff from overland flow contains less nitrate than groundwater. Stream nitrate concentrations will increase again after the runoff event is over as the water level returns to baseflow. The hydrograph is also a good indicator of the mechanisms for transport and delivery of pollutants to streams.

No-till, cover crops and perennial-based rotations that help build soil quality will increase infiltration and soil water-holding capacity – the ultimate win-win for farmers.

Keith Schilling

What's a "water farmer"?

So, with the terminology behind us, what does it mean to be a "water farmer"? Simply put, it means managing water export from your land to reduce excess water loss and pollutant export. Many conservation practices are available to farmers, but it's important to note these practices are designed to affect different parts of the streamflow hydrograph. Figure 1 shows a typical hydrograph with a few agricultural practices highlighted to show where they are designed to be most effective.

Perhaps the most important conservation practices for "water farming" are those that affect both portions of the streamflow hydrograph (practices listed at very top of graph). Practices that feature reintegration of perennial vegetation on the landscape, such as **CRP, extended rotations** of

fields. Because we know that soil erosion occurs during storm events, practices such as **conservation tillage** and **terraces** are designed to slow runoff from fields during the rising limb of the stormflow hydrograph. Similarly, **riparian buffers** slow water runoff from the edge of fields, whereas well-placed **ponds** and **wetlands** intercept and store rainfall runoff before it enters a stream.

When stormflow peaks high enough in some watersheds, discharge that was confined to the channel may escape into the floodplain. This disperses flood waters and also drops out particulates. **Floodplain reconnection** practices focus on making it easier for flood waters to enter their floodplains – but this conservation practice only affects stormflow during high flow events. In the end, these practices affect the stormflow portion of the hydrograph, but have little to do with the baseflow contribution to streamflow. Water farming for flood mitigation focuses on these types of practices in an agricultural watershed.

Reducing nitrate in groundwater

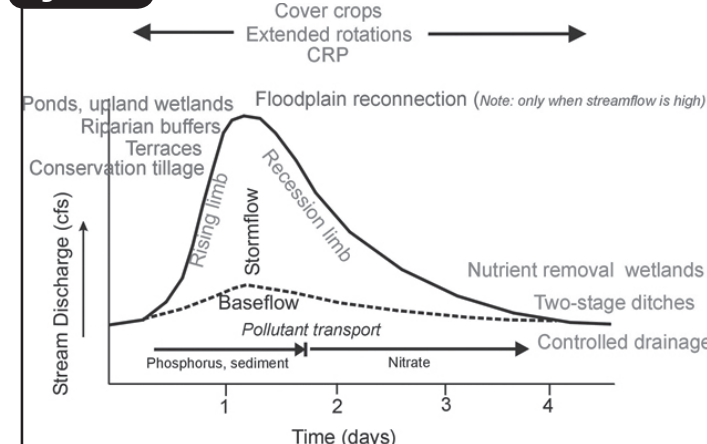
On the other hand, several newer conservation practices are being designed to address the baseflow portion of the hydrograph when export of nitrate is prominent (practices listed on far right of graph). **Nutrient-removal wetlands** intercept subsurface tiles and treat the nitrate-laden water before discharge to a stream. During heavy rainfall, however, these systems are designed to allow runoff water to bypass the wetlands so they do not prematurely fill with sediment. **Controlled drainage** – where water levels in tile drainage networks are managed with gates and stop logs – and **two-stage ditches** (drainage ditches that are made wider to accommodate more in-stream nitrogen processing) are similarly designed to affect nitrate concentrations during baseflow periods, not stormflow runoff periods. Water farming to reduce baseflow water delivery is primarily associated with reducing subsurface losses of nitrate.

Comprehensive "water farming"

Perhaps the most important conservation practices for "water farming" are those that affect both portions of the streamflow hydrograph (practices listed at very top of graph). Practices that feature reintegration of perennial vegetation on the landscape, such as **CRP, extended rotations** of

(Continued on page 27)

Figure 1



Typical streamflow hydrograph showing hydrograph nomenclature, dominant pollutant pathways, and where on the hydrograph various conservation practices might be most effective.

