

working together, always learning

the

Practical Farmer

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On the cover



James Frantzen stands in a pasture on the Frantzen family farm – land he will one day manage.

(Photo courtesy of Organic Valley)

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the Practical Farmer helps keep farmers and friends of farmers in touch with one another through informative articles on the latest on-farm research, demonstration and observation, and helps 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 updates members on PFI programming and news.

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(Back issues are available upon request.)



LEOPOLD CENTER



Responding to Questions about PFI

What are the most frequent questions you get about Practical Farmers? How do you respond? Here's a short list of some of the queries I receive:

Where did the name "Practical" come from? When Dick and Sharon Thompson and Larry Kallem founded the organization in 1985, they "were looking for information that's usable, information that can be applied," Dick reports. "Maybe we should have named the group 'usable' rather than 'practical' farmers of Iowa."

How many members do you have? The new numbers are in: 2,100! Twenty-four percent of you have joined in the past year. See the pie chart on this page for our amazing growth.

Are your members all Iowans? Nope. Twelve percent of our members live outside the state, including 8 percent who live in the states that border Iowa. Two of our South Dakota members are featured in this issue: Bob Corio, below, and Tom and Ruth Neuberger, pages 16-17. The website and our farminars are dramatically helping us increase our reach.

Where does your funding come from? The most important 7.7 percent comes from our individual donors, because it gives us the most flexibility to do the programming that members want; 46.6 percent comes from private foundations; 31.4 percent from federal sources; and 7.9 percent from state sources. See the annual

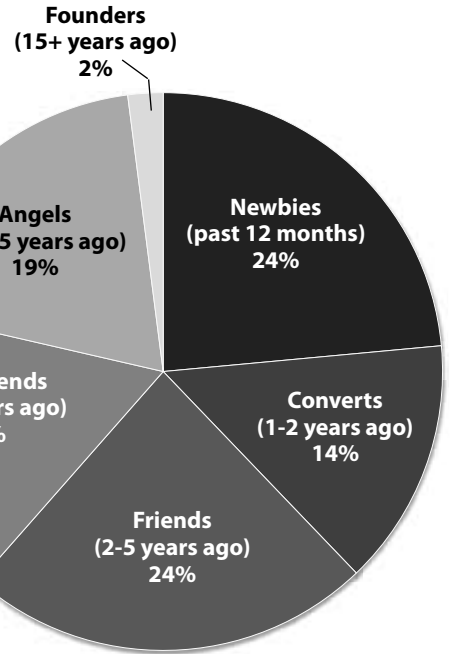
report in this issue for more information on PFI finances.

If I am not a member, am I "impractical"? This one is usually asked with a chuckle. I usually chuckle back. With all the useful information shared among members, it seems impractical to not be a member, don't you think?

Aren't you a group of ridge-tillers ... Organic producers ... Vegetable producers ... [add your favorite enterprise here]? Members of Practical Farmers have all kinds of systems. People frequently try to "pigeon hole" us, but it is just not accurate to do so. If you need proof, check out our Field Day guide (soon to arrive) for the wide range of enterprises we feature. Diversity is our strength.

Can I join if I'm not a farmer? We welcome "friends of farmers." Suzan Erem, one of our friends of farmers, reports her family belongs "because we pick up a lot of great information about cover crops and other things we can do in our gardens. . . . We haven't ruled out farming some day, even if it's just a couple of acres and the farmers market."

Is PFI political? Good heavens, it would be hard for this diverse group to decide on a political candidate or position on so many issues. Nor would we want to. We do, however, have a targeted and effective



▲ Portrait of PFI Membership

policy role that focuses on conservation and beginning farmer issues.

Do you have other Frequently Asked Questions about Practical Farmers? How do you respond? I would love to hear your answers!

Working for you,

Laura Ohlin

▼ Dog of the Issue



Ben, shown here with his owner, PFI member Bob Corio. Bob raises sheep, cattle, corn, soybeans, small grains and hay near Jefferson, South Dakota. Bob reports that: "Big Bad Ben is a full-bred, five-year-old border collie. He knows more than I do."

▼ Past PFI Board Presidents



▲ Past PFI board presidents – **BOTTOM ROW** (from left): Dick Thompson; Ron Rosmann; Tom Frantzen; and Vic Madsen. **TOP ROW** (from left): Dan Wilson; Eric Franzenburg, Susan Jutz; and Dave Lubben.

▼ "Tim Landgraf just finished a stint as PFI Board President. Thankfully, he will continue on the Board for an additional two years. Tim has been a wise, thoughtful, and upbeat advisor to me, and I am grateful for the time he has taken for PFI. Plus he is fun, always a plus!"



Profitable Farm = Efficient Workers

by Paul and Sandy Arnold

Paul and Sandy started to hire employees when their children were born. Currently, a typical employee mix for their farm includes: two to three year-round interns; two hourly part-time, year-round employees; and one to 12 hourly part-time, seasonal employees. They work a lot with homeschoolers in the area. Sandy: "They're our rock, there for the long haul." Labor totals run 25 percent of their average expenses in summer and 8 percent in winter.

Practical Farmers was fortunate to have Paul and Sandy Arnold present at our 2013 annual conference. Here is an excerpt from their presentation on labor efficiencies.



Sandy (left) and Paul Arnold reconnect with past intern Jessie Nielsen (middle) at PFI's 2013 annual conference in January.

Creating clear expectations

Paul: If you have employees, you have to have good things in place so they understand why they're there and what they are doing. We have an employee handbook that outlines expectations when hired – what to do when punching out, punching in, clothing requirements and tool requirements. Don't walk in the house with shoes on, that's not going to happen.

I learned a long time ago, it's a 'come on,' not a 'go on.' I stay with my employees; it's what I like to do. I have morning meetings with everyone. We do a quick review of what's going on – what we're working toward today, what's happening this week, what the priorities are for the farm. Everyone knows what's going on. We keep a chalkboard with the information so everyone remembers daily and long-term priorities.

We have lots of patience when we explain how things work. It's worth it for people who are going to be there for a while. You're going to get some real work out of them. We give our employees latitude to think. We give them responsibilities. We are always looking for a better way, and asking employees to, too. We have high

expectations, even for young kids, and they like that.

I'm out there setting the personality. One thing I have to have is a positive attitude. I'm setting how everyone is acting, how fast they're going to go. I need to have plan A, B, C. If I'm standing there not knowing what to do, there are other people standing there too, wasting money.

I like to be out there in the midst of them in case they have questions; I'm right there. They all work faster when I'm there and they tell me that. I try to have everyone harvest as a group. We often have 10 to 12 people there; it's a good time to socialize. It's a good way to get things done.

Sandy: We often use large groups on weeding days, too. We can get a lot of work done in a short period of time, and it's not as daunting.

\$40 rule

Paul: Market prep is our biggest expense. We use systems to evaluate workers and techniques to improve profits. We want to know the total time to harvest, wash and pack things for market, since that's our biggest expense. We have a timing sheet to

figure this out. We time a few times a year; it can be rather onerous.

Sandy: We want each worker to be earning us a minimum \$40 per hour on harvest day, and our workers know that. We want to have a profitable farm and it's all dependent on the workers and if we can get them to be efficient.

For example, green beans: An average picker can pick, walk and pack 25 pounds per hour. At \$3.50 per pound, the value is \$87.50 per hour, which falls within our limits.

We keep a simple sheet in the washing station. After workers are trained, we'll send a whole crew to do blueberries. They mark when they go down and come back and tell us what they harvested when they come back. This tells us a lot: What crops are costing the most to prepare and what we can do to change that. We may need to raise the price, or maybe we need some more equipment to get something done more efficiently. It also tells us the best worker for the task: If I'm running to the market and running late, and need 4.5 pints of blueberries, I know who my fastest blueberry picker is and who I'll send to pick them. ■

For the Arnolds' conference PowerPoint presentation, visit www.practicalfarmers.org

CSA Retention Survey Part 2: Alternative Vegetable Subscription Options

by Sally Worley

Earlier this year, Practical Farmers of Iowa conducted a third-party survey of non-renewing CSA members. The winter newsletter issue outlined various perspectives on CSA membership and some reasons for non-renewal learned from this survey. This issue details several alternative CSA options that some farmers are experimenting with in response to customer feedback. Survey results indicated people who did not renew would rejoin if more flexible options, such as the following examples illustrate, were available through their local CSA.

Every-Other-Week and Partial Season Options

Some Iowa CSAs are already offering these alternatives. Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf of One Step at a Time Garden, near Kanawha, offer an every-other-week share. These CSA members receive a full-size share in alternating weeks during the main season, for a total of nine distributions. The every-other-week option accommodates both small families and travelers. Jan and Tim split the summer season into partial seasons: an “early Green and Sweet” segment that covers the first part of the summer season, and a “Savor-the-Summer” segment that covers the remaining 11 weeks of their main season. These options allow members to sign up for the part of the season they are in town, or when their favorite produce is available.

CSA Share Add-ons



◀ Jan and Tim also have a plethora of add-on options to allow for more customization. CSA members have the option to add a fruit, herb, gourmet, fall greens, Thanksgiving or Christmas share. They can also buy kits –

such as pesto, salsa, canning and roasting – to get large quantities of items for these purposes. Tim: **“We have the ability to grow many different products. Some go over well, some don’t. By creating a pesto kit, we are able to sell basil and garlic to those who want larger quantities of these items.”**

Flexible CSAs



◀ Larry Cleverley, of Cleverley Farm near Mingo, offered a flexible CSA for the first time in 2012. **“Through the year I heard that one of the reasons people don’t join CSAs is that**

they’re hesitant to make a commitment for the entire season. People who did join CSAs often got things they didn’t like, too much of something or too many things in a row.” Larry marketed his flexible CSA through Facebook and Twitter, where he would suggest share contents. Interested parties would custom-order a box containing the items they were interested in. Commitment was week to week. “Feedback was phenomenal,” he said, adding that he plans to expand the program this year.



◀ The Hohl family, which operates Harvestville Farm near Donnellson, added a week-to-week flexible CSA to their traditional CSA

in 2012 as well. They advertised available produce on Facebook and sold 15 to 35 boxes weekly. The boxes were not customizable, but people were able to learn the contents ahead of time. Many pre-ordered and the Hohl family also had walk-in sales at the retail barn on their farm. Adam Hohl says the first year was such a success they plan to drop the

traditional CSA this year and only have the flexible CSA. **“The number one reason [customers] enjoyed this model was because they didn’t have to make a 16-week commitment or put money down up-front,”** he says.

Farm Stand Debit Cards

Some farms are offering, in lieu of a traditional CSA box, farm stand debit cards where a customer purchases a pre-paid debit card at the beginning of the season to use at that particular farm. Similar to the idea of a CSA, the debit cards give farmers cash flow and guaranteed revenue in the spring, when they need it.



◀ Ellen Walsh-Rosmann, of Pin Oak Place near Harlan, switched from a traditional CSA in 2012 to a punch card model

in spring 2013. **“Having a young baby and other enterprises on the farm, this gives me less pressure to have a traditional box ready each week,”** Ellen says. The punch card also gives her customers flexibility: They can purchase exactly what they want, when they want it, while still making a financial commitment to the farm by pre-purchasing a set amount of product. Customers also don’t have to worry about who will pick up their produce when they are out of town, or how to prepare (or else give away) an item they don’t prefer.

With this option, customers also frequently get a discount, such as 10 percent, for purchasing a farm debit or punch card. In Ellen’s case, her customers can buy a \$45 card worth \$50 of produce, a \$90 card worth \$100 of produce or a \$135 card that’s good for \$150 of produce, and pick it up at their convenience at either the on-farm store (Farm Sweet Farm) or the Omaha farmers market. ■

For the full report online at www.practicalfarmers.org/horticulture

Poultry Production: Are Profits Going to the Birds?

by Margaret Dunn

Many PFI livestock producers have poultry enterprises as part of their farms. Some reasons include the fast turnover of poultry, low maintenance requirements, pest control, ability to use waste products as feed, and sale of the meat and eggs as “gateway” products to introduce customers to the farm. Thus there is some justification for a poultry system that is not extremely profitable “on paper.” The benefits of pest control and waste management aren’t easily quantified, and it’s hard to determine whether a sale of beef or pork was sparked by a customer’s interest in eggs that led to more. But it still behooves producers to know that their time and money are not costing more than their poultry enterprise provides. Meanwhile, some farms focus primarily on poultry production. Yet few seemed satisfied with their understanding of the economics in their systems at the 2012 Cooperator’s Meeting.

