

working together, always learning

the Practical Farmer

A quarterly publication of Practical Farmers of Iowa

Vol. 28, No. 1 | Winter 2013



On the cover



From top left: PFI members Shanen Ebersole, Ian Olson, Scott Wilber and Alice McGary display their new PFI signs.

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Different approaches to swine diets: Small grains, custom grinds

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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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Newsletter Editor: Tamsyn Jones

(Back issues are available upon request.)



LEOPOLD CENTER



Doing What Others Will Not Do

It was good to see you all at the annual conference!

I am very excited to report that at least 305 members served as Practical Farmers leaders last fiscal year. See pages 14-15 for a list of those who helped govern this organization, held field days, spoke at conferences and in the media, and otherwise made this organization a major presence in Iowa and gave many hope for the future.

From Oct. 1, 2011–Sept. 30, 2012:

- 74 members conducted 46 research and demonstration projects
- 109 members led field days
- 83 spoke at workshops and on farminars
- 62 served on the PFI Board of Directors and on other committees
- 47 served as media spokesman.

Practical Farmers provided approximately 90 opportunities for members to learn from each other in Fiscal Year 2012. Please thank the hard-working and talented PFI staff when you see them: Each of those events requires managing a myriad of details.

What can you look for from Practical Farmers in 2013? We have big plans:

- Working together to manage drought
- Further building the momentum for cover crops

- A focus on the profitability of adding a third crop
- Holistic management trainings
- Investigating the possibility of crop insurance for vegetable producers
- More PFI farmers covered in the media
- 48 beginning farmers working with mentors and developing business plans through the Savings Incentive Program
- And much more!

I have spent my career working for civil organizations. With my commitment to on-the-ground change and a moderate distrust of those in power, it's been a great fit. We need strong civil organizations to do what the government, business and the universities cannot or will not do to solve social challenges. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1835: "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all minds are constantly joining together in groups. . . . Wherever there is a new undertaking, at the head of which you would expect to see in France the government and in England some great lord, in the United State you are sure to find an association."

An association like Practical Farmers of Iowa – dedicated to farmer-to-farmer exchange and a future of economic security for farms, of land stewardship on

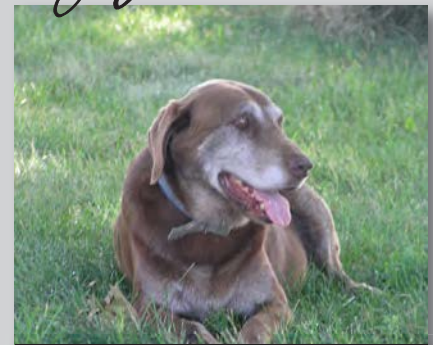


Teresa makes off with an armful of kale after a visit to Grinnell Heritage Farm.

working lands, of vibrant communities and strong bonds between farmers and friends of farmers.

Working for you,

Dog of the Issue

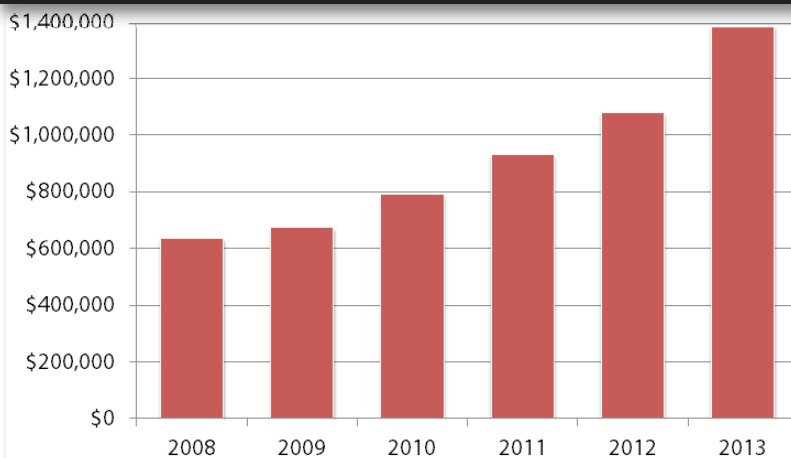


Bobby, TJ Farms, McCallsburg

Says Connie Tjelmeland: "Bobby is a male, Chocolate Labrador Retriever and he came to us about 10 years ago by way of the Animal Shelter. He is a loyal and constant companion around the farm. His mouse and rat hunting skills are phenomenal – he even caught a mink outside the feed room this spring – but he would never harm a chicken."

Bobby is a very easy-going dog, but he covers miserably when it thunders – which is the only time he is allowed in the house – under the desk, someone's foot rubbing his back. He is a beloved part of our farm family."

PFI Budget (2008-2013)



Practical Farmers of Iowa is growing!

Grinds and Grains in Swine Diets: Different Approaches

by Margaret Dunn

Feeding swine in the current agricultural economy is a tricky business. Common feed components are expensive, and producers and consumers are concerned about potential detrimental effects of corn-soy diets. Wise farmers seek to increase profitability by reducing input costs and improving feed efficiencies. Two techniques of interest to Practical Farmers members are grinding feed for proper particle size and using small grains as an alternative to corn and soybeans.

Maximizing utilization of feed is essential to achieving optimal growth and performance. Digestion and absorption of nutrients are influenced by particle size: The smaller each “bit” of feed that enters a pig’s digestive tract, the more surface area is vulnerable to digestion and the better the animal uses it.

A general rule of thumb for particle size is 700-800 microns. Kansas State University research found that decreasing particle size from 1,000 to 700 microns saved \$2 per pig. Pigs fed fine-ground feed (822-885 microns) compared to coarse (1,147-1,217 microns) ate less but gained just as much weight. Finer grinding increases feed efficiency more in older hogs. Grinding too finely, however, reduces feed flowability, increases dustiness and cost, and raises the risk of gastric ulcers.

Milling Small Grains

Most recommendations for milling and particle size have been generated for corn-based diets, but other small grains’ nutritional and handling qualities differ. **Sorghum** should be ground to approximately 600 microns. PFI member Tom Frantzen, who grinds feed for hogs and poultry, says that **barley** is the most difficult small grain to grind because of its hardness. Because of its relatively high fiber and low energy content, barley must



Pigs on Dan and Lorna Wilson’s farm. The Wilsons grind feed for their pigs, and recommend a roller mill because the mill roller produces a more uniform particle size and less dust.

be ground for a longer time to repeatedly crush the grains and reduce it to 600-700 microns. Meanwhile, wheat – and to a lesser extent oats – will grind easily (even turning floury!) and have an ideal particle size of 800-900 microns.

Hammer mills and roller mills are common in feed processing. Hammer mills have rotating metal ganged hammers, which pulverize particles until they’re small enough to pass through a screen. The rotations per minute (RPM) of the hammers and the size of the screen can be changed to adjust particle size. A screen size of one-eighth to three-sixteenths is recommended to achieve average particle sizes of 600-800 microns. Hammer mills can be used on a variety of grains and have a low maintenance cost, but require a lot of energy to run.

Roller mills feature corrugated cylinders that rotate opposite one another, crushing and cracking feed pieces that

get trapped between them. The rolls’ RPM and corrugation depth and number can be changed to adjust particle size. For an average particle size of 800 microns, rollers with 10 to 12 grooves per inch are recommended. Roller mills can be run slowly to reduce wear, but are more expensive to purchase, and slower revolutions mean slower feed processing. PFI members Dan and Lorna Wilson

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Small grains’ nutritional and handling qualities differ. . . .
Tom Frantzen, who grinds feed for hogs and poultry, says barley is the most difficult small grain to grind because of its hardness.

recommend them because they produce a more uniform particle size and less dust. Ron Rosmann, who completed a feeding trial described below, used a one-eighth inch screen for a mixture of barley, oats and wheat called succotash, which yielded a final particle size of 800 microns. He used a larger one for grinding forages, and while he has an even smaller one, he said it slows the milling process.

Challenges to Adjusting Feed Particle Size

While there are benefits to adjusting and improving feed particle size, it may be challenging for smaller-scale producers. Tom said it's hard to get to 750 microns with on-farm milling, much less the 600-or-so that some major feed mills are getting. Small tractor-driven mills have the flexibility to adjust speed – grinding faster results in smaller particle size – while industrial grinders driven by electricity cannot do so as easily. However, adjusting the screen size on-farm is more difficult than it would be for an industrial mill. When grinding feed, Tom records the operating speed, so the farmers can ask for it to be sped up or slowed down the next time if needed.

PFI Swine Feeding Trial

So how do small grains actually compare to corn when fed to swine? Past PFI research investigated substituting barley, oats and alfalfa for corn. While the

Table 1: . Effects of feeding conventional and alternative swine diets on hog performance, feed consumption and efficiency, and economics.

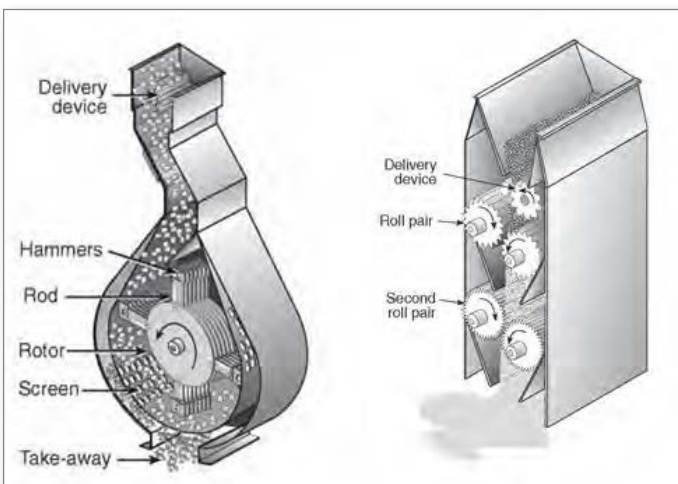
		Conventional	Alternative
Hog Data	Initial Weight (lb)	125.33	126.66
	Final Weight (lb)	256.84	253.89
	Car-cass Weight (lb)	189.50	183.92
	Time to Finish (days)	85	87.4
	Average Daily Gain (lb/day)	1.55	1.46
Feed Data	Feed Cost (\$/lb)	0.30	0.28
	Total Feed Consumed (lb)	17,770	17,362
	Daily Feed Consumption (lb/day/pig)	6.97	6.61
	Daily Feed Cost per Pig (\$/day/pig)	2.11	1.87
	Feed:Gain (lb feed/lb gain)	4.50	4.55
	Cost of Gain (\$/lb gain)	1.35	1.27
Expenses	Cost of Feeder Pigs	4,323.89	4,369.77
	Feed Cost	5,372.93	4,907.05
	Total Expenses	9,696.81	9,276.82
Receipts	Sale of Pigs	8,559.06	8,308.63
Net Profit or Loss	Total	-1,137.75	-968.19
	Per Pig	-37.93	-32.27

alternative feeds sometimes reduced growth rate, in general they were economically viable because of the ability to reduce corn and soybean meal in the diets. A new trial by PFI cooperator Ron Rosmann involved feeding groups of hogs either a conventional corn-soybean meal-premix diet, or a mixture of corn-soybean meal-premix-field pea-triticale-succotash-hay. Diets were designed to contain 15.6 percent crude protein (CP) for phase one, when the hogs weighed between 125 and 200 pounds; and to contain 14.0 percent CP during phase two, when the hogs weighed from 200 pounds to finishing weight (around 250 pounds). The cost and consumption of each diet were measured, as were weights and carcass characteristics of 30 hogs from each group (Table 1).