Pesticide drift, or the pursuit of environmental justice?

by Adam Wilke

The book "Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice" (MIT Press, 2011), by Jill Lindsey Harrison, offers a striking analysis of pesticide regulation and environmental justice in California's Central Valley. Although the book focuses on that one U.S. state, these documented findings may be applied to investigate and understand parallel issues currently occurring in other major agricultural regions of the world.



Adam Wilke

While the book focuses on pesticide drift, the theoretical concepts of environmental justice and the precautionary principle span many issues currently faced in modern society. It is important to remember, as Harrison begins in the conclusion, that "Pesticide drift is like so many environmental problems today, diffuse, elusive, hazardous and invisible" (p. 187).

This book is targeted mainly at regulatory agency scientists, academics and activists, but the average Iowa citizen will find much that is relevant to many of the issues related to pesticide drift that we have been facing recently. In the larger picture, this book contributes to a rapidly growing body of evidence documenting how predominant crop protection technology regulations may fail to adequately address the social and environmental complexity of the environments in which they are being applied. Nearly 50 years after the publication of "Silent Spring," which helped spark environmental

awareness and the movement towards environmental regulation, "Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice" powerfully re-ignites the debate surrounding pesticide use regulation, and once again brings public and environmental health to center stage. ■

Note: Carolyn Raffensperger, co-editor of the seminal book on the precautionary principle, is a PFI member. For more on Carolyn and her work, see www.sehn.org.

PFI Member Adam Wilke is currently a student in the Department of Sociology and Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. He may be reached for correspondence at awilke@iastate.edu. Contact him if you would like to borrow the book.

Aerial application, Jasper County, summer 2012



Dr. Harrison, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Colorado, interviewed hundreds of scientists, environmental regulatory agents, risk assessment experts, field workers and activists between 2001 and 2009. What began as an investigation regarding the regulatory framework of pesticide use quickly transitioned into an in-depth analysis of the differing perceptions and definitions of justice held by various stakeholders involved in this issue. One of her key findings is that different actors have varying definitions of what justice actually means, and these fundamental misunderstandings may hinder the appropriate and fair implementation of crop protection technology regulations. Further, the concepts of justice embraced by sustainable agriculture activists were found to not adequately align with those of pesticide activists, calling for a new conception of justice altogether.

The precautionary principle is the framework suggested to help environmental regulatory institutions address environmental inequalities in the most just way possible. In its most basic sense, this framework declares that the burden of proof for any action suspected to cause risk to humans or the environment, in the absence of scientific consensus on potential harm, falls on those taking the action. This framework, Harrison concludes, could help policymakers develop more equitable regulations on crop protection technologies, specifically the aerial application of pesticides.

Got Drift?

– Drake Larsen

Inadvertent exposure to aerial pesticide spray is a regular occurrence for many Practical Farmers. I put the question of "got drift?" to the PFI email list and got responses from a variety of farmers, growing both row crops and vegetables under various production methods. Their stories included:

- *accidental drift from otherwise diligent applications*
- *preventable exposures caused by sloppy piloting*
- *and a calamitous tale of an organic farm drenched in pesticide on multiple passes.*

In most cases, the exposure incident wasn't a benign issue of tasting the pesticides in the air and going on about the day. These "accidents" are often costly mishaps that lead to loss of labor due to illness of farm workers, loss of crops where market-ready vegetables are sprayed, and in the case of the organic farm, loss of organic certification – something that will haunt the farmers for at least three years as they struggle through the organic transition, again.

Water farming

◀ (Continued from page 25)

commodities with alfalfa, and cover crops all address both stormflow and baseflow water export. Surface roughness from perennial vegetation slows rainfall runoff and reduces the stormflow peak, while increased evapotranspiration from perennial vegetation (mainly in the spring and fall when there are no crops) reduces water yield and ultimately lowers nitrate loss to streams.