In true PFI style, an on-farm monitoring project was developed at the 2012 Cooperators’ Meeting. By tracking the expenses of different aspects of their poultry enterprises, cooperators would determine:

- The proportion of expenses in areas of feed, facilities, processing and marketing
- Average profit per bird and return to labor and management
- Opportunities to reduce expenses or improve efficiencies, leading to greater profitability
- Viability of different poultry production systems.

Producers were provided worksheets with which to record the number of animals they purchased or raised, inventory of product sold or used, feed purchases and uses, transportation and processing costs, and labor requirements. Cooperator John Wesselius, of Sioux City, completed the project for his broiler operation. More than just numbers, though, John provided a narrative of his production process that may give new producers an idea of what to expect when starting similar operations.

Diary of poultry expenses

In 2012 John raised approximately 1,200 broilers in four rounds of 300 birds each. Before each set of birds arrived, labor involved about two hours to clean, prepare and lay bedding in their home – a converted hog facility. The chicks stayed there for two weeks, during which time daily chores consisted of about 15 minutes to feed and observe. John estimated that each bird incurred roughly 26 cents in facility expenses: waterers (about \$30 each) and brooder lamps (about \$10 each). Each round of birds required about four bags of shavings (2.5 cubic feet each, at \$6 per bag). The chicks themselves cost \$266 for a batch of 300, but John estimates the cost to be roughly \$1 per chick once death loss is considered. All in all, he lost about 35 birds per round in 2012.

Once the chicks transitioned outside they were kept in four Salatin-style moveable pens – 75 birds per pen – and were moved twice daily. Chore time increased to about 45 minutes each day to move and feed each group of 300 birds. The pens cost about \$200

to build, though this could be done more cheaply if spare lumber were available.

Feeding costs

Chicks were fed a Kent Feeds brand starter ration, called Chick-Go, until day 14, when they started transitioning to a broiler ration. By day 18 they were converted to the broiler ration, a custom mix made of corn, soybean meal, choice white grease – or CWA, essentially pork fat used as an energy source – and a vitamin-mineral supplement. For the first few weeks, each pen received one-third of a 5 gallon bucket of feed – or approximately 15 to 18 pounds. This increased to about 40 pounds per day in each pen during the fifth and sixth weeks, and was decreased slightly during the final week or so. Birds were butchered at about seven-and-a-half weeks of age. All in all, each round of birds consumed 400 to 450 pounds of Chick-Go and about 3,360 pounds of broiler ration. Thus, each finished chick was responsible for about 1.6 pounds of Chick-Go and about 12.7 pounds of broiler ration, a total feed expense of \$3.30 per bird.

Travel, equipment and marketing costs

John noted that he’s lucky: He lives about 20 miles from his butcher. Even so, he made two round trips per group of birds, first to pick up transport crates and then to deliver the birds. At 80 miles total per 265 processed birds, he estimated about 24 cents in transportation costs per bird, plus a processing fee of \$2.52 per bird.

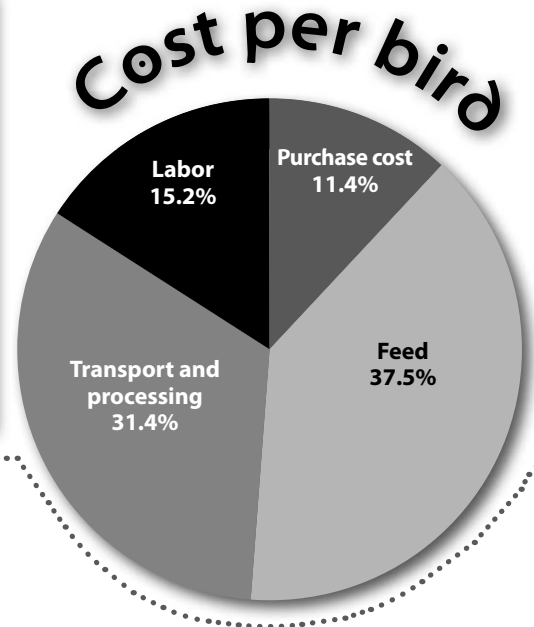
Freezers on the farm represent about \$2,470 in long-term investments; these include chest freezers and smaller freezers for vehicles. John estimates the freezers will last about 10 years.



► **Top row, clockwise from left: 1)** At 4 to 6 weeks weeks old, these chickens are approaching their most food-consumptive phase.

► **2)** Pie chart showing the breakdown of costs per finished bird.

◀ **Opposite page:** Chick photo courtesy of Orla at Dreamstime Stock Photos & Stock Free Images.



John sold his birds alongside his vegetables at farmers market stands, which cost \$1,250 per year total. The birds finished at about 6 pounds liveweight, which converted to about 4.2 pounds of saleable product. These were sold for \$3.39 per pound, or \$3.59 cut up, with bulk orders dropping the price further.

The upshot: total costs

Adding it all together, John estimated his cost of raising a chick to be about \$8.80. Given the finished weight of 4.2 pound, this means his break-even selling price was \$2.10 per pound. At his farmers market price then, he made about \$1.40 per pound, or \$5.88 per bird, for an approximate net profit of \$6,233. He estimated about 40 hours of labor per round of birds, so the estimated "hourly wage" is nearly \$40. However, this may not factor in time spent at the farmers market.

Using the estimates, it is possible to calculate the breakdown of expenses per finished bird:

- Purchase cost: 11.4 percent
- Feed cost: 37.5 percent
- Transport and processing: 31.4 percent
- Labor: 15.2 percent (assuming \$10 per hour wage)

In the past, John tried other marketing methods, including a large commercial account last year. While it required less effort and allowed him to sell his entire product quickly, he said it did not provide the margin necessary to sustain his operation. While consumers are more and more willing to pay extra for sustainable, local, consciously-grown meat, there is still occasionally some sticker shock. By tabulating his expenses, John not only knows how much he has to charge to make

a profit, but can educate his customers about the reasons that the chicken costs what it does.

Any member interested in the poultry economics monitoring project should contact Margaret Dunn, the livestock coordinator, at margaret@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661. ■

▼ **Below:** John describes his chicken-rearing setup at a Practical Farmers field day.



How Does Continuous Corn Stack Up to a Three-Year Rotation for Biofuel Production?

by Sarah Carlson

The energy footprint of agriculture is a top priority of PFI members and has always been a focus of on-farm research and demonstration projects. At PFI field days and workshops in 1992-1993, farmer cooperators showed energy savings equivalent to 12 gallons of diesel per acre by reducing nitrogen fertilizer by 50 pounds per acre. To follow up on those initial on-farm demonstrations, Practical Farmers partnered with Dordt College in northwest Iowa on a project that compared energy use on two practical, Midwest cropping systems in a controlled, side-by-side experiment. The cropping systems – a diverse multi-crop rotation versus continuous corn – were compared for three years, from 2008 to 2011, to examine differences in energy expended and biofuel produced.

Considerable capacity for biofuel production, both ethanol and biodiesel, exists in Iowa. Many farmers sell their harvested corn and soybean grain to these markets. At the same time, energy is a large expense for farmers. However, energy use varies across cropping systems. Diverse cropping systems – those with three or more crops – use a fraction of the energy inputs compared to continuous corn. Research from Iowa State University agronomist Matt Liebman shows that a rotation with three crops – corn, soybeans and a spring small grain with an underseeding of red clover – uses half as much energy compared to the two-year corn and soybean rotation.

An earlier study from 1977 by Klepper and colleagues compared 14 organic farms in the Midwest with similar farms not using organic practices. They found that the organic farms produced corn using 36 percent fewer energy inputs than the conventional farms. Nitrogen fertilizer is the greatest single energy input in corn production, and it's important to note that in the era of Klepper's study, all farms in the study – organic or not – kept livestock and applied manure. Thirty years later, these two types of farming have diverged. Many conventional row crop operations no longer have access to manure, and nitrogen fertilizer rates have increased.

Methods

Dordt College established two farming system treatments in 2008: continuous corn (CC) versus a Gateway to Sustainability rotation (G2S) that, similar to Liebman's research, included corn, soybeans and oats with an under-seeding of red clover. Dordt College documented all field operations for planting and harvesting, the inputs applied to each treatment, and harvested yields (corrected for moisture content).

PFI staff used the field notes to create a fossil fuel flow chart of the energy used to grow the different treatments at Dordt College. PFI staff then conducted a literature review and used published values

to calculate the amount of energy needed to process 1). the corn from both systems into ethanol and 2). the soybeans from the G2S system into biodiesel. The energy used to produce each crop was calculated from the diesel equivalents – organized into pre-harvest machinery, nitrogen inputs and harvest machinery – estimated from ISU Extension publication PM709, "Fuel Required for Field Operations." Published values were also used to estimate the amount of renewable energy produced and the heating equivalent, as if the products were burned instead of being processed into a biofuel.

Note on yield adjustment – Yields were adjusted to accommodate the difference in rotation length. Since the G2S system is a three-year rotation, the corn, soybean and oat/red clover crops are each only one-third the total area each year. In contrast, continuous corn is 100 percent of the total area each year. Thus, 100 percent of the continuous corn plot was assigned as the effective area, while only 33.3 percent of each G2S component was assigned as the effective area. No biofuel product was estimated for the oat/red clover part of the rotation, so 33.3 percent of the G2S rotation was assigned a zero for that part of the calculation.

Box 1

The **Energy Efficiency** value is a dimensionless ratio of the amount of energy returned as either ethanol or bio-diesel for each unit of energy put into the system, specifically in the processing, planting and harvesting of the crop. The **Land Efficiency** value is reported in mega-BTUs/Acre. This value is the NET energy produced per acre.

Equation 1 – Energy Efficiency

$$\text{Energy Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Total biofuel energy output}}{\text{Total energy input}}$$

where:

$$\text{Total Energy Input} = \text{Farm Energy Cost of Production} + \text{Biofuel Processing Energy}$$

Equation 2 – Land Use Efficiency

$$\text{Land Use Efficiency} = \text{Biofuel Energy Output} - \text{Farm Energy Cost of Production}$$

where:

$$\text{Biofuel Energy Output} = \text{Total Biofuel Energy Output} - \text{Biofuel Processing Energy}$$

