

working together, always learning

the Practical Farmer

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100
100 DAYS, 100 BEGINNERS
SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION
OF PRACTICAL FARMERS



On the cover



Beginning farmer Kevin Dietzel rides his tractor with daughter Scarlett (left) and son Sterling. Kevin is enrolled in PFI's Savings Incentive Program.

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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 to help all types of farming operations become profitable while caring for the land that sustains them. Provided as a member benefit to PFI supporters, *the Practical Farmer* also updates members on PFI programming and news.

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(Back issues are available upon request.)



LEOPOLD CENTER



These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

Rich, my folks and I just went to see a production of "The Sound of Music" in Mason City. Hearing the old familiar lyrics "raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens" left me musing about some of my own favorite things, such as:

- Hundreds showing up for cover crop and other field days this summer
- A terrific staff that is responsive to members' needs
- 305 PFI members willing to serve as leaders in this organization in 2012 (even more for 2013!)
- An inspiring vision for Practical Farmers that I see implemented already on many farms. No one implemented that vision better than long-time member Dan Specht. Please see page 29 for more on Dan's legacy.

Do you want to help govern Practical Farmers in 2013 and beyond? If so, please send me a note by Aug. 15 indicating your interest, and I will pass it on to our

Dogs of the Issue



Lexi (left) and Jazzie, farm dogs owned by Susan Jutz, do some shameless begging at a ZJ Farms field day.

Nominating Committee, which will be making recommendations to the board for all of our committees.

If you have skills or interest in any of the following areas, please throw your hat in the ring! As a committee member, you could:

- Work on conservation funding, beginning farmer programming, and other policy matters – (Policy Committee)
- Help us improve Practical Farmers' on-farm research and demonstration – (Cooperators' Program Committee)
- Help Practical Farmers track the new health care changes coming – (Health Care Task Force)
- Choose enrollees and set guidance for our savings match program for beginning farmers – (Savings Incentive Program Committee)
- Set guidance for a program that helps farms pay for labor and helps beginning farmers get experience – (Labor4Learning Committee)
- Oversee Practical Farmers' financial management – (Finance Committee)
- Help us develop our marching orders for the next three years – (Strategic Directions Task Force)
- Guide us as we consider a service to help farmers and landowners add cover crops – (Practical Ag Services Committee)
- Make recommendations on who should serve on PFI committees and the PFI board of directors – (Nominating Committee).

In addition, if you are interested in serving on the board of directors, we periodically have openings, so let me or PFI Board President Dan Wilson know your interest.

We just finished our yearly update on progress to our Strategic Plan; look for that update on the website. Many organizations develop strategic plans, but often leave them collecting dust on a shelf. Not this



My favorite things: The Opheim Family

one! Our plan goes with me in my planner, and is used to decide whether we take on work or not.

In that Strategic Plan (you can read it at practicalfarmers.org/assets/files/PFI_Strategic_Plan_2011-2014.pdf), we wrote that we will provide holistic management training, and we are following up on that commitment. I've been struck through the years at how important this framework is to a group of PFI families, including the Tom and Irene Frantzen family and the Dan and Lorna Wilson family. On page 8 of this issue, you'll find an introduction to holistic management. Please read and join us for a short course on Holistic Management at the Jan. 23-25, 2014 annual conference.

Working for you,

Lisa Opheim

Post-Harvest Handling of Small Grains

by Tomoko Ogawa

Whether you are growing small grains for seeds, feed or food, pay close attention to the handling of grains during and after harvest. After all, you've put much labor into growing them. As barley, triticale, oats, winter wheat and rye start to reach their maturity, here are some tips for handling small grains post-harvest to maintain their quality after they leave the fields.

Timing of Harvest

Determining the right timing of harvest is most critical. Especially in a wet year, it is very important to limit the time that a crop stays in the field after it reaches maturity. Begin harvest as soon as the grain is ready because the highest test weights and yield – as well as the best grain quality – are seen right after a crop reaches its maturity. Past that point, grain starts to lose yield and quality every day. If the grains are not drying out fast enough in the field, you can harvest early and dry them artificially (see Table 1 for a comparison of drying times by air versus by heat). Many farmers are reluctant to spend the extra cost for artificially drying the grains, but the cost of drying is a lot less than potential crop loss or decline in quality.

At Harvest

You need to fine-tune your combine for maximum performance. A combine for harvesting grains needs to be thoroughly cleaned so it is free of old grains, which could potentially cause mold and insect damages to the new harvest. When harvesting wet grains, it is especially important that a machine is in good repair. The cylinder bars need to be set to a uniform height to achieve improved threshing and separating by providing an even threshing edge. A rotary combine can be used for small grain harvest, but does not do as good a job as a cylinder machine. Clean the grains thoroughly and blow out

Rye



Oats



light kernels. By doing so, small, damaged or lower density grains will be taken out as these can negatively affect other grains in the storage bin.