Despite efforts to equalize protein between the two diets within each phase, the conventional diets had lower crude protein than the

alternative and the target in both phases. While this may have impaired growth of those hogs, they still gained more weight more quickly than the alternative diet hogs. Hogs on the conventional diet reached finishing weight an average of 2.4 days earlier than the alternative hogs because of a greater average daily gain, they weighed a bit more at harvest, and their feed-to-gain ratio was smaller (meaning they required less feed to gain a pound of weight). This generated a greater gross profit for the conventional hogs. However, because the small grains and forages replaced some corn and soybeans in the alternative diet, the cost of the alternative diet was less per pound. The hogs on the alternative diet also consumed less feed, despite taking longer to get to market weight. Thus, their feed costs were lower, which improved the bottom line. ■

For the full swine feeding trial report, visit www.practicalfarmers.org/niche-pork



Two mill types: a hammer mill (left) and roller mill (right).

Farm Sweet Farm: Blending History, Vision and Ambiance on the Rosmann Farm

by Tamsyn Jones

When Maria Vakulskas Rosmann and her husband, Ron Rosmann, decided to open a store on their 700-acre farm near Harlan, they didn't start with any particularly lofty plans.

They thought they were merely solving a practical on-farm challenge: the need for more freezer space to expand the on-farm inventory of their organic beef and pork products.

Before deciding on a store, they initially considered building a simple shed or lean-to to solve their space conundrum.

"Then we got to thinking, why don't we just put up a little store," Maria recalls.

Thus, Farm Sweet Farm was born.

A Farm Store with Soul

While the initial idea might have started out "little," the result is both grand and elegant, a mix of rustic, recycled, vintage and decidedly modern (the Rosmanns installed efficient radiant floor heating and will have a well-equipped commercial kitchen) – and after a scant five months in operation, it's clear the Rosmanns have created not just a warm and inviting space, but a vital community gathering place and retail resource for Shelby County.

Walking into Farm Sweet Farm on a recent grey and gusty late autumn day, the drabness of the exterior landscape was immediately countervailed by the warm wood, atmospheric lights and enticing array of goods inside the shop – itself surprisingly spacious.

Products with colorful labels from brands such as Kiss My Face, Burt's Bees and Desert Essence were artfully arranged in displays; handmade crafts and clothes

hung in cheerful clusters from hooks and shelf ends or tucked on tables; well-tended family heirlooms peeked from corners or nooks on shelves, adding to the cozy vibe; holiday lights draped along the walls, lending little auras of color; and the

pleasant, faintly aromatherapeutic smell of handmade soaps and herbal products had an uplifting effect against the cold, overcast mood outside. It was easy to think the store had existed for decades – a testament to the combined force of Maria's artistic sensibility and the Rosmann family's design aesthetic.

Visions for the Future

After just two years of planning and construction, Farm Sweet Farm opened quietly last September. While the official grand opening was in October, Maria says she wanted to work out any kinks in the point-of-sale system and get a feel for the new business.

While planning and construction were a family affair, Maria is owner and manager extraordinaire: It's her style and artistry that have imbued Farm Sweet Farm with its warmth. She selected all the merchandise, vetted the local foods and artists, designs the store displays and makes all the product purchasing decisions. She was worried about some of those choices, like tea selection, and says she prayed a lot to

(Continued on next page) 



This page, clockwise from left: 1) Maria speaks to a customer in the store; 2) Maria poses under the Edelweiss Beer tin that once decorated her grandmother's neighborhood grocery store;

Opposite page: A view of the ambient interior and artfully stocked shelves of Farm Sweet Farm.



help her make the right choices.

Early on, she decided that all the brands and products she carries would be ones the Rosmann family has personally used over the years and likes – everything from local Shelby County salsas and barbeque sauces, to handmade soy-based candles, to personal and home care items.

Maria also has a vision for the store's future. She offers complimentary tea and good-quality fair trade coffee to patrons, and hopes her store is someday not just a place to shop, but a place where community members can gather over coffee to commune and connect (currently, the only places to get morning coffee in the county are the Harlan Burger King and HyVee, or a handful of convenience stores).

She wants to have a bridal registry, so people have options beyond the big box stores. "I think filling up the freezer with certificates of good food, or setting out to help the kids get started – or same thing with paraben-free baby things – is important."

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It's really an honor when customers come in, stay awhile and then buy something, because you see a part of yourself going out the door with them.

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Maria Vakulskas Rosmann

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And her big goal is to eventually have homemade breads, cookies and treats for sale – though she hasn't decided if she'll start carrying flours and similar dry goods. For now, however, she says she's content to start slow, spend the first year making sure she knows what she's doing and focusing first and foremost on satisfying her customers.

"I want to make sure that what I choose to provide people will be really good quality, with a well-rounded selection," Maria says. "It's really an honor when customers come in, stay awhile and then buy something, because you see a part of yourself going out the door with them. I want this to be the kind of place where they want to come back again."

From Idea to Enterprise

While it can be easy in pleasing spaces to suppose that creating the appealing milieu was effortless, Farm Sweet Farm's progression from offhand idea to ambient on-farm oasis was certainly not straightforward or simple. Once the idea took root, it percolated and grew. The nitty-gritty of planning began, then the hard work of construction. In addition to selling the Rosmann family's organic beef, pork and popcorn, Maria decided she wanted to carry earth-friendly and fair trade products, local foods, and works by local artists and craftsmen.

For a brief time, she considered locating on the main square in downtown Harlan, but

decided against it: Building the store on the farm would give people the chance to "see what a farm looks like," she says, take their children to meet pigs not raised in confinement, and experience a bit of farm life. Some of the building plans shifted quite spontaneously.

"The day we were to break ground," Maria says, "Ron said, 'You know, we could make this 8 feet longer.' And I said okay – and we were able to make it just fit."

The spur-of-the-moment shop expansion meant a fence would need to be built to prevent future patrons from parking too close to the underground septic tank, but Maria says the additional depth "gave us an appropriate amount of room."

Imbued with Farm History

Next came the laborious phase of erecting the store's structure. While the Rosmanns worked with contractors on several aspects of construction, a significant amount of work was done by Ron. Their sons David, Daniel and Mark, and Daniel's wife, Ellen Walsh-Rosmann, also helped and provided support during the process.

Part of the store's special charm comes from the old wood girding most of the store's walls and floors. Perhaps the warmth felt upon entering the store stems

(Continued on page 9) ➔

Third Crops Boost Profits, Reduce Inputs and Help Soil, PFI Research Shows

by Drake Larsen

Adding a third crop is not only better for the environment, on-farm research indicates it is beneficial to the pocketbook as well. Bringing a third crop into the standard corn-soybean rotation has been shown to increase corn and soybean yields while simultaneously reducing input costs, since less herbicide and fertilizer are required for the three-year rotation. Longer, diverse rotations reduce weed and disease pressures and, depending on the additional crop, enable farmers to grow their own nitrogen.

Research from USDA, Iowa State University and University of Minnesota, recently published in the journal PLOS One (Oct. 2012), found a three-year rotation of corn-soybean-oats/red clover to be the most profitable. ISU agronomist Matt Liebman and colleagues saw increased soybean yields from 51 bushels per acre in a two-year rotation to 55 bushels per acre where a third crop was added. Similarly, corn yields averaged 11 bushels per acre higher for the longer rotations.

Effective weed control was achieved using six to 10 times fewer chemicals in the longer rotations compared to the corn-soybean rotation. The research demonstrates that longer rotations that can reduce input costs and maintain or increase yields can have an edge in profitability.

Central Iowa farmer Craig Fleishman is conducting on-farm research to study the effect of a third crop on his farm. The prospects for profits and additional long-term benefits that come from improved soil health speak to his bottom-line and his passion for soil stewardship. Practical Farmers of Iowa supports the on-farm research through its Cooperator's Program.

Finding the balance

Fleishman, of Minburn, is always fine-tuning his soil stewardship practices in what he calls a continuous search to find the "balance between steel and chemicals." When making management decisions, he always first considers the motivation for a given practice. He's found that many practices good for the crops and soil require a bigger time commitment. Driven by childhood memories of dust storms in the neighborhood, he doesn't mind the time.

Fleishman says he isn't trying anything new, merely relearning practices his parents and grandparents were doing before. Like many, his family farm shortened its traditionally diverse crop rotation when soybeans were adopted. Soybeans effectively displaced traditional third crops across the Midwest in the 1960s and 1970s. A challenger to small grains in the past, the story of the soybean is an important reminder that it is possible for alternative crops

to break onto the scene in a big way.

Recognizing that corn and soybeans will still be his dominant crops, Fleishman completed the first year in 2012 of a three-year trial that brings another crop into his farming system. His interest in adding a third crop has grown from his experiences with strip cropping and intercropping.

His on-farm experiment consists of four replications of a three-year crop rotation (corn-soybean-oats/red clover) for a total of 12 strips. Each strip is 30 feet wide by three-eighths of a mile long. The corn and soybeans were managed using ridge-tillage, as is used on the rest of the farm. Oats and red clover were planted using a Brillion seeder at 2 bushels per acre oats plus 14 pounds of red clover.

Measure return over time

The idea is to track the results across a full cycle of the three-year rotation. To understand profit over time, economic return is measured over three years instead of one year. Comparing year-to-year can be misleading, Fleishman points out, and expanding the economic timeline is essential to account for benefits gained from reduced weeds and home-grown nitrogen.

Fleishman doesn't claim to have any magic combination. He admits he is just learning, and sometimes the learning curve in agriculture can be steep.

Though the first-year results are not yet tallied, it's already been a learning experience. Looking back, Fleishman says his third crop treatments should have been planted earlier. The oats were baled as hay because the stand was uneven; a new seeder may be in order. Round-up on the corn and soybeans hurt the oats a bit too, though this is something that would have less impact in larger blocks. The clover performed well despite the drought, and biological nitrogen fixation continued long after fall harvest.



Craig Fleishman is conducting on-farm research to study the effect of a third crop on his farm

Farm Sweet Farm Store Profile (cont'd)

◀ (Continued from page 7)

Until there are big changes in the available markets, Fleishman doesn't see a third crop taking over all his acres. There are markets if you seek them out, he says, but at this point it would be saturated fast if third crops catch on. The Fleishman farm doesn't have livestock, however having livestock to feed or graze third crops significantly increases the potential value to a farmer—especially in times of high feed prices.

Nevertheless, Fleishman knows he has places on the farm that are a natural fit for a longer rotation. After perfecting his techniques through on-farm research, he's thinking about some headlands and highly-erodible land that will be next as he scales up. In the search for a balance between steel and chemicals, a third crop seems like a practical piece of the puzzle. ■

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

from the sense of history emanating from that wood: The vast majority comes from old out-buildings, long since torn down, that once graced the Rosmann farm and Daniel's nearby land. A habitual repurposer, Ron had salvaged as much of that wood as possible and put it in storage for some future use. When he and Maria decided to build a farm store, they both knew immediately the new life that old wood should have.

"I'd say that 95 percent of [the wood] in this [main store] room, and the porch, is reclaimed wood," Maria says. "There's some new trim, but most came from old granaries, an old barn and old corn cribs. Some came from Daniel's nearby acreage that he bought – like the barn boards on the east side of the shop. That came from a very bad storm that took the barn down, and we salvaged it."

Ron cleaned and restored all the wood himself, some of which had sat outside for years, and erected the bulk of the main store structure, a task that Maria says "took an extraordinary amount of time." Other family members helped, or took over some of the farm work so Ron could focus on the wood.

Continuing Family Traditions

The family also incorporated recycled wood from an old school in the nearby town of Westphalia, the Rosmann family's historic hometown in Iowa. The school, built in 1872, was closed a few years ago. Now, wainscoting from the school lines the lower half of hallway walls in the store's back storage area – adding beauty and a daily reminder of the family's Iowa roots. Classroom lights, a chalk board and assembly room doors from the old school were also salvaged and repurposed in the store.

For Maria, owning and operating a store is personal on another level as well. Her grandmother, Helen Krokowski Smith, owned a neighborhood grocery store – Smith's Grocery – in Sioux City until it closed in the late 1950s. She has memories

of being a child in the store, just tall enough to peek over the meat counter. Maria later baby-sat in the building after it became a private home.