Figure 1

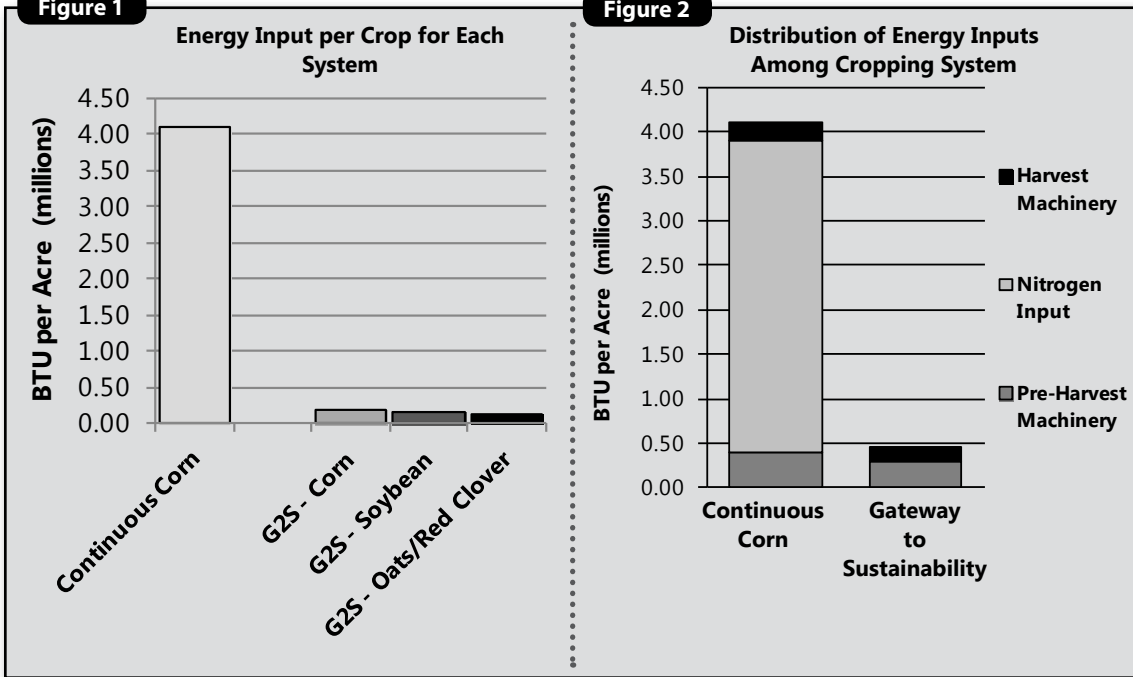
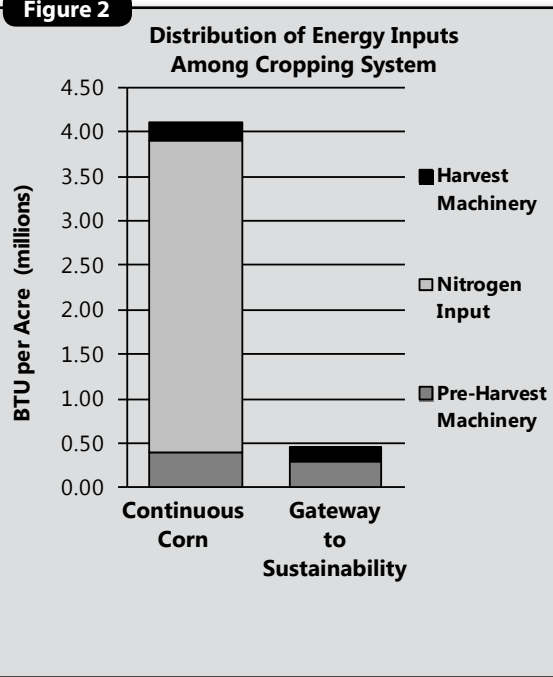


Figure 2



produced per acre. Using the Land Efficiency equation, the CC treatment yielded significantly more energy per acre (9.49 M-BTU per acre) in 2010 than any other treatment in any other year. By contrast, in 2009 the G2S treatment yielded the least amount of total energy per acre at 6.02 M-BTU per acre. Both farming system treatments were similar in 2011. Finally, in 2010 the G2S, and in 2009 the CC, both produced similar energy per acre.

Taking both equations together, the G2S system

Two separate equations were used to summarize and report the final data results (see Box 1).

Energy Efficiency is a ratio of the output energy to the input energy, while the Land Efficiency is the net amount of energy per area of land. To understand how efficient the cropping systems were in their production of energy per acre, we used both equations to help determine which system was more efficient.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the statistics program JMP Pro 10, and yield comparisons employ least squares means for accuracy. Comparisons of means were analyzed using Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference Test. Statistical significance is determined at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level.

Results and Discussion

Biofuel – Based on the Energy Efficiency equation, the Gateway to Sustainability system was significantly more efficient in 2009 and 2011 than in 2010 (Table 1). The G2S system was more energy-efficient than continuous corn in all years, yielding more energy across years – 36 percent more in 2009, 30 percent more in 2010 and 38 percent more in 2011 – for every BTU expended to plant, harvest and process the crops compared to the continuous corn system. (Note: BTU, or British Thermal Unit, is a standard unit of measurement used to denote the amount of heat energy in fuels, and is a common measure of agricultural energy production. "M-BTU" stands for one million BTU).

But it's important to consider the total amount of energy each farming system

was more efficient, requiring less energy to produce the resulting energy commodity. Total energy produced per acre in the G2S system was also similar to the continuous corn system two out of three years. The G2S energy used to grow the three-year rotation was significantly lower than the CC treatment (Figure 1). Our study confirms that nitrogen fertilizer was the biggest energy input in either cropping treatment (Figure 2). In the G2S rotation, no synthetic nitrogen fertilizer was applied to the plots during the rotation. All nitrogen was grown on the farm and came from the red clover. In this experiment, adding nitrogen-fixing legumes to the rotation drastically reduced the energy needed to grow, maintain and harvest the crops.

Conclusions

When considering both the Energy and Land Efficiency calculations together, the multiple rotation G2S system requires less energy (i.e., BTU per acre) to convert energy from a crop to a biofuel. Not surprisingly, the rotational G2S system is more efficient, but an unexpected finding of this research was that for biofuel production, the G2S system can achieve similar yields per acre as the continuous corn system. ■

Table 1

	Biofuel Energy Produced Per BTU and Per Acre			
	ENERGY EFFICIENCY (M-BTU/M-BTU)		LAND EFFICIENCY (M-BTU/Acre)	
	Continuous Corn	Gateway to Sustainability	Continuous Corn	Gateway to Sustainability
2009	1.29 CD	1.77 A	7.92 B	6.02 C
2010	1.32 C	1.72 B	9.49 A	7.32 B
2011	1.28 D	1.76 A	7.07 BC	7.10 BC

Note: The letters A through D are used merely to help distinguish statistical significance among values in this data set. When comparing values, those with the same letter (for instance, both values have an "A" next to them) are not statistically significant. A number with two letters means that the value is not statistically different from any value with either of those letters. When reading this table, compare the values in the Energy Efficiently side separately from those in the Land Efficiency side.

Continuing Curiosity: PFI Members Meet to Muse on 2013 Research Projects

by Tomoko Ogawa

Practical Farmers of Iowa members gathered at the Gateway Hotel in Ames on Feb. 7 and 8, 2013 to determine the focus for on-farm research and demonstration projects for the year ahead. Ideas were many – 52 research ideas in total – and spanned several of PFI's program areas.

Energy project ideas leapt from just three last year to 17 project ideas in 2013. Other research questions on members' minds? Recordkeeping to aid better insurance options for fruit and vegetable farmers, cover crop seeding, cost-effectiveness of burning corn kernels to heat a greenhouse and effects of various grazing management techniques on perennial pastures were among the many research priorities identified at this year's Cooperators' Meeting. (View the complete list of project ideas on page 11). Now these farmers are poised to follow through with projects designed to provide answers to their research questions.

PFI holds a Cooperators' Meeting annually to ensure that on-farm research and demonstration efforts are focused on farmers' wants and needs. Seventy individuals registered and attended this year's annual planning event. In addition, about 70 researchers took part in the Cooperators' Meeting dinner on Thursday night, where Practical Farmers presented 11 members with the first Master Researcher awards.

This new award is given to farmer researchers who have conducted 20 or more on-farm research trials and hosted at least five PFI field days to share knowledge gained over the years. A 22-minute-long film celebrating the kind of Practical Farmer curiosity embodied by the Cooperators' Program and PFI's members and farmer researchers, prepared by staff member Drake Larsen and featuring four PFI Master Researchers, premiered at the dinner. For more information or to conduct an on-farm trial contact Sarah Carlson at (515) 232-5661 or sarah@practicalfarmers.org. ■

Since 1987...

... PFI farmer cooperators have conducted more than 800 on-farm experiments and shared that information with neighbors, farmers and the public.

In 2012...

... 92 farmers took part in 54 projects.



Eileen Bader (left) and Jenny Vasquez mingle in the hall at The Gateway Hotel and Conference Center, in Ames.



The inaugural group of Master Researchers. **Bottom Row** (from left): Vic Madson, Ron Rosmann, Dick Thompson, Sharon Thompson and Gayle Olson. **Middle Row** (from left): Margaret Smith, Irene Frantzen, Larry Kalleem, Lisa Lubben and Jeff Olson. **Top Row** (from left): Ron Vos, Dan Wilson, Doug Alert, Tom Frantzen, Paul Mugege and Dave Lubben.



Craig Griffieon (left), Wade Dooley (middle) and Earl Hafner talk during a break between sessions.

PROJECT IDEAS FOR 2013

Energy Project Ideas

1. How can we cost-effectively improve the efficiency of current grain drying equipment (dryers, fans, motorized augers)?
2. How can commodity grain marketing be improved to limit delivery distance and fuel consumption?
3. How does the energy use of and cost for a farm-built, walk-in cooler using a CoolBot system compare to a commercial cooler of the same size?
4. What is the energy savings and payback period for adding insulating foam to the outside of a commercial vegetable cooler?
5. How does the energy use and cost in our newly constructed farmhouse, which is designed for energy efficiency, compare to our previous farmhouse?
6. What is the most cost-effective and efficient light source for seeding transplants: LED versus fluorescent versus other options?
7. Is burning corn kernels for sub-soil heat generation in a greenhouse cost-efficient?
8. What is the best way to burn dried corn cobs for farmhouse heat – and how efficient is this?
9. Will lithium batteries keep a refrigerator truck cool for short periods while going to market?
10. What is the best way to retrofit a used, commercial-built cooler shell with a CoolBot unit – and what is the energy efficiency of doing this?
11. What are the CO₂ and cost savings of switching the energy source for shop floor heating from grid to solar?
12. Which is most fuel-efficient: drilling versus aerial broadcast of cover crop seed and hay, and what's the tipping point in acres?
13. Will no-tilling corn into a 400-acre bean field maintain yield and conserve fuel?
14. What is the fossil energy difference among three scenarios for starting seeds for transplant: heat versus no heat; electric light versus solar; and electric circulation with fans versus not?
15. What is best way to build an energy-efficient walk-in cooler that is tight and well insulated?
16. Does on-farm wind power generation meet the sales pitch?

Field Crops Project Ideas

1. How can oak savanna and fire as a management tool be incorporated into a land-use management plan?
2. What is the return on investment of cover crops?
3. What are the best management practices for adding winter rye to a crop rotation?
4. What are the economics of different third crops in Iowa?
5. What are the best opportunities for better integrating crops and livestock using a whole-farm management plan?
6. What crop rotations can include cover crops?
7. What is the most cost-effective way to increase feed value per acre of corn?
8. What is the performance of low trypsin-inhibition soybeans?
9. What is the nitrogen replacement value of an underseeded red clover legume versus a diverse cover crop mix planted following small grain harvest?
10. What is the success rate of a red clover legume frost-seeded into a winter rye cover crop?
11. What are the economics of winter small grain production?
12. What are the economics of spring small grain production?
13. What is the performance of strip-cropped corn or soybeans?

Horticulture Project Ideas

1. What are the yield and sales data for fruit and vegetable farms in Iowa?
2. How does a grain drill compare to broadcast seeding with respect to time, seed efficiency and cover crop establishment, and which would increase the likelihood of horticulture producers planting cover crops?
3. Which cover crop species grow sufficiently between spring and fall crops to add a rotation, build soil and suppress weeds?
4. Are sunn hemp and chickling vetch good nitrogen-fixing summer cover crops for horticulture systems?
5. Can a soybean "smother crop" be used to effectively reduce weed pressure in asparagus production? What is the impact of a soybean cover crop on asparagus' fertility and yield?

6. Does paper mulch control weeds and produce better yields for melons, squash and peppers?
7. What is the yield comparison between 'Catronia' and 'California Wonder' peppers?
8. What is a suitable living cover for Brussels sprouts and kale after last cultivation?
9. Does planting thyme along with brassicas prevent cabbage worm damage?
10. Will spraying compost extract on the field increase the yield of cash crops?
11. Does planting tillage radish reduce soil compaction?