Storage

Even if you harvest the grain at its optimum quality, failure to store it properly could cause quality damage and decrease percent germination and vigor for seed grains. Again, the key to proper storage starts with cleaning the bin thoroughly before using it for storing newly harvested grains. It is good for a bin to have the capacity to put heat and air into it. Especially for a large bin, it is important to run fans to keep the moisture equilibrium. Moisture should be kept below 12 percent. At 14 to 16 percent moisture, fungi (mold) may grow and the risk of insect damage increases, resulting in lower quality grains.

Concerns with mycotoxins

In a wet year, be especially cautious of mycotoxin contamination. The chance of

Black Emmer

(Ancient Winter Wheat)



Triticale



mycotoxins developing are the highest when the temperature at the blooming stage is cool and stays between 60 to 70 degrees. Mycotoxins are toxic chemicals produced by fungi that grow on the plant in the field or in storage, and are problematic because of their numerous negative effects on the health of animals and people when consumed. Chances for mycotoxin infection increase greatly when kernels are damaged by storms, hail,

Determining the timing of harvest is most critical. Especially in a wet year, it is important to limit the time a crop stays in the field after it reaches maturity.

heat, drought or other extreme weather conditions, as well as attacks from insects, birds or mites.

There are different types of mycotoxins. Some mycotoxins, such as ergot, are visually moldy and are easy to detect. However, not all the grains containing mycotoxins look moldy. Hidden symptoms of contamination can include a light test weight, an off-color and broken or damaged kernels. Additionally, the grains may simply not look, smell or feel right. If the grain shows some symptoms that make you suspect mycotoxin infection, you can send your samples for testing to a lab for testing. There are several laboratories that test for mycotoxins. One used by many farmers is Midwest Laboratories, Inc. (www.midwestlabs.com), in Omaha. However, the testing can be very costly. A full mycotoxin screening at Midwest Labs, for instance – which includes aflatoxin, vomitoxin, fumonisin, ochratoxin A, T2 toxin and zearalenone – costs \$260. As an on-farm alternative, there are a variety of mycotoxin test kits available for purchase. ■

References

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- Martens, M. "Personal Communication." June 10, 2013.
- University of Missouri Extension. "Wheat Harvest, Drying and Storage." extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/agguides/pests/ipm1022_Pp33-37.pdf

Mark Peterson shared this photo of his rye harvest, mid-July, near Stanton.



Table 1: Drying with heat vs. Drying with air

Maximum Grain Moisture (months of storage)			
	<6 months	6-12 months	>12 months
Corn	15%	14%	13%
Soybeans	14%	12%	11%
Wheat	14%	12%	12%

Note: For damaged or immature grain, value is 1 percentage point lower.

Source: Martens, Klaas. "Growing Profitable Small Grains." PFI Annual Conference. Scheman Building, Iowa State University. Ames, IA. 12 January, 2013. Conference Presentation.



Craig Fleischman stands in a field of oats, which are planted in wide strips between corn.

PFI Small Grain Resources

- **PFI Farminar** – "[Integrate Small Grains into Large Grain Row Crops and Integrated Livestock Farms](#)," from Feb. 21, 2012, featuring Tom Frantzen and Wade Dooley. practicalfarmers.org/events/farminars.html
- **PFI Farminar** – "[Long-Term Fertility Management, Adding Livestock and Longer Crop Rotations to Reduce Costs](#)," from March 13, 2012, featuring Ron Rosmann and Nathan Anderson. practicalfarmers.org/events/farminars.html
- **PFI Guide** – "Resource Guide for Growing Small Grains" – features a list of cleaners and millers in the Midwest (bit.ly/PracticalFarmers_SmallGrainsGuide)

"Hayseed" Album Finished, On Tour

In the Fall 2012 issue, we reported how Susan Warner – a musician, singer-songwriter and PFI member – was raising funds to support the release of her upcoming new farm-themed album, "Hayseed." She donated part of the proceeds from her fundraising campaign to Practical Farmers of Iowa. That album is now complete and Susan is in the midst of a national tour performing songs from it at farmers markets and other locations this summer and fall. Iowa performances include Council Bluffs, on Sunday, Sept. 8; Eldora, on Monday, Oct. 7; and Greenfield, on Thursday, Oct. 10. Visit www.susanwerner.com for more details, or to order a copy of the album. ■



Harried by High Tunnels: When Production Leads to Problems

by Sally Worley

High tunnels are wonderful additions to many specialty crop farms, extending both the front and back ends of the growing season. High tunnels have also proved useful during variable weather, such as flooding and drought events – memories fresh for any Iowa farmer.