Now, several items from Smith's Grocery line the high shelves of Farm Sweet Farm: a popcorn tin; her dad's old metal lunchbox; vintage canisters; an Edelweiss Beer tin tray – still a shiny red.

Maria says she's proud to be carrying on the legacy of her grandmother, a Polish immigrant who successfully managed her own business. "I like to think that I picked up where she left off." ■



... Store Specifics

Hours of Operation:

Wed. – Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to noon

Location:

1222 Ironwood Rd.
Harlan, IA 51537

To Get There:

From the intersection of Highway 44 and Hwy 59, head 2 miles west, then 2.25 miles north.

Contact Farm Sweet Farm:

(712) 627-4653 – (store)
(712) 579-5660 – (cell)
farmsweetfarmiowa@gmail.com
www.rosmanfamilyfarms.com

Some of What You'll Find:

- Personal care items
- Environmentally-friendly laundry and cleaning supplies
- Rosmann Family Farms meats & popcorn
- Iowa and Shelby County foods – including Iowa wines and beer
- Hand-made aprons, blankets, wine bags and more
- Organic baby care items
- Baking and kitchen wares
- Coffee and tea selections – plus complimentary hot brewed coffee and tea

CSA Retention Survey: Why Do Some People Choose Not to Renew a Membership?

by Sally Worley

Community Supported Agriculture is a great model for some Iowa fruit and vegetable farms. Marketing is done pre-season, cash is available for seed and supply purchases at the right time, and most importantly, relationships are formed between farmers and eaters. This relationship creates an arena that increases awareness of how food is produced, how hard farmers work and how to eat both seasonally and healthfully.

While this sounds idyllic, CSA farms have experienced lower retention rates in the past few years. CSAs regularly survey members to research levels of satisfaction and ways to improve, but these farmers feel their customers are often too polite. These farmers asked Practical Farmers to conduct a third-party survey of non-renewing members to investigate why they haven't returned.

The Farms

Three CSA farms in Iowa participated: one in northeast, one in east-central and one in central Iowa. These farms, on paper, look similar in price and offerings. Two are certified organic while the third practices chemical-free production. Each farm sells 120 to 180 shares each season. They have been operating CSAs from nine to 16 years.

After the 2012 season commenced, participating farms provided a list of lapsed members from the past three seasons. Practical Farmers surveyed these members using Survey Monkey, and received 124 responses: 47 from farm "a," 38 from farm "b," and 30 from farm "c."

The Respondents

Sixty-two percent of respondents reported that their interest in local foods had increased over the last three years; 36 percent reported that interest in local foods had remained the same, and 2 percent reported a decrease in interest.

Meeting Local Food Desires: When asked how they satisfy their local food needs:

- ▶ 75 percent said through farmers markets
- ▶ 59 percent said at grocery stores
- ▶ 50 percent said by growing their own produce in a home garden; and
- ▶ 18 percent said they had joined another CSA.

Respondents also reported using online ordering services such as the Iowa Food Coop, the Iowa Valley Food Coop and Wallace Farms.

Reasons for Joining a CSA or Not

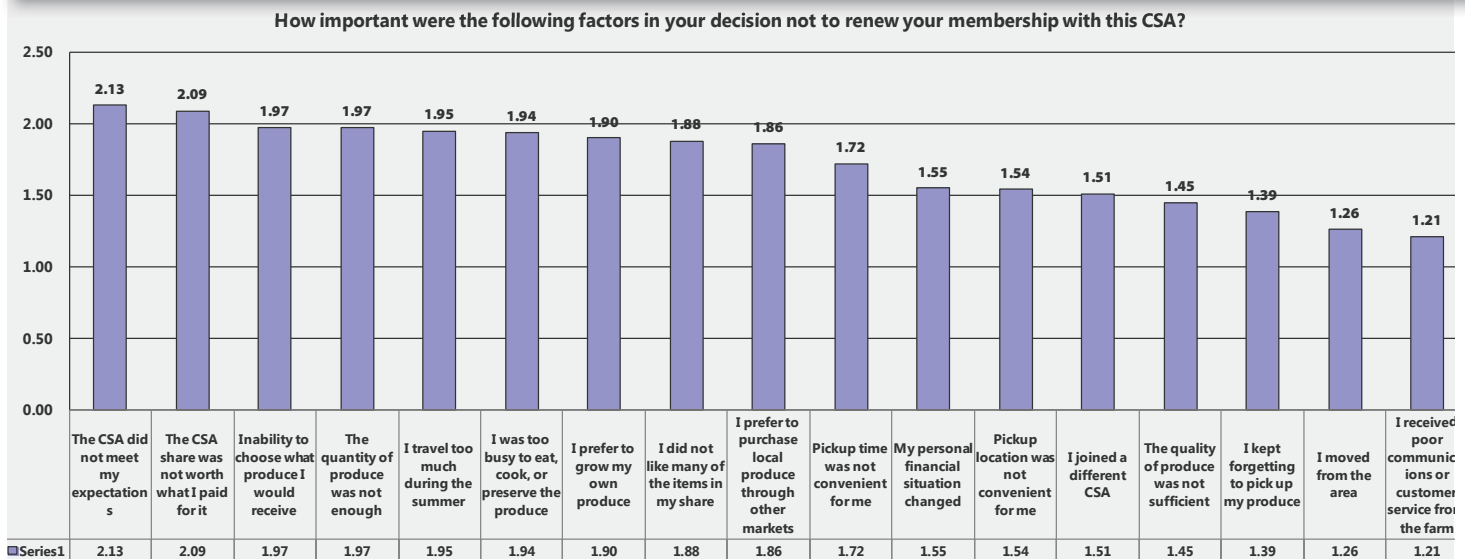
Renewing: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of potential motivations in their decision to become a member of their most recent CSA on a five-point scale from "not important at all" (1) to "extremely important" (5). The desire for fresh produce, locally grown produce and to support a local farmer were the top three reasons people signed up for CSAs.

Non-renewing members were asked a number of questions about the last CSA they had been part of. Respondents:

- ▶ had been members of their previous CSAs for one to 16 years (an average of 3.25 years).
- ▶ lived from one to 60 miles from the farm, with an average distance lived from the farm of 19 miles.
- ▶ traveled from one to 30 miles each week to pick up their share, with an average pick-up travel distance of seven miles.

(Continued on page 12) 

Chart 1 – Main reasons why former CSA members surveyed said they chose not to renew their membership with that CSA.



PERSPECTIVES
ON CSA
MEMBERSHIP

Some Respondents' FAVORITE
Aspects of Being in a CSA

"Sense of community and making a difference. Produce received was of better quality and freshness than that of the stores. Loved it was local!"

"It was fun to get a new box every week. It was always interesting produce, beautiful, fresh and delicious. I loved the newsletter, recipes, learning how to eat with the seasons."

"Quality of the produce and knowing more fully what goes into the production."

"Interaction with the growers and volunteers at the pick-up site; they truly are great people."

"The freshness and flavor of the produce. Nothing can compare to 'home-' or local grown."

"Knowing where my food was grown, by whom and how."

"Meeting like-minded people, getting to try veggies I would otherwise not have tried."

"Knowing the people who grow my food and excellent quality of product."

Some Respondents' LEAST Favorite Aspects of CSA Membership

Variety

"The volume of items we liked was very low and the items we didn't like was high. It was expensive enough that we made ourselves eat what we didn't like, knowing that if we had saved the money we could have picked out what we wanted at the grocery store."

"Not enough of the foods we actually eat (lettuce, tomato, onion, garlic). Too much of the things we don't eat. I don't need 15 cucumbers each week for a family of two. Cost given what we actually ate from the share was not really in our favor."

"There was entirely too much of the product that I liked least, i.e. kale - a never-ending cascade of different types of kale, kale, kale and more kale, and not enough of what I expected to get - asparagus, tomatoes, corn, kohlrabi...."

"Getting a lot of produce that was fun to try, but not really enjoyed by my family later on (beets, turnips, radishes)." "There wasn't enough variety...lots and lots of garlic scapes and kale. We never got some really common veggies-green beans and peas."

Inconvenience

"It was difficult to pick up some weeks due to time constraints."

"The pick-up time of a Friday afternoon was very restrictive."

"The Monday delivery of a full share did not fit our work and family schedule."

Value

"When there was a shortage we shared the shortfall but when there was a bounty we could purchase extra. A share should be a share, better or worse."

"Became too expensive for what I received."

"It seemed expensive for the amount of produce, especially the last two years."

"I had to spend the same amount of time and money at the grocery store because so much of the share was not really stuff that I 'needed' but could use for 'fill' (cabbage, onions, squash); still had to buy tomatoes, sweet corn, new potatoes, green beans, cucumbers ... because there usually either wasn't any or enough for more than one meal."

Flexibility

"No control over what I got."

"Not being able to select which items I'd receive."

Quality

"Getting a puny share, seeing boxes from other CSAs with a different quality vegetable in it."

Preparation

"It takes a lot of time to plan what you are going to do with the food. I didn't have easy recipes, didn't know how to freeze the items, etc."

Farmer Professionalism

"It seemed in every email they whined about how hard they worked and how difficult it was to get everything done. Guess what? We all work hard."

"Produce arrived for pickup 15 to 30 minutes after they said it would, week after week."

Here are some responses illustrating what would bring them back as a CSA member

"Home delivery, flexible purchasing, ability to choose what is in share."

"Cleaner produce."

"Options to pick and choose."

"Smaller share."

"If I could purchase only when I am in town."

"More recipes, storage and preparation tips."

"Better financial situation"

"Being able to purchase a la carte."

"Courteous, more professional, on time."

"Pick up nearby and items that did not require processing (berries, carrots, more common items)."

"Home delivery would be amazing!"

"If we could take weeks off of membership when we travel."

"A share with quantity equal to price and variety."

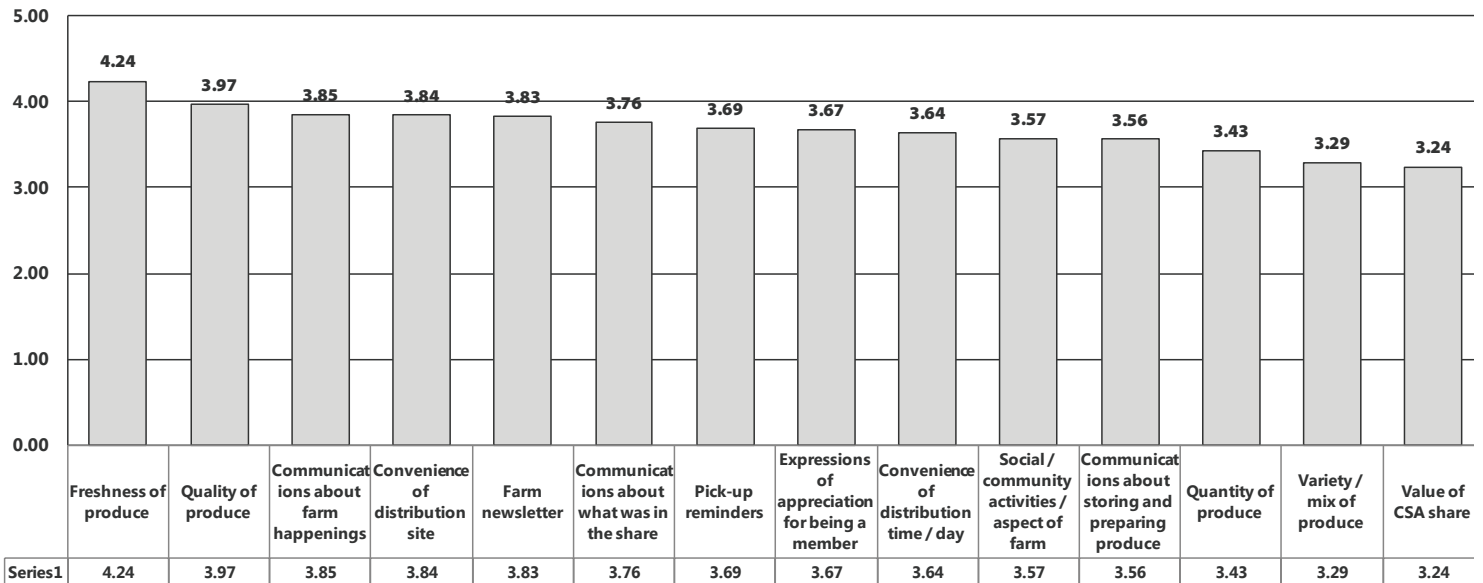
"More foods we already eat."