Livestock Project Ideas

1. Can feed efficiency be improved in organic hogs that are limit-fed instead of fed free-choice?
2. Are internal parasites causing significant reductions in weight gain and feed efficiency in organic hogs?
3. How do we monitor fly populations on cattle to determine 1). threshold levels for animal welfare and profitability, and 2). the efficacy of treatments?
4. What are the economic opportunities and barriers in poultry production?
5. What winter feeding regimes work best in a no-grain system?
6. What are the effects of raw milk as a fertilizer for pastures and hayfields?
7. Can grazing cover crops extend winter cattle feed options without harming subsequent cash crop yield?
8. What are the effects of various grazing management techniques on perennial pastures?
9. What are the costs and benefits of grass-finishing lambs in terms of economics, growth and performance, and carcass and meat quality?
10. What are the benefits of supplementing livestock with apple cider vinegar?

***NOTE: Not all project ideas will be completed in 2013; some projects might span multiple years. Check back at our next Cooperators' Meeting for results from 2013 research.**

2013 Cooperators' Meeting



1. Margaret Smith, a farmer who also works with ISU Extension's Value-Added Agriculture program, chats with Art Behrens, who farms near Carroll
2. Dave Lubben (left), of White Oak Farm in Monticello – and past PFI president in 1996 – speaks with Eric Franzenberg (also a past PFI president), of Pheasant Run Farm in Van Horne.
3. Andy Dunham, of Grinnell Heritage Farm, with baby Leonora Dunham.
4. Bob Lynch (left), who farms near Gilmore City, speaks with Bruce Voigts, a water quality specialist with Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service in Clarion.
5. Clockwise from left: Dave Lubben, Jeff Olson, Dan Wilson and Doug Alert discuss ideas during one of the project planning sessions.
6. Mary Jane and Alix Paez at the energy presentation.
7. Nathan Anderson (left) and Gary Guthrie chat during the break.
8. LaVon Griffieon (left) and Mary Wiedenhoft speaking during dinner.
9. From left: Vic Madsen, Meg Schmiöt, Dave Schmiöt and Darwin Pierce discuss ideas.



Tweaking Planting Protocol: Saving Fuel with No-Till and Fewer Field Passes

by Sean Skeeahan

Long-time PFI members and cooperators Craig and LaVon Griffieon consume a lot of diesel fuel on their farm. They grow mostly corn and soybeans on 1,120 acres, and during the first nine months of 2011 used nearly 5,000 gallons of diesel for their field operations (excluding truck fuel to haul the grain). Always looking for efficiencies in the operation, the Griffieons have decided to change their planting protocol on one 400-acre field in order to conserve fuel and dollars. The field is rotating from soybeans to corn and will be planted no-till, rather than their traditional pre-planting pass with a field cultivator alone.

Saving energy by making fewer trips across the field and moving toward no-till planting isn't a new idea. Many experts agree with these practices, including James Frisby, a professor with the Department of Agricultural Engineering at University of Missouri-Columbia. Writing in the publication *Fuel Requirement Estimates for Selected Field Operations*, originally published in 1993, Frisby says: "Farmers can save significant money and energy if they use field operation plans that provide adequate crop care with minimal fuel consumption."

The Griffieons have been following this advice: In recent years, they haven't plowed, ripped or disked before cultivating and planting in the spring. ISU Extension data also supports fuel conservation practices. In publication PM 709, *Fuel Required for Field Operations*, it's estimated that a field cultivator making one pass in a previously tilled field uses about 0.65 gallon of diesel per acre. The publication does not cite a figure for using a field cultivator exclusively before planting – but ISU Extension agricultural engineer Mark Hanna says that a field cultivator pass alone before planting "uses 0.70 gallons an acre if the field is previously untilled." It's also estimated in PM 709 that a no-till planter will consume an additional 0.05 gallon over a seed-only planter into a tilled seedbed (see Table 1). Compared with the total fuel used

by a field cultivator in a tilled field – and factoring in Mark's estimate of 0.70 gallon of fuel used by a field cultivator before planting – a farmer using a no-till planter in an untilled field will have a net fuel savings of 0.65 gallon per acre.

If that figure holds true for the Griffieons, they could save 260 gallons of diesel (0.65 gallon multiplied by 400 acres) on the corn field – or \$910 at their contracted diesel rate of \$3.50 per gallon. This change in field operations on more than one-third of their farm's row crop acres has the potential to reduce their annual diesel consumption by roughly 4 to 5 percent. It would also avoid pumping 5,800 pounds of carbon dioxide into the air and better protect the soil from runoff.

Will the change in planting technique impact yields? Craig says that years ago they no-till-planted all their fields without affecting yield. The 2010 ISU Extension publication PM 2089, *Farm Energy – Limiting Field Operations*, also suggests no change to crop yields, but some debate about yield drag from no-till systems does exist.

The Griffieons contract their diesel fuel late in the calendar year when prices are typically most favorable. Even so, the price from fall

Craig Griffieon stands by his new Massey Ferguson-White 8816 model tractor.



2011 to fall 2012 increased 6 percent, from \$3.30 to \$3.50. "Fuel cost is a driving factor in this decision to change planting methods," Craig says.

Starting in 2012, Practical Farmers has been working with the Griffieons on collecting and analyzing all their energy "baseline" data stretching back to 2008, including: the volume of energy consumed (electricity, LP, diesel and gasohol), its cost and the carbon footprint its use creates. To ground-truth whether the predicted fuel savings from Craig's switch to no-till is accurate, Craig will record his metered fuel usage on the tractor for the various field operations this planting season, and PFI will gather the data monthly. PFI's On-Farm Energy Program is supported by a grant from the Leopold Center. ■

Table 1

Griffieon Planting Protocol:			
Old: (Field Cultivate, plowed field) + (Planter, seed only, tilled seedbed) = 1.10 gallons/acre			
New: (No-till planter) = 0.45 gallons/acre			
Potential savings: 1.10 – 0.45 = 0.65 gallons/acre			
Field Operation	Diesel Gallons Per Acre	Field Operation	Diesel Gallons Per Acre
Tillage		Planting (30-inch rows)	
Shredding cornstalks	0.45	Planter – seed only, tilled seedbed	0.40
Moldboard plow	1.70	Planter with fertilizer and pesticide attachments, tilled seedbed	0.55
Subsoiler/ripper	1.70	Till-Planter	0.55
Disk-chisel plow	1.30	No-Till Planter	0.45
Chisel plow	1.10		
Offset disk	0.85		
Tandem disk, plowed field	0.65		
Tandem disk, tilled field	0.55		
Tandem disk, cornstalks	0.45		
Field cultivate, plowed field	0.70		
Field cultivate, tilled field	0.65		
Seedbed conditioner	0.90		

James Frantzen Responds to His Parents' Decision to Bequest Their Land to PFI

by James Frantzen

“What about James?” has been a common question the Frantzens have fielded since announcing at the PFI annual conference that they are bequeathing their farm to Practical Farmers. The Frantzens have three children, but James is the only one farming with his parents. Here is James’s response.

What does this decision mean to your farming future?

The decision protects me long-term. If I had to purchase this farmland, I would have great debt for a number of years. That would really tie my hands from being able to improve or expand the farm. Taking that burden of farmland debt out of the picture might open up doors to other opportunities down the road.

I’m still going to have debt purchasing machinery, livestock, and grain – and that’s no small matter on this operation. This is a complex operation. If I don’t have to buy farmland, I’ll be able to focus on purchasing the correct equipment, the correct genetics for our livestock or maybe growing different grains.

What questions have you been asked about your parents’ decision?

A common one is: “If they wanted to avoid the tax issues or if they wanted me to avoid debt, why didn’t Mom and Dad just sell the farm to you for a dollar or just give you the farm?” Well, that’s not fair to my two sisters. Even if the farm were just handed over to me, an asset like farmland is power when you walk into a bank. But it’s also a banker’s next best friend because they can take that asset away.

From left: Tom, Irene and James Frantzen with family dog Samantha.



What dreams do you have for the farm?

I’d like to expand the farm’s diversity. I’d like to increase the number of hogs we have, possibly increase cattle. It might be possible to add land to the farm. If that does take place, maybe we’d add some crops we’ve never grown before. I’d like to keep looking at different renewable energy resources: solar panels or producing our own oil and blending our own biodiesel to cut down on our fossil fuel use on the farm. I want this farm to be open to Practical Farmers of Iowa members, staff and beyond.

It’s hard to get a picture-perfect farm. It takes a lot of money and a lot of paint, but we want a working farm that is fairly picture-friendly. We want a farm that helps educate through cover cropping or grain production demonstrations, energy conservation, through solar and

geothermal energy production, and through different livestock research trials with swine and beef. I want the farm to be open as a model farm for Practical Farmers of Iowa to do any research trials. I envision the farm to be open for educational youth groups such as FFA.

Do you want to speak more broadly about how parents can help their children get started farming?

Generational transfer is unique to every situation and every farm family. Our family is providing an example for generational transfer, but we certainly don’t foresee everyone doing this. This is what fit for us. You have to sit down as a family and discuss what’s going to fit best. You have to go over multiple aspects and multiple future scenarios, whether they are economic or family-related. What happens if Dad dies, what if Mom dies, what if Dad and Mom die together, what if I die, what if all three of us die, what if Mom and I die, or what if Dad and I die? You have to think of every little, different approach. What would happen to the farm and what would happen to the land?

“This decision protects me long-term. If I had to purchase farmland, I would have debt for a number of years.”

“This is not only the Tom and Irene Frantzen legacy; this is not the James Frantzen legacy: This is the Frantzen Family legacy.”

Do you have any special memories of the farm?

My sisters and I always enjoy sharing farm memories. One of my fond memories is planting trees around the place to provide natural habitat and windbreaks for the farm. As a family we always worked together shelling corn. We pick the corn on the ear, as much as possible, and after half a year or so the corn is dry in the corn cribs, and we have to then separate corn from the husks. This is a traditional farming agricultural practice that's not practiced much anymore. We're proud to say that we own three corn shellers. I foresee shelling corn as long as I can do it. We have saved a lot of money over the decades on this practice. The memories of working together as a family is something I want to continue, whether it's with my own family or with our family through Practical Farmers of Iowa.

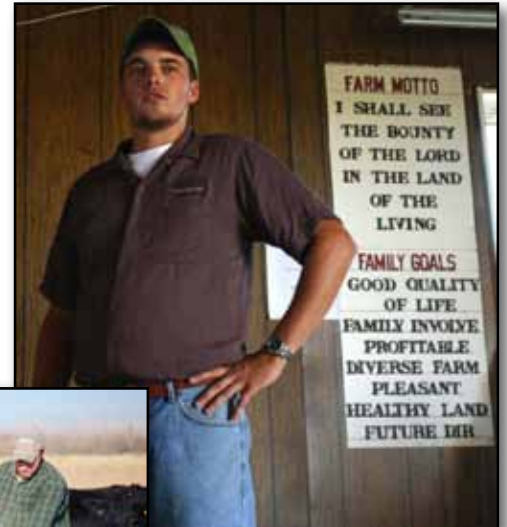
We want an open farm. Whoever wants to come and spend a weekend, week, or a month or two and help work on the farm can come. There's a lot of hard work to do, but there's a lot of fun work to do. I want to keep the farm as a different work environment than the standard conventional farm.

Anything else you want to add?

When I first bought my acreage a few miles north of the farm, I thought: What can I do with such a limited small area of land? What can the Frantzen Farm provide from one generation to the next? What other crops and livestock can we produce? How much can we produce on such a small tract of land since we are smaller than the average Iowa farm? How much can we feed back to this land with different cover cropping and different land production models?

It all goes back to the legacy. We belong to the farm. By gifting the farm to Practical Farmers of Iowa, my folks are preserving that legacy for when we are no longer here.

This is not only the Tom and Irene Frantzen legacy, this is not the James Frantzen legacy: This is the Frantzen Family legacy. It goes back to my grandparents John and Dorothy Frantzen and great-grandparents Joe and Rose Frantzen. The Frantzens have farmed in this county for 100 years, and in the country for many more. We want to preserve what we have done – and what we hope to do – here. ■



▲ Above: James stands next to the farm motto: "I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living."



◀ Left: Tom and James check the condition of one of their cattle.