Good soil structure helps soils hold more water

Over time, many conservation practices are synergistic and work together to boost the soil's ability to retain water within the landscape. Infiltration rates and soil moisture content are closely related to soil structure and organic matter content, so conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops and sod- or perennial-based rotations that help to build soil quality will increase infiltration rates and soil water-holding capacity – the ultimate win-win for water farmers, because soils with these two qualities address both sides of the hydrology spectrum, increasing landscape resilience during droughts while helping reduce runoff peaks during floods. However, time is needed for these practices to work, as improvements in soil quality can take many years to develop. Thus, the time needed to see a positive effect will extend well beyond the timeframe of a typical event hydrograph lasting a few days.

So which conservation practices are best for a "water-farmer"? Like all answers from politicians and scientists (so it seems), it depends. It depends on which portion of the hydrograph you want to affect, or which issue you are seeking to address (flooding, phosphorus or nitrate export). It is clear that conservation practices are not created alike, so careful consideration is needed to pick and choose a practice that is best suited for your concern. The key component needed for water farming is thinking about how water moves across your field and then designing a water management system that meets your goals. ■

Keith Schilling is a research geologist with the Iowa Geological and Water Survey, a division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Help train beginning farmers on your farm –\$1,000 stipends available

Does your established farm seek a highly motivated farm employee? Do you have a passion to share your farming knowledge with an aspiring beginning farmer? Apply to be a "Trainer" in Practical Farmers of Iowa's new Labor4Learning program.

This program's goal is to help beginning farmers in our membership get paid for on-the-job training and help experienced PFI member farms attract high-quality, motivated farm employees.

Approved "Trainer" farms will receive a payment from PFI of up to \$200 per month – not to exceed \$1,000 per year. This money pays farmers to spend time (about 1-2 hours per week) with an approved "Trainee" employee by providing additional business planning training – such as farm financing, how the farm makes a profit, etc. – beyond wage-earning tasks performed as a farm laborer.

Trainees gain valuable training time, and also receive other benefits for participating, including: two paid days off to attend Practical Farmer events like field days, a special student rate discount to Practical Farmers of Iowa's annual conference, and special consideration for free lodging at a PFI member's home during the 2014 Annual Conference.

Practical Farmers helps advertise and connect trainees to employment opportunities

at trainer farms; however, hiring decisions are made at the farmer's discretion.

We are accepting applications to be an approved trainer for this program now through November 15th.

To be eligible to apply, farmers must:

- Be current members of Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Live or farm in Iowa

Up to 15 trainer farms will be selected from applications by a diverse committee made up of PFI members. All farm sizes, enterprises, production practices and regions in Iowa are encouraged to apply.

A fill-and-save PDF application is available at <http://practicalfarmers.org/programs/youth-and-next-generation.php>, or contact PFI at (515) 232-5661. Return by November 15 to luke@practicalfarmers.org or call 515.232.5661 for more information. ■



Beginning farmer Jeremy Peake demonstrates keyline plowing at his Aug. 4 field day this summer.

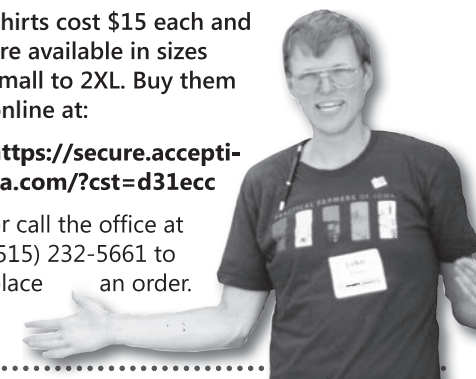
New PFI t-shirts available – get yours now!