CSA Survey (cont'd)

◀ (Continued from page 10)

Chart 2 – Satisfaction levels with various aspects of CSA membership indicated by survey respondents.

Satisfaction with CSA farm, thinking about the whole season on average
(1 Very Unsatisfied - 5 Very Satisfied)



Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported that they never visited the farm during the last season they were a member, 32 percent visited once or twice, and just 5 percent had been to their CSA farm more than twice.

Satisfaction

Non-renewing members were asked to rate their satisfaction with a number of dimensions of CSA membership on a five-point scale from "very unsatisfied" (1) to "extremely satisfied" (5). Satisfaction rated fairly high for all categories. As illustrated in **Chart 2**, survey respondents were most satisfied with the quality and freshness of produce offered through the CSA, and least satisfied with the value, variety and quantity.

When asked about favorite aspects of being part of the CSA, most prevalent were comments about getting fresh, local food. Supporting a local farmer and being introduced to new items were also cited often. There were many compliments to the farmers and their efforts.

Reasons for Leaving

Non-renewing members were asked to rate the role that a number of potential reasons played in their decisions not to renew on a five-point importance scale ranging from "not important at all" (1) to "extremely important" (5). **Chart 1** (pg. 10) shows the top reasons people did not rejoin. Having to throw away produce they could not use, not enough variety in the share the CSA not meeting expectations were the top three cited reasons that people chose to not renew their membership.

When asked to comment on their two least favorite aspects of the CSA, the number one answer was not receiving a satisfactory variety of items they liked versus didn't like. The second most common response was that the share was inconvenient to pick up. Other reasons cited multiple times included poor value for money invested, waste, poor quality, lack of preparation knowledge or time, guilt over not using produce, dirty produce and dissatisfaction with professionalism of farmers.

Some respondents realized CSA was not the right model for them: "It's just not

for us. We're lazy." Another commented: "I don't think the model fits my family. We eat a lot more veggies than average. One box didn't meet our needs and we can't afford two."

Almost half of survey respondents have their own garden, and some have scaled their own growing up enough that gardening is filling their demand for produce. One respondent replied: "I have expanded my garden this year and it is more fun, a lot cheaper, I get what I want, and I have more flexibility on when I harvest so I waste less." Another said: "If I couldn't do my own garden any longer I would gladly return to being a CSA member."

Next issue: Find out how some Iowa CSAs are already responding to this feedback. ■

Read the full report online, including more charts and respondent feedback, at www.practicalfarmers.org/horticulture

Savings Incentive Program *Class of 2014*



Ibrahim Ali
Des Moines



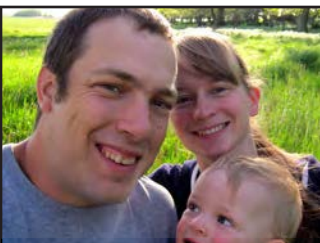
Dawn Anderson
Badger



Julie and Daniel Beougher
Maxwell



Meghan Spees and Anne Bohl
Decorah



Kevin & Ranae Dietzel
Jewell



John C. and Sarah Gilbert
Iowa Falls



Twyla Hein
Tipton



Dave and Meryl Hiler
Rockwell City



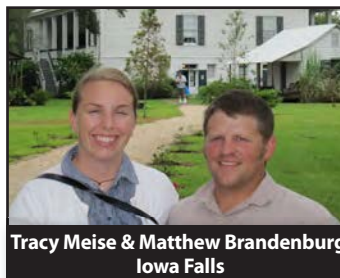
William Lorentzen
Mechanicsville



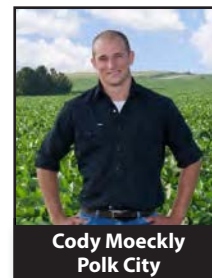
Martin Lucas
Urbandale



Loren and Heather Liutjens
Ashton



Tracy Meise & Matthew Brandenburg
Iowa Falls



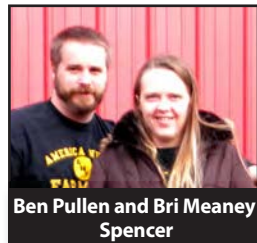
Cody Moeckly
Polk City



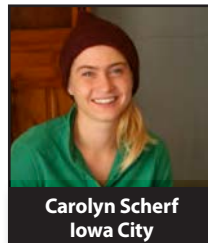
Danelle Myer
Logan



Philavanh ("Air") Phrakhoumany
Milo



Ben Pullen and Bri Meaney
Spencer



Carolyn Scherf
Iowa City



Julia Slocum
Ames



Christie and Zeb Sullivan
Ankeny



Neal and Laura Vellema
Osceola



Dennis and Patty Wimmer
Osceola



Angela Winburn
Malcolm



Cheryl Damon and Susan Yario
Springville

Learn More
To view profiles of Savings
Incentive Program recipients,
visit www.practicalfarmers.org/programs/youth-and-next-generation.html

Not Pictured
Shanti Sellz & Peter Flynn
Iowa City

More than 300 PFI members play leadership role in 2012

This astounding number is a reflection of the degree to which Practical Farmers of Iowa truly is an organization fundamentally based on the dedication, commitment and vision of its members. From participating in on-farm research to hosting field days; from serving on a committee to speaking in a PFI program; from volunteering to spreading the word about PFI by sharing your stories and perspectives with the media – YOU are the backbone of PFI. THANK YOU to all of you! (And if we erred and left you off, please let us know so we can remedy the omission next issue!)

Speakers

Sharing knowledge, in the news

Paul Ackley	Wade Dooley	Dru Montri	Rob Faux
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Nathan Anderson	Melissa Dunham	Mark Peterson	Tom Frantzen
Linda Barnes	Kate Edwards	Mark Pokorny	Ann Franzenburg
Chris Blanchard	Kamyar Enshayan	Donna Prizgintas	John Gilbert
Ethan Book	Rob Faux	Ron Rosmann	Jason Gomes
Thomas Burkhead	Irene Frantzen	Mark Runquist	Sally Gran
Lee Burras	James Frantzen	George Schaefer	Earl Hafner
Garrett Caryl	Tom Frantzen	Dave Schmidt	Ryan Herman
Craig Chase	Ann Franzenburg	Rich Schuler	Sharon Hoerichs
Toodd Churchill	Craig Fleishman	Grant Schultz	Susan Jutz
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Tom Cory	John Gilbert	Sean Skeehan	Drew Lietz
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Karl Dallefeld	Sara Hanson	Dave Stender	Jerry Peckumn
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		Mark Tjelmeland	Ben Saunders
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		Lorna Wilson	Grant Schultz
		Joel Winnes	Sean Skeehan
			Dan Specht
			Sam Taylor
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			Dick Thompson
			Kelly Tobin
			Michael Von Weihe
			Paul Willis
			Dan Wilson
			Erin Wilson
			Joel Winnes

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Donna Atha	Sarah Gilbert	Gayle Olson	Francis Thicke
Bob Atha	Jason Gomes	Jeff Olson	Susan Thicke
Barney Bahrenfusse	Sally Gran	Jeremy Peake	Connie Tjelmeland
Jill Beebout	Craig Griffieon	Jodi Peake	Mark Tjelmeland
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Ethan Book	Dean Henry	Julie Petersen	Kelly Tobin
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Kim Corbin	Susan Jutz	Derek Roller	Jake Wheeler
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Tom Cory	Greg Koether	Neal Sawyer	Maury Wills
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Dan DeCook	Nicholas Leete	Arnie Schneider	Erin Wilson
Kay DeCook	Dean Lietz	Jane Schneider	Lorna Wilson
Mark DeCook	Drew Lietz	Sharon Seufferer	Sally Wilson
Mike DeCook	Garth Lloyd	Scott Shriver	Torray Wilson
Lisle Dunham	Jill Lyle	Sean Skeehan	Joel Winnes
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Shanen Ebersole	Lee Matteson	Sheila Smith	
Kate Edwards	Dennis McDonald	Dick Sloan	
Phil Forbes	Alice McGary	Harn Soper	

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Rick Juchems
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Beth Kemp
Fred Kirschenmann
Philip Kramer
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Jan Libbey
Matt Liebman
Amy Logan
Eric Madsen
Vic Madsen
Janice Marquardt
Ryan Marquardt
Adam Montri

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Derek Roller
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Nick Wallace
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Scott Wilber
David Williams
Norma Williams
Dan Wilson

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Hollianna Fank
Scott Fank
Luke Fank
Sue DeBlicke
Mason Osborne
Mary Elisabeth Roland
William Roland
Peter James Roland

Jan and Cornella Flora



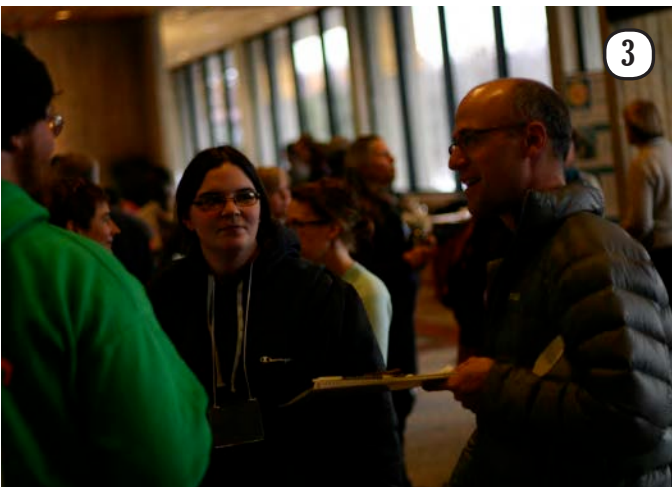
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Finding solutions to on-farm challenges

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Nathan Anderson
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Art Behrens
Ray Bratsch-Prince
Ron Brunk
Bill Buman
Bruce Carney
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Eric Franzenburg
John Gilbert
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LaVon Griffieon
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Chris Henning
Stephanie Hyde
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Dan Specht
Rob Stout
Francis Thicke
Dick Thompson
Sharon Thompson
Mark Tjelmeland
Kelly Tobin



Networking

1. Kate Edwards, of Wild Woods Farm, speaks with Dave Baker (middle) – who works with the ISU Beginning Farmer Center, one of the conference sponsors – and Benjamin Barron.
2. Greg Judy's (center) Saturday breakfast meeting on contract and mob grazing was packed. PFI's annual conference provides attendees many ways to mingle one-on-one with fellow farmers and experts.
3. Glen and Beth Elsbernd (left and middle) speak with Andrew Dunham.
4. Jeff Klinge (left) discusses a poster on herbicide spray drift prepared by Rob Faux with Tyler Franzenburg.
5. Speakers Sandy and Paul Arnold (left and right) reconnect with their past intern, Jessie, at a Saturday morning breakfast meeting.



Learning



1. Jeff Wu gets hands-on tractor driving practice during the Tractor 101 short course.
2. Ron Vos speaks with fellow attendees at a Saturday morning breakfast session.
3. Eric Armbrecht (right) and another conference attendee learn about PFI members' soil types at the PFI soil display.
4. Firmin Ntakimazi (left) and Etienne Hacima speak about farming traditions in their home country of Burundi, in central Africa, during the "Refugee Farmers Experiences in Iowa" session. The session featured refugees from Burundi, Sudan, Bhutan and Myanmar (formerly Burma), who shared their stories of farming in their homelands and what they've grown here since re-settling in Iowa.
5. Jordan Clausen (left) and Thomas Burkhead get up close and personal with the underside of a tractor during the Tractors 101 short course.