More Thoughts from Tom and Irene

The impact this plan has on our son is significant. Much thought went into this. People can say, "Why don't you just will him a third of your farm?" But right away that starts dividing the farm up, and that's against our goals. If James would purchase even at a reduced price, he would end up with a burden that's far higher than the average rent. The purchase and the interest are real burdens he would carry as long as he would have that contract. If James is a good tenant with Practical Farmers of Iowa, he's not going to lose his tenancy. He has an operating base and that is a very sound financial situation for him to be in if he wishes to expand his operation. We think the impact on him is probably more psychological because he won't be a farmland owner. But in practical terms, he is probably better off. It does solve his generational transfer problem. He is a Frantzen, it is the Frantzen farm. Hopefully he will be here for many years and hopefully he will have descendants to carry that on. This plan is not without thought for him, but this plan also looks into the reality of the difficulties we face when property valuations have gone to the insane levels they are at today.

—Tom and Irene Frantzen

More of a Calling: Tom and Ruth Neuberger Have Made Long and Thriving Lives by Direct-Marketing Meat

by Teresa Opheim

The Goosemobile. If you're from eastern South Dakota, you may well have seen it at the Sioux Falls farmers market or tootling down Interstates 29 and 90. Its unusual name is a conversation starter for its farmer owners, Tom and Ruth Neuberger, of Canistota.

"We have bookmobiles. So why not a goosemobile?" Tom Neuberger says.



The Neuberger's products include chicken, Cornish hens, duck, geese, turkey, beef, lamb, pork and dog food. Ruth raises all kinds of vegetables for sale and sells jams and jellies, pickles and other canned vegetables made in their certified kitchen. She even makes and sells exquisite down comforters and pillows out of their goose feathers.

The Neuberger's sell at farmers markets and drop-off sites in Sioux Falls, Brookings, Madison, Vermillion and Yankton. They also sell through Dakota Rural Action's online ordering system (similar to the Iowa Food Cooperative that Practical Farmers started).

Tom was born on the farm, but the Neuberger's didn't always farm. Ruth was originally from "west river." (In South Dakota, people identify themselves as from west of the Missouri River – cattle ranches with poorer soils – and east of the river, which has farms with better soils and row crops.) After they married, they lived in Iowa, Michigan and other places while Tom coached and taught and Ruth raised their young son.

"Then we came home one Christmas and my folks said they were going to retire, and we were offered a chance to farm," Tom says. The Neuberger's headed back to South Dakota in 1972 with their then 13-year-old son. Tom got a part-time job teaching at Freeman Junior College while they started working the 160-acre farm.

By 1980, they had a full-scale operation, including pigs, cattle and sheep sold into commodity markets. "In 1976 and '77 we were getting a dollar a pound for cattle," Tom says. "Then it went down to 26 cents a pound. We'd borrowed money and were paying more in interest than we would make, so we started selling the livestock to bring down our debt. All the farmers were having trouble then."

Something had to change, and that's when the Neuberger's decided to sell direct.



They bought trucks from the South Dakota Goose Association, which is now defunct, and began using them in 1983 as their newly named "Goosemobile."

They have never raised row crops. Their farmland is certified organic, and their sheep and cattle are 100 percent grass-fed. They buy grain for the poultry and hogs from friends. "We feed a lot of oats, because there are no genetically modified

oats. Oats have more protein and fewer carbs than corn and beans anyway," Tom says. "We don't have a slaughter facility nearby that does organic, so our beef and lamb aren't certified organic, but we can sell everything we raise anyway." They process all of their poultry on the farm.

"South Dakotans always had a Christmas goose, so that was a good market for us around the holidays," Tom says. They used to sell a lot of geese – about 500 a year; now the bird is less in demand, and they sell about 50 a year. Ruth thinks the demand might increase again, though, as the word is getting out about the health benefits of goose and duck fat.

The Neuberger's are members of all the Midwest sustainable agriculture groups. Tom likes Practical Farmers because "it has the most extensive information in its newsletter." Tom is frequently called upon to speak about their operation, most recently at a Dakota Rural Action Farm Beginnings course. He's also garnered several awards, including one from the South Dakota Farmers Union and the 2005 South Dakota State University distinguished alumnus award.

He jokes that his alma mater gave him the award for being able to "make a good living on 160 acres of land."

Both the Neuberger's are in their 80s and thinking about the future of the farm and business, but have no transition plan yet. "I don't pull punches with beginning farmers," Tom says. "From April to November, it's daylight to dark. This is more of a calling than anything else."



1). A highway sign directs people to Goosemobile Pastured Meats; 2). Geese free-ranging at the Neuberger's farm; 3). An old photo of Ruth manning the Goosemobile.

Celebrating with a Gift Annuity

At the end of 2012, Practical Farmers of Iowa received a letter from Tom Neuberger. "We would like to invest in a gift annuity with PFI," Tom wrote. "Today is our 60th anniversary, and I know of no better way to celebrate than to invest in a worthy organization."

Their gift annuity with PFI is the 12th annuity they have opened – all with organizations that advance their faith, their interest in education and their commitment to sustainable agriculture. Says Ruth: "This is a wonderful way to distribute our assets. These organizations have been a big part of our lives." Tom adds: "We like supporting these organizations. Plus, where else can you get 6 percent interest right now?"

What is a gift annuity?

A gift annuity is an agreement between an individual and a charitable organization or institution. The donor transfers assets and receives fixed payments for the rest of his or her lifetime and/or the lifetime of another person.

Are there tax benefits?

Yes. There can be a combination of income, capital gains and estate tax savings.

What determines the size of each payment?

A number of factors, including the amount you place in the gift annuity and your age at the time the annuity is created.

Why does my age affect the rate of payment I receive?

Part of the amount you transfer is returned to you over your life expectancy, which changes with age. Generally, the older you are when your gift annuity begins, the higher your rate of payment.

Does that mean my payments change from year to year?

No, your rate of payment on a particular gift annuity agreement is set when your annuity begins. But if you give for additional gift annuities – as many people do – the rate will generally be higher for annuities in subsequent years.

What if I outlive my life expectancy?

The gift annuity agreement requires that payments will be made for as long as a recipient lives.

Are the payments affected by interest rates or economic fluctuations?

No. Payments for a particular annuity are never lowered or raised, regardless of changes in interest rates or the national economy. All net assets of the charitable organization stand behind your agreement.

Exactly how can I benefit another person through a gift annuity?

You can designate a loved one to receive the payments with you, instead of you or

only following your death. This can result in a double gift – one to the charitable entity and another to a relative or special friend.

Can I give stocks, bonds or other securities rather than cash to fund a gift annuity?

Yes. If you give a low-yielding asset to fund a gift annuity, you may also be able to increase your income as a gift annuity may pay more and be taxed more favorably than other income. There can be additional tax benefits if the securities have increased in value, because you avoid the tax on a portion of the capital gain in the property.

How can I begin a gift annuity?

A gift annuity can be created with minimal effort. Contact Teresa Opheim if you would like to see how a gift annuity would work for you: teresa@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661. ■

Health Insurance Unknowns Loom for Farmers as Affordable Care Act Approaches

by Amy Mayer

In the Summer 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 – written by Harvest Public Media’s Amy Mayer and reprinted in abridged form here with permission – is the fourth in that series. It focuses on the Affordable Care Act and includes information from a report Practical Farmers commissioned from rural health care expert Jon Bailey at the Center for Rural Affairs.

As the Affordable Care Act is implemented beginning in 2014, a greater percent of people in rural communities will feel its reach because so many rely on individual policies; about 36 percent of farmers and ranchers buy health insurance as individuals, while only 5 percent of all Americans get it that way.

David Lyons, CEO of CoOpportunity Health – a new co-op health insurance carrier that plans to offer individual policies in Iowa and Nebraska – says health insurance co-ops may especially appeal to rural residents because the co-op model is familiar.

“Member-run, member-driven non-profit opportunities are how a lot of the industries in rural America have been built,” Lyons said.

Lyons cites rural electric co-ops and grain co-ops as examples. He said CoOpportunity Health wants farmer-members so it can leverage their risk-management expertise.

“We represent a model that they’re very comfortable with in an industry that they’re pretty uncomfortable with,” Lyons said.

Lyons said CoOpportunity’s members will figure out themselves how to reduce healthcare costs – perhaps by focusing on prevention – and then members and doctors will all share in the savings.

The Affordable Care Act also has provisions to help new players – like CoOpportunity – compete against the biggest insurers. In Iowa, that’s Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Headquartered in Des Moines, Wellmark covers most individuals in Iowa – including the Farm Bureau member policies. Wellmark’s director of actuarial services Pat Ryan said there’s no distinction between rural and urban in policies. As the new law goes into effect, though, he said more risk is shared across more people, which will impact rates.

“Any given person, depending on where they’re being rated at today, could see an increase or decrease,” Ryan said.

Right now, for example, younger men typically pay lower rates than women the same age. But at the other end of the spectrum, older women pay less than men. In the new environment, Ryan said the people currently paying less may pay a little more while those paying the most now could see reductions.

Practical Farmer Ann Franzenburg is quite familiar with rate increases; last year her family’s policy went up 12 percent and on April 1 it’s going up another 13 percent.

“And I don’t, frankly, see it getting any better,” Franzenburg said. But she already has some experience shopping around – her middle child is a college student and now gets insurance through his school. It costs about the same, Franzenburg said, but the coverage is more robust.

Lyons said the creation of health care exchanges, also a mandate of the new law, will mean customers like Franzenburg can go to one place and see all of the options in the marketplace.

Ann Franzenburg, who operates Pheasant Run Farm with her husband, Eric.



Lyons predicts farmers will benefit from this system, both because some will qualify for subsidies to help pay for policies purchased through the exchange and because they’re not afraid to comparison shop.

“If I can go to the exchange, and I make less than \$44,000 per year, roughly, as an individual or \$92,000 as a family of four, and I can get the policy I want that manages the risk the way I want it, and significantly reduce the out of pocket cost for my family, I’m going to do it,” Lyons said.

Jon Bailey, of the Center for Rural Affairs, said the critical piece for rural communities is access—to insurance, to providers and in the coming year even to the exchanges, which are expected to be Internet-based. But whatever the challenges, he said farmers and ranchers are committed to having health coverage.

“They see health insurance in a big way as bankruptcy insurance,” Bailey said. “So that an illness or an injury doesn’t bankrupt the whole operation.” ■

Harvest Public Media, a reporting collaboration of public media stations throughout the Midwest, covers issues related to food and food production. For more information, go to harvestpublicmedia.org. Amy Mayer is Harvest’s reporter at Iowa Public Radio in Ames.

Table 1: . Health insurance by the numbers. (Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons, Neb.)

	Iowa Farmers	General U.S. Population
Insured	93%	84%
Purchased Individual Policies	36%	5%

Read the complete article at http://bit.ly/Affordable_Care_Act_Story

Savings Incentive Program Graduates Receive Business Plan Feedback

by Marc Strobbe

Practical Farmers of Iowa created the Savings Incentive Program (SIP) to increase the success of beginning farmers. The first group in the two-year program completed its work January 2013. Along the way participants each met with a mentor, attended Practical Farmers events, checked in with staff, saved money for their farm and wrote a business plan. Upon completing the program, Practical Farmers provided a savings match to the money they saved to put toward a farm asset.

Near the end of the program, once business plans were submitted they were sent to a panel of expert reviewers, including lenders, extension professionals, financial experts and business plan consultants. These reviewers generously donated time to provide feedback to the beginners on the strengths of their plans as well as opportunities for improvement.

Beginning dairyman Joel Winnes, near Waukon, said the feedback was “very interesting to see. It surprised me how much feedback varied between the reviewers.” Jason Jones, a beginning vegetable grower from Des Moines, said that getting “as many reviews and as often as possible is important,” adding that “with [the reviews] I know much more about what I need to do and what is realistic in the business plan.”

Overall, the nine plans drew positive reviews with constructive feedback. Reviewers at

Jason Jones asks a question at Chris Blanchard's 2012 field day.



Lincoln Savings Bank said that, as a group, the plans surpassed what they typically receive from clients, and that the plans were well-done, detailed and extensive.