Have you glanced in your closet recently and bemoaned the lack of PFI gear? Do you want your wardrobe to show your support for Practical Farmers of Iowa? Then you'll want one of PFI's snazzy new t-shirts. We're pretty happy with the design. The all-cotton shirts are available in earthy brown and heather grey, and feature a design that illustrates the diversity of PFI members and enterprises.

Shirts cost \$15 each and are available in sizes small to 2XL. Buy them online at:

<https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=d31ecc>

or call the office at (515) 232-5661 to place an order.



Sean Skeeihan joins PFI staff as a program director



Sean Skeeihan, of Blue Gate Farm, speaks with visitors at the Oct. 7 Farm Crawl that featured eight farms in the Knoxville and Lacona areas.

Sean Skeeihan joined the PFI staff in late October. He will be working on the Savings Incentive Program, PFI's energy work, the health care task force and more. Raised in Colorado, Sean worked in the non-profit theatre industry as a technician and administrator for more than 20 years, where he met his Iowa native wife, Jill Beebout, also a theatre technician and administrator. They left their old careers and moved "home" to Iowa in 2005 to work a small piece of the family farm land.

Together they created Blue Gate Farm, a small diversified operation near Chariton. They grow chemi-

cal-free fruits and vegetables; keep honey bees; raise egg-laying hens; value-add some of their produce into jams and jellies; put up hay for sale; and hand-spin fiber products. The farm's primary sales outlets are a CSA and the Des Moines Farmers Market. Sean and Jill have been PFI members since 2005, have participated in PFI sponsored field trails, and with several neighbors have presented the original Farm Crawl annually since 2007. ■

Music raising funds for PFI



Musician and PFI member Susan Werner is raising funds on the website PledgeMusic to support the release of her upcoming farm-themed album, *Hayseed*. Werner, an Iowa native now living in Chicago, generously offered to donate a portion of the proceeds from the fundraising campaign to Practical Farmers of Iowa, The Land Institute and the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES).

So far the campaign has been a great success, with Werner raising nearly twice her goal amount from more than 250 individual supporters on the PledgeMusic website. Depending on the level of contribution, supporters can choose gifts ranging from a digital download of the album when it released (for a pledge of just \$10), to signed CDs and DVDs, to a digital download of Susan's entire discography. The campaign will be wrapping up soon, and the more money raised, the more will be donated to Practical Farmers of Iowa. ■

To support this campaign or learn more, go to: <http://pledgemusic.com/projects/susanwerner/>

"Growing more than crops" – training grows new leaders for sustainable ag

Practical Farmers of Iowa held its first Outreach Leadership Training in August at the Rock River Retreat near Webster City. The two-day gathering included training on message development, media relations and telling your farm story. Participants also practiced their public speaking skills during videotaped sessions. The Outreach Leaders trained this year include:

Back row, left to right: John Gilbert, Mark Peterson, Tom Frantzen, Jeremy Gustafson and Dick Sloan.

Front row, left to right: Vic Madsen, Melissa Dunham (and baby Leonora), Sara Hanson, Ann Franzenburg and Irene Frantzen.

If you would like to be an Outreach Leader, contact Drake Larsen at (515) 232-5661 or drake@practicalfarmers.org. ■



PFI's first Farm Progress showing a big success

For the first time ever, Practical Farmers of Iowa had a booth at the Farm Progress Show, held Aug. 28-30 this year. The "Got Cover Crops" team, wearing persuasive (and stylish) "Don't Farm Naked" T-shirts, informed visitors about the many benefits of cover crops and shared their personal cover crop stories and experiences.

Team members included PFI members Jeremy Gustafson, Mark Peterson, Craig Fleishman, Aaron Heley Lehman, Dick Thompson, Ron Rosmann, Rick Juchems and PFI staff. More than 2,500 farmers and passers-by learned about PFI and cover crops, including 1,000 of whom received PFI's "Got Cover Crops?" sticker. The Got Cover Crops team answered questions about PFI, cover crops and practical questions. ■



ABOVE: Mark Peterson mans the PFI booth, which featured live potted cover crop plants, educational materials, shirts for sale, free pens and stickers – and, of course, PFI cover crop experts.