2013 Annual Conference

Good Food ...

1. Nearly 500 conference attendees enjoy Saturday's local foods lunch of beef-barley or vegetable-barley stew, salad with micogreens, cornbread and ice cream. Ingredients were supplied by PFI members.
2. Harn Soper chats with Sarah Carlson at PFI's first annual conference Potluck Party on Friday night at the CPMI Center in Ames, a celebration of food and friendship attended by more than 300 people.



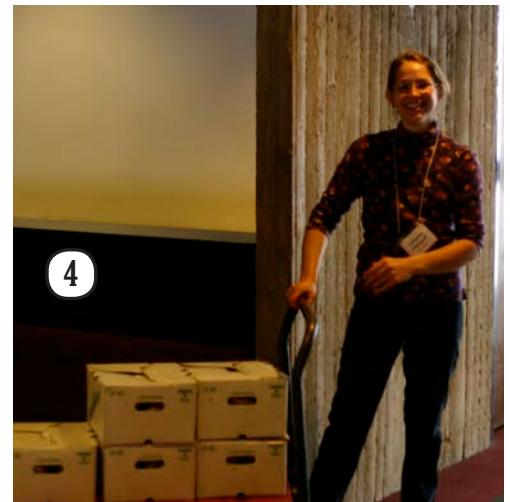
... And Friendships

3. Donna Prizgintas converses with Mary Wiedenhoft.
4. Erv Klaas (left) speaks with a fellow PFI member at the Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner breakfast meeting.
5. Paul Swanson, a PFI member from Hastings, Neb., enjoys a friendly chat with Sarah Hegeland.
6. Tim Landgraf and Mary Cory mingle after the Saturday lunchtime keynote presentation.
7. Mike Salama and his girlfriend, Jamie Murphy, revel with friends at the PFI Potluck Party.

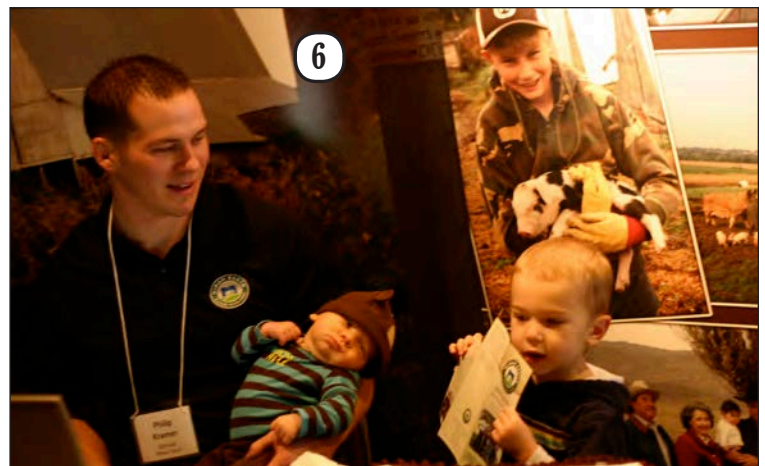


Giving

1. The Frantzen family gathers for a portrait with Teresa after announcing their intent to bequeath their farm to PFI. **From left to right:** Teresa Opheim; Irene, Tom, Jess and James Frantzen; and Jolene, Jackie and TJ Schaefer.
2. Matt Liebman hoists his new shovel aloft after receiving PFI's 2013 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award. The gift is symbolic of Matt's tireless efforts to research and advocate for a viable sustainable agriculture in Iowa.
3. Conference attendees donated at least 100 items to the silent auction, which garnered more than \$2,772 – a new conference record – to benefit PFI's youth program.
4. Volunteers like Emily Rose Pfaltzgraf, shown here carting potatoes donated by Grinnell Heritage Farm for the silent auction, gave their time to help make PFI's annual conference a success.



- ... *Familiar Faces*
5. PFI founders Sharon Thompson, Larry Kallen and Dick Thompson enjoy Rosmann Family Farms popcorn during a break between sessions. The trio remain actively involved in the organization they helped establish 28 years ago, and which has seen tremendous growth in that time. This year's conference, for instance, was PFI's biggest yet, with 653 people attending – a 28% increase over last year.



And New Ones ...

6. Philip Kramer's young sons are among the newest members of the Practical Farmers of Iowa family.

Farm Bureau Insurance: Many Practical Farmers Have It: Why?

by Sean Skeehan

In the Fall 2012 issue of the Practical Farmer, PFI began a series of articles focused on the accessibility and affordability of health insurance for farmers. This article is a continuation of that series. Much of this article includes information from a report Practical Farmers commissioned from rural health care expert Jon Bailey at the Center for Rural Affairs.

Many PFI members report they have health insurance purchased through Iowa Farm Bureau. That is not surprising as the American Farm Bureau Federation and network of state Farm Bureau associations comprise the third largest insurance group in the United States. Nationwide, Jon Bailey notes in the report that the various Farm Bureau insurance companies “generated more than \$11 billion¹ in premiums in 2011 and \$300 million in insurance premium revenue for Farm Bureau by selling a variety of insurance products.

Individual Policies for Members

Farm Bureau health insurance policies offered to its members are typically individual policies rather than group policies, so the premiums may not be as favorable as group health insurance offered through employers or a membership organization. Farmers Union, in some states, offers individual and group health insurance policies (at this time Iowa Farmers Union does not offer health insurance).

An insurance purchaser from Farm Bureau must be or become a member of Farm Bureau. For some people the membership fee, any discount and the relative cost of any other insurance choices should be examined carefully.

Farm Bureau Financial Services

Farm Bureau has arrangements with 140 different insurance companies in every

state in the nation and established a separate insurance company in the 1930s now known as Farm Bureau Financial Services (FBFS), headquartered in West Des Moines. FBFS operates in a relatively simple manner:

- It makes arrangements at the state level with licensed health insurance companies in the state.
- Insurance products and policies are then marketed by the independent FBFS field associates or agents.
- State-based Farm Bureau federations also market insurance products offered by Farm Bureau Financial Services to their members and promote “affordable” rates and discounts to members.

Evaluating the affordability and the amount of discounts to an individual member or member family depends upon factors so varied that blanket statements cannot be made. As with any insurance product, the purchaser has to shop and compare.

Partnerships with the Major State Insurance Companies

Farm Bureau insurance products generally are products of the largest insurance companies in the state. In Iowa, Farm Bureau sells health insurance through Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. There are both HMO and PPO plans with multiple deductible options. To a large extent, as a result of the highly concentrated Iowa health insurance marketplace, many Iowans have no choice but to purchase health insurance through Wellmark no matter the agent or membership affiliation.

Jill Beebout, and her husband Sean Skeehan – author of this article – are PFI and Iowa Farm Bureau members and have had health insurance policies through Farm Bureau and Wellmark since 2005. Jill notes: “A couple of years ago we compared premium costs between our Farm Bureau Wellmark policy and a similar plan direct from Wellmark. There was little difference in premium charges

Sean Skeehan and Jill Beebout, owners of Blue Gate Farm



and it was not worth risking possible exclusion of pre-existing conditions with a switch.” Given the upcoming changes in health insurance laws disallowing insurance companies from excluding pre-existing conditions, Jill says: “Another exploration of available policies and premium costs is warranted, including a small business group policy covering from two to 100 employees”.

Future articles in this series will focus on health insurance cooperatives and the Affordable Care Act. ■

Comments from Member Insurance Survey

“Farm Bureau has such good rates, they’re going to be hard to beat.”

“Once our premiums hit \$900 per month for a family of four, Blue Cross became unsustainable at our family off-farm income level of 40K/yr.”

¹ Shearn, Ian T. “Whose Side is the American Farm Bureau On?,” *The Nation*, July 16, 2012

Fifth Annual Next Generation Retreat Highlights: Biggest Event Yet

by Luke Gran

Our organization continues to generate strong interest from beginning farmers who want to attend events geared towards their needs. The fifth annual Practical Farmers of Iowa Next Generation Retreat, held Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, 2012, is one of these events, and its growth illustrates the extent to which more beginning farmers are discovering and finding value in PFI.

The retreat, held at the Christian Conference Center southeast of Newton, brought 55 beginning farmers together. Beginners hailed from 27 counties across Iowa, from a wide spectrum of farm enterprises. This is the largest number of registrants we have had for this type of event.

Enthusiasm was high as beginners learned from each other about cover crops, business planning, marketing, land access and financing. Plans were made to share labor, purchase inputs together, explore

new markets and solve beginning farmer challenges.

The focus this year was on peer-to-peer learning. Beginning farmers with a few years experience led sessions. Extra time was provided for structured and unstructured networking as well as a group session on Friday night about farm bill programs to support beginning farmers led by Traci Bruckner of the Center for Rural Affairs.

One attendee remarked: "I met lots of new people. I can't believe how many beginning farmers were there that I had never met before. There are lots of people in similar situations, and it was awesome to learn from everyone."

Twelve beginning farmers met individually with a Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan officer. Most had not heard about the specifics of the FSA loan programs.



Clockwise from left: Twyla Hein, David Wimmer and Pete Flynn display their "Farmagons" in small groups at the December 2012 Next Generation Retreat. This visioning exercise was developed by PFI staff for the 2010 retreat as a way for beginners to envision their big goal and five-year plan to get closer to achieving that goal.

Thank you to beginning farmer PFI member speakers: Nathan Anderson, Kevin Dietzel, Wade Dooley, Sally Gran, and Jason Jones.

Attend the 2013 Next Generation Retreat! Look for more details in late summer.

Funding provided by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2010-49400-21843. ■

Cultivating Community, and Cover Crops, at SWCD Breakfast Meeting

by Drake Larsen

At a Saturday morning breakfast meeting at the PFI annual conference, a small group of Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) commissioners and assistant commissioners gathered to discuss opportunities and challenges in their counties. Commissioners new and veteran were able to connect and share information.

One success story that generated great interest comes from Allamakee County. Long time PFI member and four-term SWCD commissioner Jack Knight talked of his district's accomplishments in paving the way for expanded use of cover crops in NE Iowa.

For several years the Allamakee SWCD had seen increased interest in cover crops, but local farmers in the Environmental Quality Incentives and Conservation Stewardship programs often struggled to get cover crops planted in a timely fashion. The commissioners wanted to help these farmers effectively use these programs, and decided that aerial seeding was the key.

The Allamakee SWCD took the lead in forming a partnership between a local seed dealer and a flying company. Pilots had just finished aerial spraying, and were happy to have another 20 days of work, but wanted to be sure there was enough interest to make it worth their while. Between Allamakee and neighboring Clayton and Winneshiek Counties the SWCD was able to line up 1500 acres.

Before the summer was out, the pilots had seeded over 3000 acres!

The SWCD also helped to customize seed mixes that were suitable for use in existing conservation contracts. The commissioners plan to repeat the effort next year, but hope that sometime in the future a private entity will take over the task.

There was too much good stuff discussed that morning to cover it all here. SWCD commissioners have been meeting at the PFI conference for years, but this was the first time the get together was formalized. Given the rich conversation, it is surely something that will continue. In the future PFI will provide opportunities for commissioners to network outside of the conference as well. ■

Creating a Local Grains Marketplace: HoQ Restaurant + Early Morning Harvest

by Tomoko Ogawa

Just after a month since opening its door, HoQ Restaurant in Des Moines' East Village neighborhood is already well connected to many PFI producers. Suman and Cynthia Hoque opened their restaurant in mid-November with a strong emphasis on and commitment to sourcing locally-raised ingredients. According to National Restaurant Survey, "locally sourced meats and seafood" and "locally grown produce" continue to be the top two trends on restaurant menus for 2013. What makes this new Des Moines restaurant especially unique, however, is that it also sources its flour 100 percent from Iowa: The owners purchase wheat flour and cornmeal from PFI members Earl and Jeff Hafner of Early Morning Harvest in Panora, Iowa.

that she was having a hard time marketing her organic wheat.