Broad themes for improvement emerged from the Savings Incentive Program business plans:

Factor in living expenses: Living expenses were commonly omitted or not accounted for sufficiently. Chris Dix from Lincoln Savings Bank said this is typical. “This is a problem as they will use the funds to live on and then come up short on revenues needed to repay loans and other current liabilities.”

Ensure thorough and integrative financial statements: Chris liked the comprehensive financial statement requirements of the Savings Incentive Program, which include enterprise budgets, annual cash flow, balance sheet and projected income. Some could have been more thoroughly completed, however, and Chris highlighted the importance of “clean” financial statements. “It is important to have complete and viable financial statements that show a clear picture of the operation and a realistic plan for the future.”

Explain how all information and research applies to the farm business: Ashley

Coake, another reviewer at Lincoln Savings Bank, said it was great that supporting research had been done for the plans – but advised that use of the external information needs to be more carefully balanced. “Make it clear you did your homework,” she said, “but the focus needs to be your interpretation of the information.” She explained that the business plan must clarify why that information applies to you and how your business will beneficially use it.

Regularly review and update the business plan: Ashley pointed out: “Making the business plan a living, working document



Joel Winnes with his cows

is essential. I recommend reviewing the business plan at least monthly. This provides an opportunity to stay on track with business goals and sustain efforts to achieve and measure them. Over time this enables you to track what works and what does not in the business.” She added that: “You don’t always reach your goals. Reviewing and updating the plan regularly lets you determine what changes really need to be made in the plan and for the business.”

All division leaders at Lincoln Savings Bank create business plans each year for their working group. Ashley does this and reviews all her previous plans annually. She points out that always knowing what you are accomplishing, and why, is “awesome, and so easy to do!” ■

Practical Farmers is grateful to the following business plan reviewers who donated their time and expertise:

- **Ashley Coake** – Lincoln Savings Bank Assistant Vice President / Office Manager / Personal Banker II
- **Chris Dix** – Lincoln Savings Bank Ag and Commercial Lender
- **ISU Extension Value-Added Agriculture Program**
 - › Ray Hansen
 - › Madeline Schultz
 - › Christa Hartsook
 - › Bob Mortensen
 - › Barry McCroskey
 - › Margaret Smith
 - › Lani McKinney
 - › Dan Burden
 - › Linda Naeve
 - › Connie Hardy
- **Chris Blanchard** – Flying Rutabaga Works
- **Andy Hunziker** – USDA-FSA Feasibility Specialist
- **Curt Lambertsen** – Retired American Airlines executive
- **Penny Brown-Huber** – Grow Your Small Market Farm
- **Kelvin Leibold** – ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist
- **Ann Johanns** – ISU Extension and Economics Specialist
- **Kristen Schulte** – ISU Farm and Ag Business Management Specialist

PFI Members Help Women Farmers in Uganda

by Tamsyn Jones

Since May 2011, several PFI members have volunteered their time and expertise helping women farmers in Uganda as part of a rural development project led by ISU Extension's Value-Added Agriculture program, in partnership with the Ugandan non-profit Volunteer Efforts for Developing Concerns (VEDCO) and ISU's Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL). The two-year project – called "Bridging the Gap: Increasing Competitiveness of Ugandan Women Farmers in the Marketplace" – linked Iowa farmers with 10 groups of women farmers, 180 women total, in the Kamuli District in southeastern Uganda.

PFI members worked with the women on business development skills, group marketing, improving maize quality, and soybean production and marketing. The project, now nearing its end, was co-led by PFI members Margaret Smith and Linda Naeve, both value-added ag specialists with ISU Extension. The last group of PFI volunteers – which included Margaret, Jenny Thomas, Connie Tjelmeland and Paul Mugge – traveled to Uganda in January 2013. Here are some of their thoughts and reflections.



Margaret Smith

► To me, the biggest difference between Uganda and Iowa agriculture is the lack of infrastructure to support ag and ag development: roads, a feed and processing industry,

transport infrastructure, research and extension. The infrastructure we have in the U.S., which we don't often think about, is profound. There, a farmer goes to sell grain to a buyer and there's no standard for quality.

Another thing that struck me as a profound difference: Everything they grow in Uganda they eat (except coffee; they don't drink coffee, they export it). Most of our farmers don't eat any corn or soybeans. We have Iowa farmers that don't have a garden and don't eat what they grow on their farm.

Connie Tjelmeland

For nearly 20 years, Connie has helped run TJ Family Farm with her husband Mark, selling brown eggs from a flock of 750 free-range chickens reared on reconstructed prairie.

► I talked to the women about soil fertility. The women were very clear that their soil fertility has been declining, in their lifetimes, since they remember their mothers farming. They take that very seriously.

They do a number of very good things: They inter-crop a lot, do a lot of crop rotation and a certain amount of mulching and composting. But they could only manage to get manure, compost or mulch around the crops close to their house. They wouldn't tend to take it out to where corn might be planted, because they didn't have the means to transport it. That's something we ran into with most of the women.



Connie Tjelmeland explains about soil quality and structure.

Jenny Thomas

Jenny lives with her husband in Humboldt, Wright County, on a commercial corn and soybean farm they've operated for 30 years.



Jenny Thomas wears a version of the 'gomesi' dress worn by Ugandan women since the early 1900s.

► I focused on the success rate of women keeping written records. To my knowledge, there were no paper records prior to our involvement. Some women may have kept records on a wall in their homes. We started out asking the participants to track soybeans. On our last

trip, about 80 percent of the women were tracking multiple crops.

A long-term obstacle to continued success of records seemed to be the cost of a binder to keep the records safe from season to season, and the cost of paper and printing. We were able to supply binders, but on-going costs for record sheets (a few nickels each) will need to be justified and paid for by the women. We think increased income as a result of farm management changes will make money easier to come by.

Paul Mugge

Paul lives near Sutherland in northwest Iowa. He was the first male volunteer on the project.



Paul Mugge demonstrates how to use a simple soybean cleaner he designed.

► Right now to clean soybeans, the women just throw them in the air and blow on them to get the chaff – the stems and stuff – out. But doing this, they inhale dust and it makes them sick. We found a 5-gallon pail in the market and put a small screen in the bottom that lets the dust through. The basket on top lets soybeans through, but not the chaff. It was far from perfect, but it helped – and the groups we asked would have preferred something really simple and cheap like that to a big, heavy, expensive cleaner that admittedly does a better job but is harder to move around.

One of the things I was really struck with about these women: They are functionally illiterate, but they were so smart. They knew how to farm, how to raise their 20 different crops, how to take care of their soil. I was really impressed. ■

Read more about the project and the most recent volunteer experience at the trip's blog site: http://bit.ly/UgandaTripBlog_2013

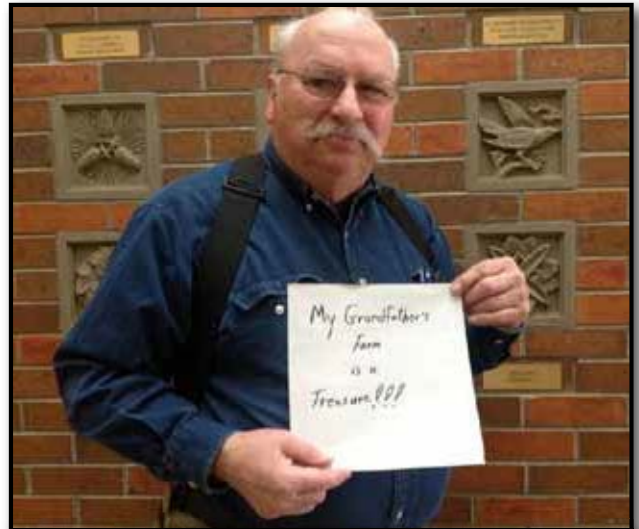
Outreach Leaders Tell Their Story to Make a Difference

by Drake Larsen

Practical Farmers completed the second installment of communications training for our Outreach Leadership Program, which aims to help farmers recruit others to PFI and more effectively engage in the debate about the future of farming. Twenty Practical Farmers now hold the "Outreach Leader" designation. With support from PFI staff, they are working to be a voice for a more diverse and sustainable agriculture through newspaper editorials and opinion pieces; interviews on radio newscasts and talk shows; social media; and oral presentations.

- Real farm-fresh food tastes different
- Farming that respects nature and people

The group then practiced delivering a three-minute advocacy message in small groups. Each speaker chose a key message, linked to the mission and vision of Practical Farmers of Iowa, and carried it through the steps of effective advocacy storytelling. A small-group format provided a safe atmosphere where all could be complimented and critiqued by the communications coaches and fellow Practical Farmers.



Glen Draper displays the six-word slogan he wrote expressing why he supports sustainable agriculture and PFI.

Farmers along with PFI board members and staff prevailed over drifting snow to gather and hone their communications skills at the Iowa Arboretum (www.iowaarboretum.org) on March 11 and 12. Led by communications coach John Capecci (www.capeccom.com) and his colleague Tami Spry, a group of 28 worked on bringing clarity, confidence and impact to their advocacy efforts. Teaching from his book "Living Proof: Telling Your Story to Make a Difference," Capecci taught attendees some essential skills for tapping into one of the most powerful tools we have – our personal stories.

Participants were challenged with creating a six-word reason for being an advocate for sustainable agriculture. The variety in answers revealed a diversity of perspectives and experiences – characteristic of a Practical Farmers crowd. A few of the six-word reasons shared included:

- I want to eat wholesome food
- Iowans understanding the culture of agriculture
- Growing it organically for our future
- My grandfather's farm is a treasure

PFI's Outreach Leaders have been putting their training into practice. Since the first communications training took place in August, Outreach Leaders have:

- ▶ authored or been featured in 12 articles in local newspapers and farm press including *AgriNews*, *Iowa Farmer Today* and *Wallaces Farmer*;
- ▶ been featured in 19 radio spots, including The Big Show on 1040 WHO, The Midday Show on 540 KWMT and Iowa Public Radio;
- ▶ and presented six public presentations describing Practical Farmers of Iowa, cover crops and watershed improvement work on their farms.

Additionally, six Outreach Leaders were featured in a series of newspaper advertisements that ran across Iowa for six weeks this winter; the ads ran in 30 daily and 121 weekly newspapers

with a total readership of nearly 1.8 million Iowans.

As you can see, the Outreach Leaders have accomplished a lot already, but we hope you will be seeing even more of them in the future: We hope to secure 60 print and radio articles for 2013, and are planning 15 advertisements – with a new advertising campaign beginning soon. ■

PFI Outreach Leaders

**Nathan Anderson
Glen Draper
Melissa Dunham
Craig Fleishman
Tom Frantzen
Irene Frantzen
Ann Franzenburg
Jeremy Gustafson
John Gilbert
LaVon Griffieon**

**Sara Hanson
Rick Hartmann
Mark Peterson
Vic Madsen
Amber Anderson Mba
Gayle Olson
Daniel Rosmann
Ellen Walsh-Rosmann
Dick Sloan
Tim Smith**

How Important is it for Beginning Farmers to Own Farmland?

Compiled by Teresa Opheim

In late January of this year, PFI posted a question to Practical Farmers' general email discussion list to spur conversation on a topic of central importance to most farmers: land. The question – "How important is it to own the land you farm?" – generated a flurry of responses. Here a few of those replies.

Ridiculous Land Prices

Twyla Hein, Tipton

I used to think you needed to own your farm to be a farmer, as my parents did. But with these ridiculous land prices, reality is sort of settling in, and I'm not sure we'll be able to purchase any more land. We live on 1.5 acres of the original farm where I grew up and have toyed around with the idea of trying to buy

5-10 more acres of the farm, but land is going for \$7,000 an acre. One reason for more land around us would be to create a larger buffer away from the chemical drift that surrounds us.



Until land prices come down, if ever, it's very hard for someone to start farming. That is so sad. It's getting to the point that only large corporations or already large farms are the only ones that can buy more. I feel the true "family farm" is dwindling.