TOP RIGHT: Dick Thompson speaks to a visitor about cover crops.

RIGHT: Jeremy Gustafson (left) interacts with a visitor to the PFI booth.



Paul Willis wins sustainability award

PFI member Paul Willis, founder and manager of Niman Ranch Pork Company in Thornton, Iowa, received one of the 2012 Sustainability Awards from Chefs Collaborative, a nonprofit that works with chefs and the greater food community to celebrate local foods and foster a more sustainable food supply.



Paul was recognized as a "visionary working in the greater food community who has been a catalyst for positive change within the food system through efforts that go beyond the kitchen." He has worked to revitalize sustainable hog farming methods in the Midwest for many years. In 1995, Paul was introduced to Niman Ranch and formed a relationship to create a network for hog producers interested in raising their hogs according to Niman's sustainable methods. ■

PFI makes Latvian connections



PFI member Stefan Gailans (left) presented a PFI hat to Mike, a British expat living and farming in Latvia, during a family trip in June. Stefan and his parents traveled to Valmiera, in northeastern Latvia, to visit cousins from his father's side who still live in the area. Stefan says his father was born in Latvia during World War II, but had to leave when the family became refugees.

Mike grows rapeseed (canola) and rye, and was introduced to Stefan by his cousin, whose boyfriend also happens to be a British expat living in the same area. Stefan is a PhD student in the Sustainable Agriculture program at Iowa State.





District 1—Northwest

- Kirk Den Herder, Orange City
- Tom Geake, Wall Lake
- Ben Pullen, Spencer
- Randy Schacherer, Wallingford
- Megan Snyder, Breda
- Neal and Laura Vellema, Harris

District 2—North Central

- Mark Edelman, Boone
- Brian Berst – Klinkenberg Aerial Spraying and Seeding, Inc., Parkersburg
- Marissa Moore, Ames
- George Pfaltzgraff, Hampton
- Shari Sweeney, Ames
- Henry Taber, Ames
- Joe Tyler, Parkersburg

District 3—Northeast

- Diane Depken, Cedar Falls
- Alyssa Dunn, Marion
- Dan and Nancy Hayes, Stanley
- Rebecca Helland, Pella
- Terrance Holub, Coggon
- Scott Koether, McGregor
- Alicia Lenz, Farmersburg
- Dennis Rauen, Farley

District 4—Southwest

- Dawn Hay, Bondurant
- Paul and Margery Jones, Clarinda
- Cody Moeckly, Polk City
- Robert Owens, Mingo
- Jared Schmidt, Adel
- Steve Shivvers, Prole
- Zeb Sullivan, Ankeny
- Zach Sullivan, Urbandale

District 5—Southeast

- Denis Aldrich and Noreen Towers, Iowa City
- Peg Bouska, Iowa City
- Shami Morse, Iowa City
- Carolyn Scherf, Iowa City
- Kraig Van Hulzen, Oskaloosa
- Tyler Youngers, Grinnell

District 6—Out of State

- Luciano Garofalo, Tacoma, WA
- Daniel Sheehan – The Howard G. Buffet Foundation, Decatur, IL
- Cyril Troendle, Caledonia, MN

UPCOMING EVENTS – NOV. | DEC. | JAN.

November 6 – Farminar: “Farmers as Employers: Legal Responsibilities – 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

November 7 – Helicopters and Cover Crops – Lakefield, MN – 1-3 p.m. – Farm of Jerry and Nancy Ackerman – For more, see the monthly calendar at www.practicalfarmers.org

November 8 – Cover Crop Field Day – Carroll, IA
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. – farm of Art Behrens
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org

November 13 – Farminar: “Profitable Direct-to-Consumer Meat and Dairy Opportunities” – 7 p.m. – Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

November 14-18 – North American Biodynamic Conference | Madison, WI | Monona Terrace

This biennial conference is the foremost event for biodynamic education, networking and community-building, bringing together hundreds of farmers, gardeners, educators, activists and interested newcomers for five days of keynotes, informative workshops, networking, exhibits, film screenings, art and organic and biodynamic foods. This year’s theme, “Sacred Agriculture: Creating a New Relationship with the Earth,” will focus on how we can build a sacred relationship to the earth through farming, gardening and transformational work in our communities.