Filling a local need

Initially, Early Morning Harvest contacted HoQ when Earl heard Suman's interview in the local news. In the interview, Suman said he and Cynthia were trying to source as many local ingredients as possible for their restaurant, except for those things they can't find in Iowa, such as fish and flour. Earl contacted Suman and informed him that he "actually can get flour in Iowa" and delivered samples of different types of wheat flour and cornmeal to the Hoques.

"All the samples were so good and so fresh," Suman says. "When I opened the bag, I thought, oh my god it smells so good!" The Hoques started purchasing 50 pounds of wheat flour per week, but are now up to 100 pounds per week. They also started purchasing cornmeal. Suman makes breads for the restaurant from scratch, including buns for burgers, focaccia and dinner rolls. They also make

pizza dough and dessert in-house. All the flour the Hoques use at the restaurant is from Early Morning

Located about 50 miles away from the restaurant, Earl and Jeff Hafner and their employees at Early Morning Harvest grow, mill and market their organic small grains, including buckwheat, wheat and corn. Between December 2011 and January 2012, the Hafners finished their new milling room and purchased a stone mill from a company called Meadows Mill in North Carolina. Their mill started operation on Feb. 18, 2012, and it processes up to 400 pounds of wheat per hour. At the moment, Earl does all the milling to ensure consistency. He mills every week at the speed of 100 to 150 pounds per hour.

Earl says. "Even within my field it was different."

The Hafners now grows buckwheat, spring / winter wheat and winter rye every year as part of their rotation system. While most of the wheat they currently grow is hard red wheat, they sometimes grow soft red wheat as well. Almost all their products come from their farm, but the Hafners did purchase hard red wheat from PFI Savings Incentive Program participant Betsy Dahl in Rolfe this fall: Earl had heard from Betsy's father at a PFI field day on the Shriver farm

From buckwheat to diverse small grain rotation

Years ago, Earl started to plant buckwheat as a cover crop in an effort to find a dual-purpose cover crop that would pay for itself. He tried buckwheat after wheat and says: "With the right weather, it works. The first year, it worked and we made money." In some years, though, his buckwheat did not do well while the buckwheat his friend Scott Shriver – another PFI farmer who lives about 20 miles away – was growing was doing fine, illustrating the effect that differing soil types and rainfall amounts between his and Shriver's farms can have. "It is amazing how 5 miles and 10 miles made a difference,"

▼ **Below (left):** Earl Hafner explains his small grains milling process.



▼ **Below (right):** A shelf-full of Early Morning Harvest grains illustrates how the Hafners are creating a local marketplace for local grains.



(Continued on next page)



Harvest and they do not mix in any other commercial flours.

Superior freshness and quality

The common perception for locally grown Iowa wheat is that it lacks the protein or consistency needed to bake good bread. But Suman says that while he did have to play around a few times to figure out the recipes using wheat from Early Morning Harvest, he would have had to do the same for any new flour products, purchased from anywhere, intended for bread baking. With Earl paying close attention to the consistency of milling, the Hoques can also trust that they can get the same quality wheat from week to week. Moreover, nothing can beat the freshness and flavor of locally grown and freshly milled grains.

Early Morning Harvest usually delivers to HoQ on Tuesdays, so the Hafners mill the flour right before – on Saturday or Sunday. Suman kept emphasizing the great flavor and freshness of Early Morning Harvest flour, saying, “I cannot find fresh flour like this anywhere else.” He says that is why their customers love their breads so much. Since local grains are still very new idea for people, Suman and Cynthia try to have their servers to tell people great quality flour that they use is grown in Iowa, in fact only 50 miles away from their restaurant.



◀ **Left: Suman and Cynthia Hoque.**

▼ **Below: Fresh bread baked with flour from Early Morning Harvest.**

Creating a local marketplace

In addition to HoQ restaurant, Early Morning Harvest is also currently selling its products through its own farm store, to some grocery stores (Wheatsfield Cooperative in Ames and HyVee in Fairfield), and the Hafners are in the midst of conversations with several more potential customers. Similar to the education piece that the owners of HoQ mentioned both to their front-of-house staffers and to their customers, Earl also stresses the importance of education. Because his flour is not commodity flour, the Early Morning Harvest team continues to learn more about artisanal flour so it can better communicate the benefits to potential customer. For that reason, Earl says they want to go slow on their marketing efforts.



Locally grown small grain has a lot of potential – and not just for the pleasure of eating an ultra-fresh product. It also has the potential to significantly impact Iowa’s landscape in this changing climate by providing farmers an excellent way to extend their rotations, while providing food that can also be enjoyed by people right here in Iowa. ■

It’s CSA Sign-Up Time – Get Season-Long Fresh Produce While Supporting a Local Farmer!

It may still be winter outside, but this is the time of year when farms engaged in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) start signing up new members.

CSA is a direct-marketing, agricultural business model that is increasingly popular thanks to a growing demand for fresh, local food. CSAs provide consumers with an opportunity to know where their food comes from and how it’s grown while supporting small-scale family farms.

CSA farms offer shares of their goods (produce, meat, dairy, cheese, fruit, etc.)

for pre-season purchase. Individuals and households with CSA memberships then receive weekly or bi-weekly allotments of their share throughout the growing season.

Benefits for members and farmers

Members get the freshest produce possible, receive recipes and education about food systems and learn how to cook and eat a variety of produce – including rare, heirloom varieties. Through their connection to food growing, or to a farm where they get food, families also eat

a wider variety of vegetables and have opportunities to try new foods.

For farmers, the benefits are many as well. Marketing is done pre-season, freeing farmers to focus on farming activities during the growing season. They also have greater economic security due to pre-season investment by CSA members, as well as the opportunity to develop relationships with and educate the people they feed. To find CSAs near you, visit www.localharvest.org. ■

Frantzens to bequeath farm to PFI: Preserving their farm “generation after generation” is paramount

by Tom and Irene Frantzen

Tom and Irene Frantzen have a showcase farm in Chickasaw County, with significant conservation features blended into a working landscape. As Tom and Irene hit their late 50s, they began thinking seriously about their farm’s legacy and have now come to a decision: Upon their deaths, their farm will be transferred to Practical Farmers of Iowa, the 320 acres to be kept together generation after generation. Here is their story of that momentous decision.

Holistic management, which we’ve practiced for 20 years, has been the driver as we’ve worked out the details of our generational transfer. The basic principle in holistic management is that we have no idea where we’re going if we don’t have goals.

The goal we developed to guide us during this generational transfer discussion includes securing “long-term protection for a true Iowa family farm that has significant conservation features blended into a working landscape.” This was written after much thought and a lengthy discussion with our family. With that stated goal, we could now measure proposed actions against it.

Meeting a consultant, developing a plan

We started meeting with a consultant, who also came here and toured the farm. We told him that we each own 50 percent of a business called Frantzen Farm Feeds LLC that is separate from the farm. He said that was the place to start, and he was right. Starting with the business gave us a good idea about how assets can be handled without the emotional attachments that farmland brings.

Without a plan, if our son wanted to take over this business, he’d have to go in debt in order to buy out his sisters.

We decided to appraise the value of the business and then we, through the business, purchased a whole life insurance policy on Irene for that dollar figure. The beneficiaries are our two daughters.

So here’s how the Frantzen Farm Feed transition follows: If Tom passes away tonight, our son inherits half of the business and he becomes a manager. Irene still has half. If Irene passes away tonight, our son inherits her half of the business. Each of our



From left: James, Irene and Tom Frantzen

.....
“We needed a strategy that allows the farm to survive a variety of tragedies and unexpected results, or we really don’t have a plan for the future.”
.....

daughters then gets half of Irene’s whole life insurance policy. In effect the asset value of the business has been shared by the children and the business continues on.

There’s a very important principle involved: If our family members have physical activity in the operations, then they will share the risk or rewards in it. We love our two daughters, but they’re not involved in this business. Our son ends up with a business which may be worth a lot, or a little – those are the risks and rewards.

With the business transfer in place, the consultant then made some

recommendations for the farm, which we thought about for a year. The farm is not only complicated, it is emotional, and it is far more of a fiscal entity. The consultant recommended that we have some of the farm surveyed off and willed to our son. But in the end we rejected that recommendation, because it didn’t fit our goals.

The decision to transfer the farm to PFI

Instead we have changed our wills to bequeath our 320 acres of farmland to Practical Farmers of Iowa. There is a governing document with the bequest of this land that PFI is required to follow. This list includes actions that are required, ones that are suggested, and those that are forbidden.

The farm has an inventory of grain, livestock and machinery. James currently works nearly full-time for us. In time, he will begin to build his own tangible asset inventory as we reduce our farm activities. The value of these farm goods are an important part of our retirement income.

Now people are going to say, “Well why didn’t you just will the farmland to your son?” When the Pope visited Iowa in 1979, he said that the land is ours to be preserved for generation upon generation. His visit started our transition to a more

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When the Pope visited Iowa in 1979, he said the land is ours to be preserved for 'generation upon generation' He didn't just say preserve the land for a generation.

sustainable agriculture and life that we've had. He didn't just say preserve the land for a generation. He said "generation upon generation." The plans that the consultant came up with do not protect the farm long-term. We think that the farm is best preserved by a group than any individual.

There are real problems today with selling our farm to our son as my father sold his farm to us. Land values are ridiculously high. Then it gets very complicated with assessments and how it gets legally transferred. James would end up with a real serious burden of debt, regardless of the price.

And not only that, we also looked at what would happen because our two daughters have chosen other careers and currently do not plan on coming back to the farm. What if something would happen to James? Then it would end as far as it being the Frantzen Farm. He could die of a car accident, he

could become disabled or have some kind of health issue that would prevent him from being able to farm. We aren't looking at just James's generation. We want the farm to be continually preserved and kept in the hands of an organization that's going to care for the land like we do and will maintain the name Frantzen Farm.

We needed a strategy that allows the farm to survive a variety of tragedies and unexpected results or we really don't have a plan for the future.

It's selfish not to have a generational transfer plan. Without a plan, when Tom dies, he dumps all the responsibility and management, from the cow herd to the income tax, in Irene's lap.

When we are no longer here, then the farmland is the PFI Board of Directors' property. We prefer a Frantzen descendent to be the operator of this farm. If our son is here and shows that he's a viable operator, he rents this farm and the rent is based off a percentage of the county's average rent. Future tenants, family or non-family should have a basis for a profitable operation. They will not be burdened with interest and principle payments on the farm.

We are all tenants on our farms in our lifetimes anyway.

Preserving a legacy

This farm has a story that started 100 years ago. Our farm is profitable and we provide sustainable employment. It is a good place to work and an important part of a rural community. It involves many other businesses in very positive ways. Down the road, maybe it will even support more families. There are no rules saying what the farm has to look like in the future. One hundred years ago, it was carved out of a chunk of tallgrass prairie, and it has been changed enormously in many different ways since.

A former Supreme Court justice said that you can have great concentration of wealth or you can have democratic process. You cannot have both. We find the concentration of land ownership and the escalation of its worth very destructive to rural communities. We find those factors a huge threat to democratic process. We personally can't change those trends that are going on, but we don't have to be a part of them either.

To divide up this farm and sell its assets off to the highest bidder is in complete conflict with our goals. Our children understand this. They realize that because of our generational transfer plan, they won't benefit from this current run-up in land values. They understand the love and care and the legacy of the land we are trying to preserve.

Practical Farmers of Iowa is about more than just growing crops or putting food on the table. It's a part of our other family. The organization brought so much to us that we feel like we owe something back to it. We really think that we're setting an example that maybe others can follow. If we don't do it, who will?