Owning Land Creates Wealth

Matt Russell, Lacona



My parents have been farming since 1970. My dad once told me that when he started farming he was proud to pay income tax because he was making money. Over time, as the farm economy

changed, he figured out he could only succeed by figuring out how not to pay taxes. About 30 out of my parents' 43 years of farming, they used the schedule F to build wealth but generate very little cash. Pat and I have been farming for eight years. We've yet to pay income tax on our 110-acre direct market farm. We have, however, built wealth. I really have come to appreciate my dad's insights into how the tax code works in his favor as a farmer.

A major problem with contract livestock production is that the farmer who puts up a building is putting his or her resources

into a highly depreciating asset. They have been told that their building is an asset they will own in 10 years, but in the end the building is worth less than they put into it. They work like dogs, make very little cash and then end up with very little additional equity. Land, on the other hand, generally appreciates. Helping new farmers develop strategies to use the Schedule F to invest in appreciating assets is really important.

Pat and I would have a very hard time justifying buying our farm at its current appraised value. We'd also have a very hard time justifying how hard we've worked if we didn't have at least some of the wealth from the appreciation of the value of our farm over those eight years. Generally speaking, farmers should probably try and buy at least some of their land – EXCEPT when land prices are in an unsustainable bubble – because they are going to need to have their land appreciate in order to experience wealth creation. A day hardly goes by that I'm not thankful we bought our farm back in 2005.

Even Land to RENT Would be Nice

John Wesselius, Sioux Center



Twice last month land in our county was sold with one phone call. One piece sold for \$18,000 per acre and a piece west of Sioux Center

sold about the same time for \$20,000 per acre. The people buying are current farmers. At these prices only the wealthy can begin farming.

Is it important to own the land, but I would be happy if I could even rent a small piece with a long-term arrangement. The owners I have spoken to are content to rent to their current tenant because life is good. The advantage to owning land – and especially paid-for land – is that no one can keep you from growing "outside the box." Owning land can help with creating a healthy ecosystem and avoiding drift.

It is important for many small farmers to own small farms. It is what our democracy is based on. . . . It develops the type of character that has made Iowa a stand-out state."

– LaVon Griffieon

It is important to own the land, but I would be happy if I could even rent a small piece with a long-term arrangement.

– John Wesselius

Be More Mobile

Jordan Scheibel, Grinnell

As a beginning vegetable grower with no family land and no money to buy land, I am not looking to purchase land in the near future. My experience has been that there are many landowners who are willing to simply let me use their land for free or for some sort of exchange, because they want to see it used and they want me to succeed. There is a general willingness to help beginning farmers.

In Joel Salatin's book *You Can Farm*, he talks about how land ownership and the desire to find the perfect place to settle down can be a financial and emotional trap for a lot of people who want to farm. He suggests that we be more mobile in our thinking; that we not be tied down by expensive, permanent infrastructure and retain the ability to move to a new farm.



His prime example is grazing on rented land and how that can be far more profitable than buying land and grazing it. In my current situation, I'm gardening about a half an acre and using existing infrastructure for my wash, pack and storage areas. I don't necessarily see this as the place I am going to settle down forever. Not trying to buy land allows me to farm in a low-debt, slow-growth way that fits with my personality and abilities. It gives me more flexibility and takes some of the pressure off of my endeavor. I could conceivably farm my whole adult life without buying land and still be able to have a profitable farm business.

Foundation of our Republic

LaVon Griffieon, Ankeny



It is important for many small farmers to own small farms. It is what our democracy is based on, and it is the underlying foundation of our republic. It

develops the type of character that has made Iowa a stand-out state. It also makes it more difficult to pack up and leave when the going gets tough.

Right now many investors are buying farmland and driving up the price of land. Hopefully, when the economy turns around, some of that will become available again to buy as the investors

move on to something else. Much of the reason older folks don't want to sell is because we have no basic laws in Iowa protecting farmland. It is sickening to see the family farm buildings destroyed (many in good shape) so another 5 acres of corn can be planted by the new owner.

Our neighbor just died and part of his will was that the entire homestead (many nice barns and a good older house which had been well maintained for at least four generations of the same family) be destroyed. This way it is ready for development and the kids didn't have to make any hard decisions – as it was Dad's wish that everything be destroyed. So they hired the neighbor to bulldoze it all. Trees even are gone....

*.....
Generally speaking, farmers should try and buy at least some of their land – except when land prices are in an unsustainable bubble – because they are going to need to have their land appreciate in order to experience wealth creation.*

– Matt Russell

Cash is King

Harn Soper, Los Altos, California

In the world of row crops, I think there are strong economic reasons not to own. Imagine if a beginning farmer rented 300 acres of ground at \$250 per acre (\$75,000 per year). Compare that to buying the same 300 acres for \$6,500 per acre (\$1.95 million). Since cash is king in any business, without locking up dollars into land ownership, I think a farmer could rent more ground with the \$1.95 million not spent



on ownership and build his or her business, achieve more efficient use of equipment and produce a higher income. If, after a number of years of rigorous saving, that beginning farmer could afford to purchase more ground, it would seem to make more sense NOT to purchase ground he already rents but to purchase additional ground.

PFI's Board Gets Two New Faces: Melissa Dunham and Kathy Eckhouse Will Serve Three-Year Terms

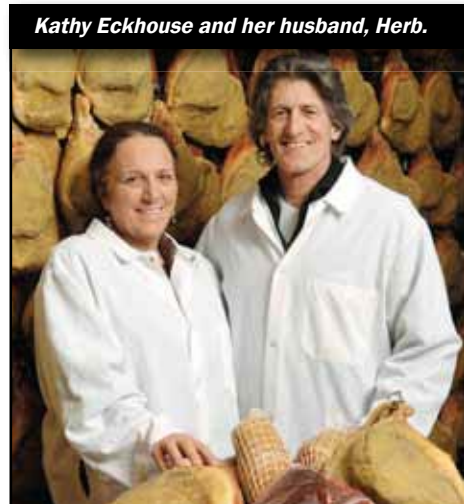


Melissa with her husband Andrew.

Melissa and her husband, Andy, operate Grinnell Heritage Farm on approximately 65 acres north of Grinnell raising certified organic vegetables, flowers and herbs; grass-fed beef; and a few certified organic broiler chickens. In addition to selling more than 40 varieties of produce at the Cedar Rapids

Downtown Market and Iowa City Saturday Market, as well as to local restaurants, the centerpiece of the Dunhams' operation is a 250-share community-supported agriculture (CSA) subscription service that serves Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Grinnell, Des Moines and Ames.

Originally from the Twin Cities, Melissa has a degree in accounting from St. Catherine University and worked for an international company in the Twin Cities before meeting Andrew and moving to Iowa in 2007 to become a farmer and help build Grinnell Heritage Farm. Melissa and Andrew have three children: Collin (15), Emma (4), and Leonora (1). When not wrangling children or managing the business Melissa enjoys spending time with friends and family. In January, she started her first year of a three-year term on the PFI Board, filling an at-large farmer position. ■



Kathy Eckhouse and her husband, Herb.

Based in Norwalk, Kathy and her husband, Herb, founded La Quercia, which produces dry-cured meats, in 2000. She is the company's CCO (Chief Culinary Officer) and works in all aspects of the business – visiting the farmers and their pigs; selecting and buying the pork; salting, trimming and handling the meat; and doing sales and office work. Kathy is the proud mother of three young people. She worked as a farm and ranch hand in Idaho and then as a researcher in agricultural economics at the University of California at Berkeley before making home-making and mothering her full-time occupation. This is Kathy's first term on the PFI Board; she is filling a friend-of-farmer position. ■

Story City Locker Will Process Sheep, Goats, Poultry and More, with Local Focus

Are you an Iowa farmer raising poultry, sheep, goats or cattle who's been challenged by the dwindling number of state-inspected meat lockers? Put the Story City Locker on your radar. This new meat locker – operated by PFI members Ty and Bobbie Gustafson – will offer custom meat processing of beef, pork, lamb, goat and poultry. The locker will also process deer and have a butcher retail shop – The Cleaver – on-site. Meats sold through the shop will come from animals that have never been given antibiotics or growth hormones, and any grain used to feed them must have been GMO-free and never sprayed with pesticides.

The Gustafsons aim to have their meat be entirely local and traceable, sourced from small farms within a 150-mile radius of Story City. Writing on their website, the Gustafsons say: "Story City Locker is being established to support sustainable, local food supply concepts and to meet the needs of our customers



Bobbie Gustafson



Ty Gustafson

by providing quality meat products in a safe environment." The Gustafsons also emphasize that Story City Locker will "practice ethical animal take-down and sustainable butchery," and will strive to operate as sustainably as possible.

Starting this summer, Story City Locker will begin accepting custom processing appointments. Check the website – www.storycitylocker.com – for grand opening dates, or follow developments in the Gustafsons' business on Twitter and Facebook (links available from the Story City Locker website). ■

Watch for the 2013 Field Day Guide

The growing season is upon us, and as farmers are busy rejuvenating their fields, PFI staff have been busy planning another stellar line-up of field days. This year's Field Day Guide (*look for it in your mailboxes about the second week of May*) will showcase more than 35 events across the state – with topics ranging from crop pollinators, ridge-tilling vegetables and multi-species grazing infrastructure to growing berries in greenhouses, converting crop ground to grass and a beer tasting with locally grown hops.

“We joined Practical Farmers of Iowa in 1986.

Since then, our membership has contributed so much to the profitability and sustainability of our farm.

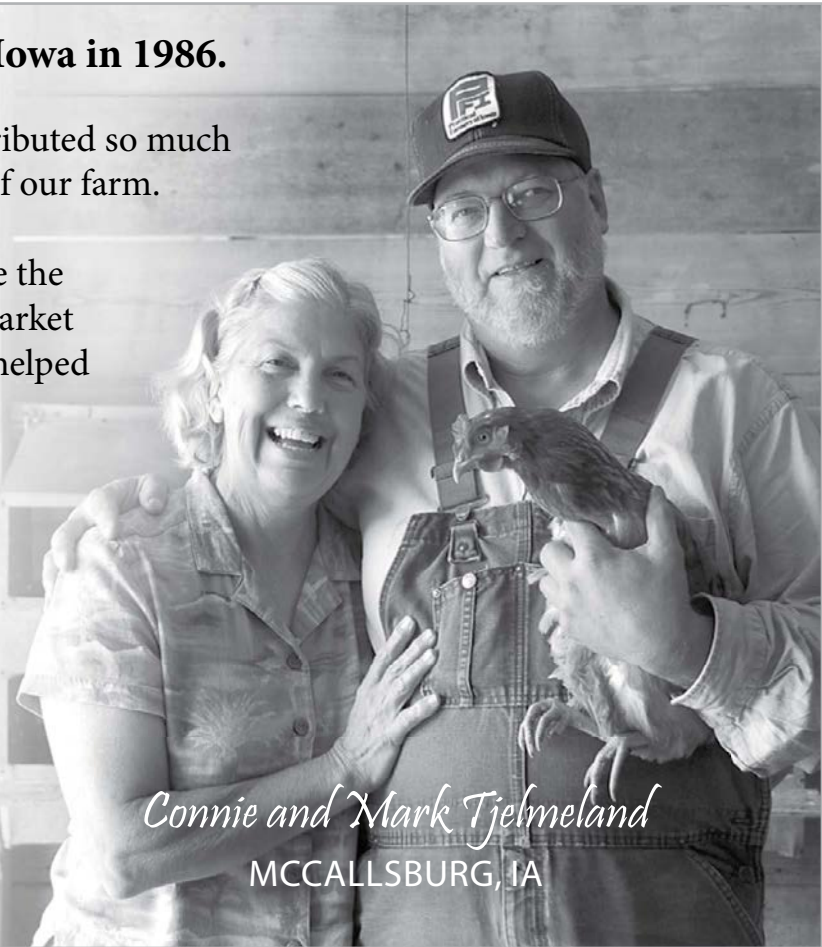
Eighteen years ago, PFI helped us have the courage to start a free-range, direct-market egg operation. And just last year, PFI helped us decide to plant cover crops.

No matter your age, lifetime membership is a great value.”

Become a lifetime member today!