For cost, details or to register, visit: www.biodynamics.com/conference

November 18-19 – 12th Annual Iowa Organic Conference | Iowa City, IA | Memorial Union
Price: \$115+ (regular); \$35 (student). Register at: <http://iowaorganicconference.eventbrite.com>

November 20 – Farminar: “Production in High Tunnels: Salad Greens, Microgreens and More” – 7 p.m. – Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

November 27 – Farminar: “Drought Recovery Grazing: Ideas to Get Through the Winter and Plan for a Resilient Farm” – 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

November 30-December 1 – PFI Next Generation Retreat | Newton, IA | Newton Christian Conference Center

Price: \$10 (PFI members); \$35 (non-members). Join PFI at the 5th annual gathering of beginning farmers to share good food, network and swap stories of their beginning farms. Gather to discuss opportunities and challenges for beginning farmers in Iowa. Discuss efficient production, marketing and distribution of crops and livestock. Share your plans and experiences developing infrastructure for new enterprises. Learn from other farms and get new ideas for

next year. Contact Luke Gran: (515) 232-5661 or luke@practicalfarmers.org. For more details, visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/events/workshops.html

December 4 – Farminar: “Poultry Enterprise Budgets: Know Your Expenses and Keep Your Profits” – 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

December 8 – Tour of SiouxPreme Packing | Sioux City / Sioux Center, IA

SiouxPreme harvests and does fabrication of pork, specializing in niche, small-scale and specialty orders and is the preferred facility for Niman Ranch hogs grown by PFI members. The tour will include the fabrication and harvest facilities. RSVP is required.

Contact Margaret Dunn at margaret@practicalfarmers.org. or (515) 232-5661. For more, visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/events_detail.php?eid=306

December 11– Farminar: “Beginning a Crop and Livestock Farm: Equipment” – 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

December 11-13 – Midwest Value-Added Agriculture Conference | LaCrosse, WI
Price: \$150+ (regular); \$115+ (student).

Hear Laura Jackson, John Ikerd, PFI members Francis Thicke and Chris Blanchard, and others, and meet people from a variety of backgrounds interested in creating sustainable local food systems. Learn more about developing niche markets, expanding product diversity and sustainability on the farm.

For more information, or to register, visit www.rivercountryrca.org/valad.html

December 18– Farminar: “Pricing and Marketing Produce at Farm Stands and to Wholesale Grocers” – 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

CALENDAR

Grow your farm with PFI. Join today!

This annual membership is a:

- New membership
- Renewal

I am joining at the level of:

- Student—\$20
- Individual—\$40
- Farm or Household—\$50
- Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—\$100

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.)

How did you hear about Practical Farmers of Iowa?

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

Sustain PFI

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

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

JOIN OUR GIFT OF THE MONTH CLUB

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

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

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

Thank you!

Individual, Farm or Organization Name*: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Primary Phone (with area code): _____

Alternate Phone (with area code): _____

Email: _____

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

Payment:

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

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

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

Practical Farmers of Iowa

600 Fifth Street, Suite 100

Ames, IA 50010-6071



Diverse Farms

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



Healthy Food

Wholesome food that is celebrated for its connections to local farmers to seasons, to hard work and good stewardship Communities alive with diverse connections between farmers and friends of farmers



Vibrant Communities

Places where commerce, cooperation, creativity and spirituality are thriving Places where the working landscape, the fresh air and the clean water remind us of all that is good about Iowa.