Next issue: James Frantzen on the Frantzen legacy plan. ■

"To divide up the farm and sell its assets off to the highest bidder is in complete conflict with our goals."



On-Farm Energy Check-In: The Cooler Project at One Step at a Time Gardens

by Jan Libbey

The fellow in the picture – we claim as Iowa’s Bill Nye, the Science Guy – is Rich Schuler. Rich is working with us on behalf of Practical Farmers of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa Farm Energy Working Group. Of our on-farm energy users, our outside cooler is the big hog.

Rich has installed a monitoring box (which he’s setting up in the attached photo) that is tied into the “on” and “off” cycling of our outside cooler compressor to help us monitor its energy use. Using temperature probes and current monitors (you can see all the cable wires on the ground during this set up phase), Rich is monitoring temps on

the cooler’s exterior - in the shade, in the sun, and under foam insulation. He is also monitoring inside at various spots of the cooler, and in crop that has just come in from the field so we can gauge time to cool to desired temp. The cooler looks like it’s ready for an EKG.

The goal of the project is to achieve desired cooling with the greatest energy efficiency. The first step is to understand just how the cooling is working - hence all the probes - and, recognizing the system stress presented by surface heating, how to mitigate this exposure - clearly working against the interior cooling goal.

Our goal for this project is to pull cooler energy use down at least 25%. The top



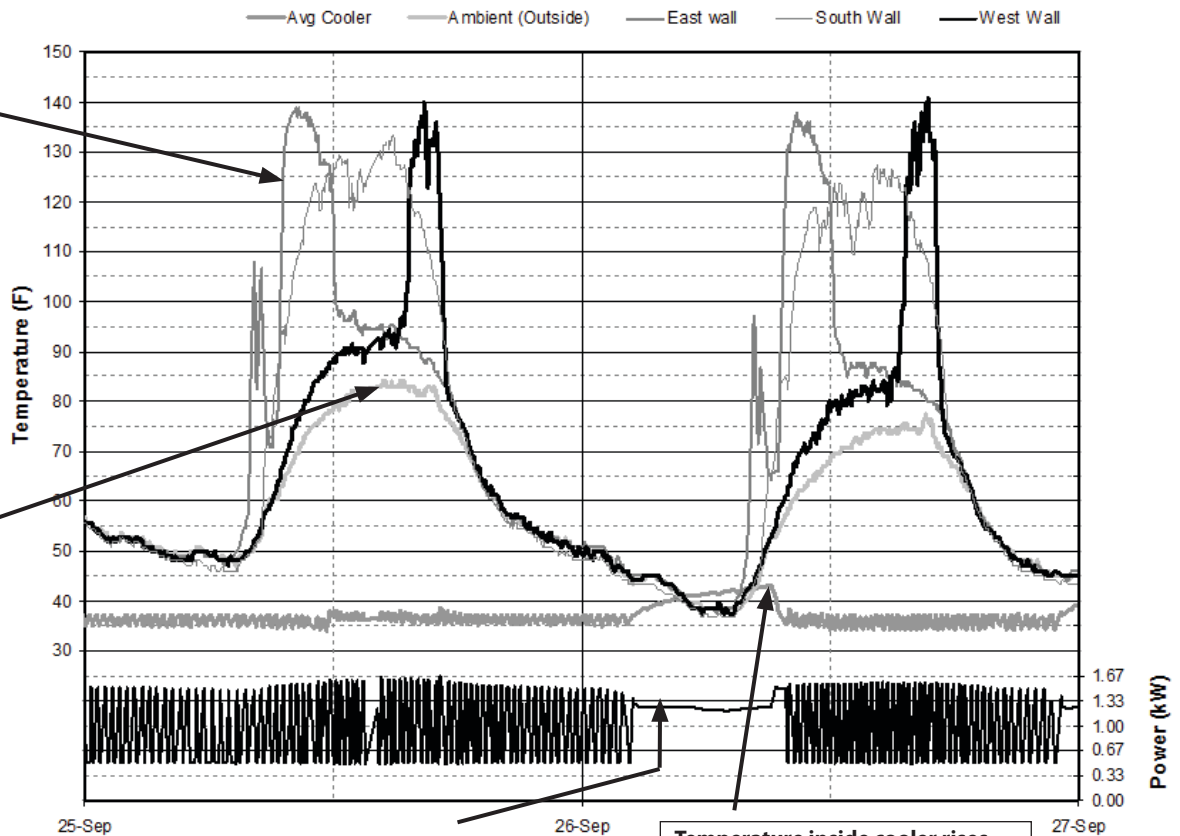
two strategies we are looking at include painting the exterior with a highly reflective paint and changing the pattern of fan use inside the cooler. All of this is to help us maximize the energy we use, allowing our newly acquired solar power to play a more significant role in powering this farm!

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2012 PFI Cooler Study: One Step at a Time Gardens

Cooler surfaces in full sun peak at 140 F and remain above 120 F for 8.5 hours

Ambient temperature reached 84 F.



Chiller unit malfunctions due to lack of refrigerant.

Temperature inside cooler rises above ambient due to heat given off by the circulation fans

Ken Burns' Dust Bowl Documentary: Now Time for Part 3?

by Paul Johnson

Ken Burns has just released a fine documentary on 1930s agriculture ("The Dust Bowl," on Iowa Public Television). It reminds us of the terrible tragedy that can occur when humans and the Land collide. The documentary should serve as a wake-up call for agriculture. But I'm afraid that it won't.

The human tragedy portrayed in the Burns story was powerful – thousands of families displaced, lives lost, dreams shattered. Unfortunately, Ken Burns passed on the land half of the story. Oh, I know there were a few references to turning the land "wrong side up" and the efforts of the fledgling Soil Conservation Services' working with those landowners who stuck it out to use better conservation practices. But unfortunately although the human side of the story was well told, the land story wasn't.

A follow up four-hour documentary is in order. I'd recommend starting with our Iowa native conservationist, Aldo Leopold. He understood what happened back then. In 1933 Leopold led a camp of Civilian Conservation Corps members on a soil erosion project in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, not far from where Ken Burns' dust darkened the skies. Later in that same year Leopold assisted Hugh Hammond Bennett, father of soil conservation in our country, in establishing our nation's first watershed project. This occurred in Coon Valley, Wisc., just across the Mississippi from northeast Iowa.

In 1939, as the dust finally settled on the horrible thirties and our nation's soil conservation efforts began to take root, Aldo wrote my favorite essay, "The Farmer as a Conservationist." He began that piece with the following words: "Conservation means harmony between people and land. When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land; when both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation. When one or the other grows poorer, we do not."

Leopold also wrote in that essay that it is the farmer who weaves the carpet on which America stands and reminds those of us who farm that our farms are a portrait of who we are.

These thoughts along with Ken Burns' human tragedy should be our lesson from the Dust Bowl. I'm disappointed that Burns, like so many before him, still hasn't fully comprehended what happened back then.

Today we are constantly reminded by the agriculture establishment that we should be guided by good science and common sense. Does good science and common sense mean siting thousands of large animal confinement systems on top of hundreds of thousands of miles of ag drain tiles in north central Iowa? Does it mean the unsustainable pumping of the Ogalala aquifer in the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, site of Ken Burns' dust bowl, to produce fuel and feed for huge cattle feedlots? Or the millions of poultry now grown on the sands of the Delmarva peninsula draining into the Chesapeake Bay? And the corn and soybeans expanding again onto the steep hills of northeast, southern and western Iowa with no conservation requirements anticipated. Good science and common sense?

How many times have we been told "give the farmer a good price for his crops and then we'll see good conservation"? In my granddaughter's words "duh?" ■

Paul Johnson has farmed at Oneota Slopes near Decorah since 1974. He has served in the Iowa State Legislature, was chief of the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service) and director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Paul served as a Peace Corps Member, on the National Research Council's Board on Agriculture and as ex-officio member on the Committee on Long Range Soil and Water Conservation Policy. He is currently serving on the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission.



Paul Johnson (top of pyramid) with his wife, Pat, and their children and grandchildren.

On-Farm Energy Check-In (cont'd)

Two days in the life of a cooler

The temperature and current monitoring system has been in operation at the farm since September 18th, 2012. The table summarizes the energy use and cost for 26 Sept as well as the estimated energy savings per month (in the warm season). The solid and dashed vertical lines in the figure correspond to midnight and noon respectively for Sept 26th (warmest day in the monitoring period to date) and Sept 27th. ■

Current and Estimated Cooler Energy Use After Implementing Energy Savings Strategies	
Energy Consumption of Cooler on Sept. 26	22.5 kWh
(Energy cost @ \$0.12 / kWh and 67% clear days)	(\$54 / month)
Estimated Energy Savings for Top Two Strategies on Sept. 26	6.5 kWh (29%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coat the exterior walls with a highly reflective paint: 2.6 kWh (12%) Change pattern of fan use to match compressor operation: 4.8 kWh (21%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run all three circulation fans only when compressor is operating 	1.8 kWh (8%) 4.8 kWh (21%)
Estimated Monthly Savings at \$0.12 / kWh and 67% clear days in the warm season	\$21 / month

Matt Liebman Recipient of PFI's 2013 Sustainable Ag Achievement Award

by Drake Larsen

Practical Farmers of Iowa awarded its 2013 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award to Matt Liebman, professor of agronomy at Iowa State University and a longtime leader in sustainable agriculture. PFI grants this award annually to those who have excelled in demonstrating sustainable agriculture and have been generous in sharing what they have learned with others. The award was presented to Dr. Liebman on Jan. 12 at Practical Farmers's 2013 annual conference.

Matt has been active in sustainable agriculture for more than 30 years. He graduated from Harvard University and obtained his Ph.D from the University of California at Berkeley. He is currently serving as the Henry A. Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture at ISU. In 2009 he was selected as Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy.

Matt has a vision of what sustainable agriculture might look like: "It includes food systems, rural communities, industrial agriculture and more," he says. "Each one needs to be in the picture. We must live in harmony with each other and the environment." He adds that we need to focus on the importance of place, and asks people to consider "what this piece of land, this watershed, this community needs to be more sustainable."

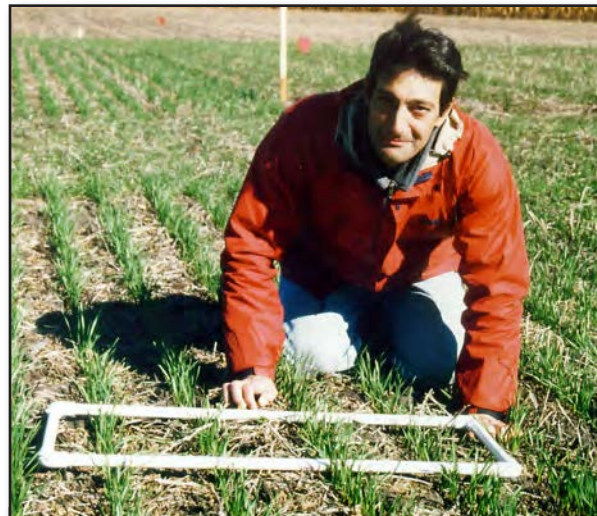
Matt's scientific research focuses on diversified crop rotations, cover crops, prairie buffer strips, weed ecology and using native perennial species for biofuels production. He stands out in his desire and ability to share scientific knowledge with others. For instance, he has made extensive contributions to sustainable agriculture through popular press, extension and peer-reviewed publications.

The professor is passionate about education and one of his goals as holder of the Wallace Chair is to develop more opportunities for students in sustainable agriculture. Matt was integral in the creation of the Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State – the first program of its kind in the U.S.

Results of Matt's recent research, published in the journal PLOS ONE, demonstrate the benefits of adding additional crops to the traditional two-year corn-bean rotation. The research group found that longer rotations (three- or four-year) can more effectively balance productivity, profitability and environmental health in agricultural systems. This study indicates that cropping systems that include legumes and small grains can use smaller amounts of synthetic chemicals and still meet or exceed the performance of the status quo.