For more information, contact Patrick Burke at (515) 232-5661 or patrick@practicalfarmers.org.

PRACTICALfarmers
of Iowa
working together, always learning



Connie and Mark Tjelmeland
MCCALLSBURG, IA

Future PFI Conference Location?

PFI members, your input is requested!

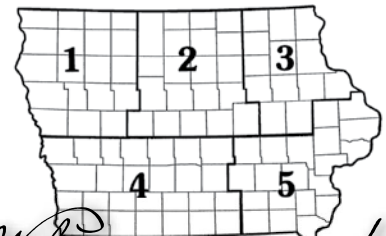
Practical Farmers of Iowa is currently looking for conference space for the 2015 annual conference. (The 2014 conference will be in Ames). For our size group, there are few choices in Central Iowa. One option is the Prairie Meadows Conference Center. Several PFI Board members have been there and report that the conference center is quite separate from the casino.

Would you decline to attend the conference because you are opposed to gambling? If so, please let us know. contact Patrick Burke at (515) 232-5661 or patrick@practicalfarmers.org. ■

Cover Crops Email List Now Available

Due to the growing interest in cover crops in the Midwest, Practical Farmers of Iowa has launched a new email discussion list called PFIcoverCrops. All PFI members are welcome to join the list to discuss tools, techniques, seed mixes, planting and termination dates, and other information about working with cover crops. The new list is one of six email discussion lists available exclusively to PFI members in order to facilitate farmer-to-farmer learning. The others are: General, Grazing, Horticulture, Policy and Poultry.

How to join: Interested in joining the new cover crops discussion list (or any of the others)? It's quick and easy: Send an email to Patrick Burke at patrick@practicalfarmers.org, or call him at (515) 232-5661. ■



Welcome, new members

District 1—Northwest

- Bill Brenny, Sac City
- Donna Buell, Spirit Lake
- Calvin Christensen, Emmetsburg
- Mark and Becki Guritz, Spirit Lake
- Bill Langel, Kingsley

- Jathan Chicoine, Ames
- Rebecca Clay, Le Mars
- Andy Krieger, Jefferson
- Darren Fehr, Mallard
- Steven Fisher, Pilot Mound
- Bill Frederick, Jefferson
- Jeb Gent, Ames
- David and Nan Heer, Ames

District 2—North Central

- David Arnold, Marshalltown
- David Ausberger, Jefferson
- Wendell Bahr, Alden
- Debra Boekholder, Ames
- Laura Lynn Boettger, Cambridge
- Rob Brown, Ames

- Brian Henderson, Ellsworth
- Paul Hertz, Ames
- Jon Hunstock, Ames
- Eve Iversen, Story City
- Nicole Jonas, Boone
- Adam and Jessica Krupicka, Ames
- Al Lingren, Ogden

(Continued on pg. 26)



◀ (Continued from pg. 25)

- Robert Lynch, Gilmore City
- Yvonne Mallory, Toledo
- Jeff and Carol Meyer, Toledo
- Mark Naberhaus, Scranton
- Bob Pearson, Wesley
- Joan Peterson, Ames
- Sharon Rasmussen, Ames
- Marvin Rasmussen, Jefferson
- Clarion Reece, Ledyard
- Jenny Vazquez, Tama
- Robert and Megan Secor, Fort Dodge
- Ronald VanDenBroeke, Kelley

District 3–Northeast

- Alex Billings, Pella
- John Delaney, Harpers Ferry
- Marvin and Joia Eales, Mount Vernon
- Emma Johnson, Central City
- Mike Muench, Dubuque
- Bill Rieckhoff, Cedar Rapids
- Lindsay Schmidt, Waverly
- Luther Snow, Decorah
- Phil and Sharon Specht, McGregor
- Kate Timmerman, Cedar Rapids
- Thad and Rachel Trier, Cedar Rapids
- Kay Vifian, Garnavillo

District 4–Southwest

- Terry Barnes, Lamoni
- Matthew Butler, Des Moines
- Kelly Clime, Urbandale
- Lena Corson, Des Moines
- Zachary Couture, Clive
- Amanda Dorff, Urbandale
- Joe Driscoll, Honey Creek
- Jeffrey Goetz, Des Moines
- David Hance, Altoona
- Andrew Hansen, Panora
- Matt Hauge, Grimes
- Susan Heathcote, Des Moines
- Jason Hirsch, Dexter
- Charles Ikenberry, Mingo
- Chris Jahnke, Atlantic
- Richard and Tracy Johnston, Exira
- Doug Lundgren, Stanton
- Ray Maylor, Ankeny
- Cody Neill, Mondamin
- Allen and Glenna Plath, Pisgah
- Matt Roe, Corydon
- Susan Ruden, Dexter
- Darvan Saner, Newton
- Virgil Sanny, Bedford
- Ashley Shafer, Des Moines
- Mikel Stockwell, Bedford
- Tony Thompson, Elkhart
- Ward and Sandi Van Dyke, Reasnor

- Rory and Lynette Van Wyk, Ankeny
- Aaron White, Carlisle
- Tom Wilson, Des Moines

District 5–Southeast

- Alitza Blough, Fairfield
- Scott and Cathy Brown, Columbus Junction
- Kenny Duke, Keosauqua
- Richard Eis, Bonaparte
- William Furlong, Iowa City
- Kathleen Goff, Davenport
- Jess Jackson, Fairfield
- Janice Johnston-Jones, Mount Pleasant
- David and Denise Kaisand, Kellogg
- Terry LeDoux, Tipton
- Jonathan Mast, Bloomfield
- Elyssa McFarland, Columbus Junction
- Emily Monroe, Iowa City
- Kathryn Peterson, Iowa City
- Teresa Reed, Tipton
- Harold and Dee Sandquist, Fairfield
- Rizo Saverio, Fairfield
- Hutha Sayre, Iowa City
- Steve Schomberg, Iowa City
- Shirley Waite, Blakesburg
- Seth Wenger, Iowa City
- Bob and Carole Winkleblack, Riverside

District 6–Out of State

- Tim Boatman, Minneapolis, MN
- David Carbaugh, Omaha, NE
- Jen Colby, Salt Lake City, UT
- Mary Damm, Bloomington, IN
- Bret Ebel, Lafayette, CO
- Gail Fisher, Maiden Rock, WI
- Richard Groux, Broad Run, VA
- Ib Hagsten, Gladstone, MO
- Diane Halverson, Northfield, MN
- Healthy Acres, LLC, Branson, MO
- Jeremy Hinderman, Dickeyville, WI
- Brent Jones, Salem, OR
- Joni Kuhns, Lancaster, MO
- Timothy LaSalle, Benson, NC
- Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, St Paul, MN
- Ben Olson, Minneapolis, MN
- Roger and Tina Shaner, Stronghurst, IL
- Ryan Wesley, Reston, VA
- Donald Whittaker, Jersey City, NJ
- Stephen Wright, Madison, MO
- Tom and Colleen Yucus, Ohio, IL

UPCOMING EVENTS – MAY | JUNE | JULY

May 5 – Intro. to Orchard Integrated Pest Management | Duluth, MN | University of Minnesota Duluth

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. – Cost: \$45 per day (or \$120 for the whole series). Learn the seasonal phenology of your trees and what to expect as your trees begin to flower in the spring. You will get an introduction to IPM and organic management of fruit trees, and learn the early warning signs for fire blight and apple scab and what you can do to prevent or stop an outbreak. This is the first of a three-day series on Fruit Tree Management & Pest Control (other dates are July 7 and Sept. 8). Each day consists of two sessions. For more details, visit www.d.umn.edu/cscd/sap/main/index.php

May 13 – Growing Growers Workshop: Post-Harvest Handling and Food Safety | Lawrence, KS | 4-7 p.m.

This event is part of a series of workshops, all of which are open to the public and geared to anyone interested in growing. Workshops cover a range of "Market Farming 101" topics, plus a few more advanced topics. For more information, or to register, email smithjen@ksu.edu

May 17-18 – Farm-Scale Composting | East Troy, WI | Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Day 1: 5-9 p.m.; Day 2: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. – Cost: \$80
This workshop will offer a theoretical and practical basis for understanding the importance of composting in agriculture. Explore how one can start to counteract the loss of soil fertility, and gain insights into the biological fragility of our farms. Day 1: Learn about hot-controlled fermentation composting. Day 2: Take part in a full day at the institute's pilot project and learn about mixing organic resources, establishing proper C/N ratios, setting windrows, temperature, and overall management of a thriving compost site. For more, visit: www.michaelfieldsaginst.org/whole-farm-workshop-schedule/

May 19 – Intro to Biodynamics | Caledonia, IL | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. | \$90

Join Angelic Organics for an introduction to the comprehensive ecological methods behind the Biodynamic farming movement inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The day will include tours, discussion and hands-on learning activities. Facilitated by Janet Gamble of Turtle Creek Gardens. Sandwiches provided. Learn more: www.learngrowconnect.org/node/4474

May 22 – Cover Crop Field Day: Dan Specht Farm | 12794 Pleasant Ridge Rd. | Monona, IA | 1-3:30 p.m.

This free field day will feature discussions and presentations, including area-specific topics such as: no-tillage/strip-tillage systems, rotational grazing or grazing cover crops for livestock feed, soil and nutrient management benefits of cover crops and spring management for cover crops. For more, contact: Sarah Carlson at (515) 232-5661 or sarah@practicalfarmers.org, or Aaron Andrews at (515) 294-4922 or andrews1@iastate.edu

June 4 – Dream to Farm: Micro-Farming Program | Council Bluffs, IA | Iowa Western Community College | \$39 for 14 week-course

Do you aspire to be a local food producer? This 14-week class will help you create a comprehensive business plan and will cover the basics of farming

techniques, soils, animal husbandry, irrigation and integrated pest and disease management. Classroom work will be supplemented with hands-on labs, field trips and relationship-building with mentors. For more details, call (712) 325-3404

June 10 – Growing Growers Workshop: Drip Irrigation and Small-Farm Equipment | Olathe, KS | 4-7 p.m.

For more information or to register, email crivard@ksu.edu

June 22-24 – Goat School | Littlefork, MN | North Country Goat Farm

Day 1: 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.; Day 2: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Day 3 (optional soap and cheese-making class): starts at 9:30 a.m. Cost: 200 per person, \$100 for additional family member, \$75 for teenagers 13+

Ken and Janice Spaulding, who developed the famous Goat School in Maine, will explain the best way to raise goats, how to market them, and the variety of goat products you can make. This all-encompassing course will offer novices a vast amount of information about goats, and will also benefit experienced goat farmers.

Some topics include: choosing your new goat, management, breeding, kidding, medical problems, nutrition, hoof trimming, milking, tattooing, necessary paperwork, recordkeeping and a segment on emergencies! Learn about raising goats for meat, fiber, dairy and more. The optional Monday will show how to make a variety of cheeses including mozzarella, chevre, and "squeaky cheese". The afternoon soap making demonstration will show how to make all kinds of soap including fragrances, plain, swirls, solid colors and molds. For more, contact Elizabeth Pendergast at (218) 278-8888, mependergast@yahoo.com, or visit www.northcountryfarm.net

July 13 – Growing Growers Workshop: Weed, Pest & Disease Management | Kansas City, KS

9 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information or to register, email nixonk@lincolnu.edu.

July 19-21 – Seed Savers Exchange Conference & Campout | Decorah, IA | 1-5 p.m. | \$50

Cost: \$100 (full-conference, non-member; other conference rates available).

Join the Seed Savers Exchange community at the 33rd Annual Conference and Campout. This event brings together experts and amateurs to share seed-saving knowledge and stories. Speakers include Dr. Gary Paul Nabhan, Dr. Jack Kloppenburg, Dr. Jeremy Cherfas, and Rosalind Creasy. A range of workshops will be available in the "Seed Saving 101," "Heritage Farm" and "Community Seed Projects" categories. Learn more at: www.seedsavers.org/Education/2013-Conference/

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

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This annual membership is a:

- New membership
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I am joining at the level of:

- Student—\$20
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- Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—\$100
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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
- \$_____

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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

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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.