"I was very surprised to learn about [the award] and honored to receive it," Matt says. "PFI is filled with people who are generous in spirit and knowledge, from whom I have learned much. Science is about probing how the world works, and the experiences and observations of PFI members provide a great reality check on what I do as a scientist."

To access Matt's PLOS ONE paper on extended rotations, visit www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0047149. ■



Matt takes a quadrat sample in one of his research plots. Quadrat sampling is a technique often used in ecology and other natural sciences research to record criteria of interest occurring within the marked area.

Past Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award Winners

- 2012: Fred Kirschenmann
- 2011: Tom and Irene Frantzen
- 2010: Ron Rosmann and Maria Vakulskas Rosmann
- 2009: Vic and Cindy Madsen
- 2008: Kamyar Enshayan
- 2007: Francis Thicke
- 2006: Paul Johnson
- 2005: Denise O'Brien
- 2004: George Beran
- 2003: Rich Pirog
- 2002: Rick Exner
- 2001: David Williams
- 2000: Mark Honeyman
- 1999: Jean Wallace Douglas
- 1998: Neil Hamilton
- 1997: Dennis Keeney
- 1996: Michael Duffy
- 1995: Dick and Sharon Thompson
- 1994: Richard Cruse
- 1993: Larry Kallem
- 1992: Jerry DeWitt
- 1991: John Pesek
- 1990: Alfred Blackmer

Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf receive Leopold Center's 2012 Spencer Award

by Laura Miller
(Leopold Center communications)



Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf, operators of One Step at a Time Gardens near Kanawha, are the recipients of

the 2012 Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture, awarded by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The pair received the award on Jan. 11, at Practical Farmers' 2013 annual conference.

The Spencer Award – being presented for the 10th year – honors farmers, teachers and researchers who have made a significant contribution to the ecological and economic stability of Iowa's family farms. It has been presented annually by the Leopold Center and includes a \$1,000 cash prize from an endowment established by the family of Norman and Margaretha

Spencer, who farmed near Sioux City for 40 years.

Jan and Tim own 132 acres of rolling glacial moraine adjacent to East Twin Lake, a natural, glacial wetland and upland woods complex. They raise vegetables on nine acres and in two high-tunnel greenhouses. In addition to serving their 150 CSA members, Jan and Tim sell their products via direct sale to regional wholesale operations. A pastured-poultry operation is incorporated into the crop rotation, producing about 650 chickens each summer.

They manage cover crops and use composted animal manures, diverse crop rotations, shallow cultivation, mulching and grass pathways. Since moving to the farm in 1990, they have added 45 acres of permanent cover, including prairie grasses and flowers, shrubs, trees and restored wetlands. They established their CSA operation in 1996 and began farming full-time in 2002.

They have also participated in on-farm research through PFI and the Organic Agriculture and Horticulture programs at Iowa State University. Projects have included cover crops, poultry feed efficiencies, broccoli and edamame trials and pollinator assessment and identification.

Landgraf has served on the PFI board of directors since 2006 and has been president since 2009. Libbey has been a leader in numerous community groups including the Iowa Network for Community Agriculture, Healthy Harvest of North Iowa and the North Iowa Farmers Market.

Landgraf worked as a manufacturing engineer for many years at Eaton Corporation. Libbey has an animal ecology degree from ISU and worked for the Wright County Conservation Board as a naturalist. They have two children, a daughter at Luther College in Decorah, and a son who is an agricultural engineer for Case New Holland. ■

PFI celebrates first lifetime members!

Since Practical Farmers introduced a lifetime membership option in October, several long-time members have taken the plunge! Mark and Connie Tjelmeland of McCallsburg, Kurt and Teresa Van Hulzen of Sac City, and Jack Knight of Luana all made a \$1,000 one-time payment for lifetime membership. In exchange, they will receive all the benefits of PFI membership for life. In addition to avoiding the hassle of renewing annually, lifetime members also receive a framed certificate to display proudly in their homes.

If you value your membership in PFI and plan to be a member for many years to come, please consider becoming a lifetime member. Not only will you be proclaiming your commitment to PFI's shared values, you'll also be making a great long-term investment. For more information, contact Patrick Burke at (515) 232-5661 or patrick@practicalfarmers.org. ■

William H. Gilbert 1916 – 2012



Long-time member William H. Gilbert died November 21, 2012. He was the father of John and Bev Gilbert and the grandfather of John C. and Sarah Gilbert, and Kate Gilbert, all PFI members. Mr. Gilbert is pictured above (at right) at his last PFI field day, the pork tasting event held at Gibraltar Farms in September. His obituary noted that: "He was a long-time advocate of soil conservation and crop rotations. Bill was particularly proud of the Century Farm designation of the home farm, and that his grandson John and his wife Sarah had returned to be the third generation to dairy." ■

Spiffy new PFI hats now available

Show off your Practical Farmers pride by wearing a PFI hat! The new hats cost \$15 and are available in:

- denim / mesh with peach logo
- olive / tan with green logo.

The hats, along with our popular t-shirts, are available for purchase online at: <http://bit.ly/pfi-merch>. ■



Eric Armbricht, of The Homestead, shows off his PFI hat at the annual conference.



District 1—Northwest

- Jennifer Erickson, Ida Grove
- Loren and Heather Luitjens, Ashton
- Doug Toliver, Sac City

District 2—North Central

- Rooney Charest, Ames
- Tom Geiger, Ames
- Zach Hawkins, Ames
- Pete Kapustka, Fort Dodge
- Kathryn Schlake, Ames
- Dale Swanson, Nevada

District 3—Northeast

- Vickie Arkema, Pella
- Don Lund, Monona
- Brian Nowak-Thompson, Mount Vernon
- Clark Porter, Waterloo

District 4—Southwest

- Jeff Adams, Crescent
- Ernie Adkison, Parnell
- Ibrahim Ali, Des Moines
- Patrick Frazier, Des Moines
- Carl Glanzman and Doris Bane, Oakland
- Tyler Martens, Missouri Valley
- Stephen McGrew, Emerson
- Jennifer Miller, Windsor Heights
- Cindy Watson, Winterset

District 5—Southeast

- Austin Dunn, Iowa City
- Eric Johnson, Oxford
- Jason Kerr, De Witt
- William Lorentzen, Mechanicsville, IA
- Gregory Matano, Coralville
- Rosemary Roelf, Iowa City
- Jon Yagla, Iowa City

District 6—Out of State

- Kevin Ballman, Red Wing, MN
- Brian Bates, Petoskey, MI
- Truman Brady, Chicago, IL
- Caitlin Caughey, Omaha, NE
- Mark Rosmann, Washington D.C.
- Sustainable Farm Partners: Harn Soper, Los Altos, CA

UPCOMING EVENTS – FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL

Feb. 15-16 – Healthy Farms Conference | Omaha, NE | Eugene T. Mahoney State Park

Join the Nebraska Society for Sustainable Agriculture to learn new farming techniques; network with new, transitioning, beginning and experienced farmers; and learn first-hand from fellow farmers. Sessions include: Hugelkultur, Animal Welfare, Grazing Cover Crops, Language of the Fields, and more. The event will once again feature a full youth program as well as the All-Nebraska dinner, live auction and entertainment featuring farmer comedian Ross Brockley. For more details, visit www.nebsusag.org/conference.shtml

Feb. 15 – Cover Crop Basics | East Troy, WI | Michael Fields Agricultural Institute | 1-4 p.m.

Discuss the basic principles of cover cropping, including uses, species selection and management. Price: \$32-\$40. For more: www.michaelfields.org/whole-farm-workshop-schedule

Feb. 15 – Southern Iowa Grazing Conference | Bloomfield, IA | Mutchler Community Center

8:15 a.m. - 4 p.m. – Cost: \$55 + \$35 for each additional person from the same farm. This first annual event is being put on by PFI members. Speakers will discuss forages and grazing practices for a variety of different species. Contact Margaret Dunn for more details (margaret@practicalfarmers.org; (515) 232-5661), or mail registrations to Elmer Beech, 11306 220th St, Bloomfield, IA, 52537. Be sure to include a note with attendees' names, address, city/state/zip and phone number.

Feb. 15-16 – MN Sustainable Farming Assoc. Annual Conference | Chaska, MN | MN Landscape Arboretum

This year's event will include practical education sessions, culinary demonstrations, interesting speakers, and more. New this year is a grazing track. Learn from local experts what it takes to create and maintain a profitable pasture-based livestock operation. Visit: www.arboretum.umn.edu/2013SustainAgSummit.aspx

Feb. 19 – “Making the Sale” Local Food Production Workshop | Council Bluffs, IA | Iowa Western Community College Campus | \$15

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. – This class targets wholesale selling in our region. Learn what the buyer expects and how to make sure you exceed their expectations and win their repeat business. This class will focus on aspects of wholesale that include: packaging, invoicing, delivery and follow up. For more details call (712) 482-6726.

Feb. 19 – Farminar: “Selecting the Right Genetics for a Grass-Based System” – 7 p.m. – Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

Feb. 26 – GAP Level 2 Workshop – Council Bluffs, IA – 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. – \$35

This Level 2 workshop is available to anyone who has successfully completed the Intro to GAP / GAP Self-Audit / Basic GAP certificate workshops. For more details, visit www.practicalfarmers.org/events.php or call (712) 325-3404.

Feb. 26 – Farminar: “Vegetable Irrigation Basics for Beginning Farmers” – 7 p.m. Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

March 2 – Planning Your Organic Garden | Caledonia, IL | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Cost: \$70

Learn how to design an organically managed home vegetable garden, including methods for building soil, planning for space needs and crop rotation. Especially for beginning gardeners, or those ready to convert to non-chemical techniques. Bring a sack lunch. Visit: www.learngrowconnect.org/node/4445

March 5 – Direct-Marketing for Food Production | Council Bluffs, IA | 1-4 p.m. | \$15

Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/events.php

March 9 – Fruit Trees 101 | Caledonia, IL | 1-5 p.m. | \$50

Interested in growing your own fruit without chemicals? Learn about variety selection, siting, planting methods, sustainable care and more. To learn more, visit: www.learngrowconnect.org/node/4448

March 12-13 – Arkansas Grazing Lands Conference | Little Rock, AR | Crown Plaza Hotel

Price: \$125. Learn more at: www.argrazinglandscoalition.org/

March 13 – Sheep Shearing School | Jefferson City, MO | George Washington Carver Farm | \$50

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Put on by the Sheep, Goat and Value-Added Fiber Program at Lincoln University. For more details, call (573) 681-5312 or visit <http://bit.ly/SheepShearingPamphlet>

March 14 – Employee Management Meeting | Location (in Iowa) TBD | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Learn how to write an employee manual and create systems to effectively manage employees. Chris Blanchard will present. For more, contact Sally Worley at (515) 232-5661 or sally@practicalfarmers.org

March 16 – Permaculture Design Certificate | Council Bluffs, IA | Iowa Western Community College Campus | 10 Sessions for \$410

For more, call (712) 325-3404 or visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/events_detail.php?eid=366

April 1 – Webinar: “Growing and Marketing Cut Flowers” | 7-8:30 p.m. | FREE

Put on by the Missouri Beginning Farmers Program. To participate, visit <http://univmissouri.adobeconnect.com/debikelly>

April 21 – The Ins and Outs of Composting | Caledonia, IL | 1-3:30 p.m. | \$45

Learn what makes a successful compost pile and decide which methods will work best for your household. Go over various types of compost bins, build a pile together, and learn about Angelic Organics' farm-scale compost operation. Meet the worms in their vermiculture system and find out how to implement indoor composting at home. Dress to work outside! Visit: www.learngrowconnect.org/node/4463

For more events, visit www.practicalfarmers.org/events.php

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
- Lifetime Member—\$1,000

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.