For Jill Beebout and Sean Skeehan of Blue Gate Farm, however, the honeymoon with their high tunnels is over. In 2009 they started seeing adverse symptoms relating to heavy production in a small area within tunnels they started using in 2006.

In their tomatoes, Jill and Sean started seeing leaf contortion in the older leaves, moving to chlorosis and then to necrosis. Jill: “No plants died completely, but we had significantly reduced production.” Jill and Sean sent photos to Iowa State University. Initial diagnosis was magnesium deficiency. Follow-up tissue samples indicated potassium deficiency. Jill: “We did everything to crank on magnesium and potassium, from comfrey green smoothies – comfrey is notably high in potassium – to foliar feeding of organic fertilizers. While the plants didn’t die, we could never get on top of the problem.”

After a year of not getting a clear diagnosis and solution, Jill had a conversation with Andy Dunham of Grinnell Heritage Farm. “He clued me in that I needed both a tissue and soil analysis,” she says. They sent both to Midwest Labs. “That’s

where we finally found out that some nutrient levels were too high.” The farm’s sodium level was 131 ppm and rated “very high.” According to the report, phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, sulfur, zinc and iron were also very high.

“Part of the reason we have nutrient build-up is because our tunnels sit on clay pads – so don’t have great drainage,” Jill says. “Water just sits and evaporates.” Upon recommendation from Midwest Labs, when Jill tears out winter crops at the end of February she applies calcium sulfate (SuperCal SO4®). She then broadforks all high tunnel beds and floods the beds three times. The idea is that the SuperCal breaks up clay, the broad fork further opens the bed and flooding washes out built-up nutrients.

“This has been helping, but will never solve the problem,” Jill says, though she adds that with management they’ll be able to keep their productivity up. Blue Gate does not see adverse symptoms in any but its solanum crops, with tomatoes exhibiting the most symptoms.

Will Cover Crops Help?

Dr. Ajay Nair, assistant horticulture professor at ISU, is conducting research comparing yellow mustard and oilseed radish with a control, planted in four replications in a 30-by-96-foot high tunnel. Both cover crops were planted at a rate of 10 pounds per acre.

“The idea is to see if cover crops will help build soil and help with salt concentration,” Ajay says.

Initially the salt E.C., or electrical conductivity, in the high tunnel ranged between 0.6 and 1.2 (saturated paste extract method). Ajay: “The optimal E.C.

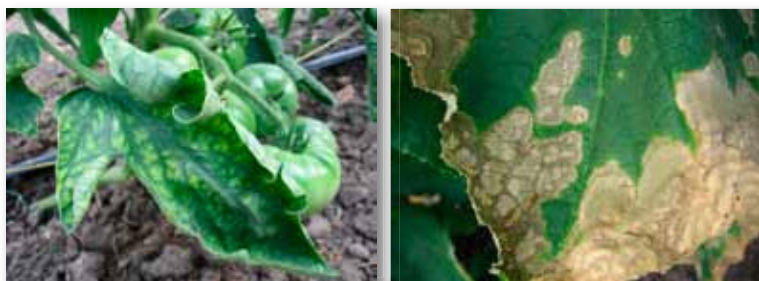


Ajay Nair stands between mustard (on the left) that was planted 45 days prior and a weed-filled control plot.

is between 0 and 2, depending on the crop. Tomatoes can go up to 3.5 before it is detrimental to the plant.” Though the salt level was in the optimal range before the experiment, it did drop after one season of treatment. “Some of the treatments, especially oilseed radish, went from 1.2 to 0.6 after one season,” Ajay says. He warned that multiple trials are necessary for reliable data, and stressed that cover crops don’t have immediate impact. “It takes three to four years of cover crops to build the soil.”

Link between cover crops and weed suppression? Although cover crops build soil over time, Ajay noticed an immediate, striking difference in weed populations among treatments: The control plots had abundant weeds, the radish had a few purslane present, and there were virtually no weeds in the mustard. “Cover crops add organic matter and stimulate soil microbial activity in the soil,” Ajay says. “We are studying if microbial populations shift to more microorganisms of one type than the other as a result of adding cover crops.”

If further research indicates cover crops effectively reduce nutrient build-up, would Blue Gate Farm use them as a production strategy? Jill: “To grow a cover crop in my high tunnels, I’d have to take them out of production. Real estate is too valuable in our tunnels to do that each year. If it made a huge difference and I didn’t have to do it every season, perhaps I’d consider it.” ■



Symptoms of leaf contortion (left) eventually leading to leaf tissue death (right) on Jill and Sean’s tomato plants.

Visit extension.iastate.edu/vegetablelab for Ajay’s current research, and check back in the future for the report on the cover crops project mentioned here.

Apple Cider Vinegar: What Can It Do?

by Margaret Dunn

Happy, healthy and productive animals are the goal of any responsible livestock farmer. To that end, proper nutrition and health care is essential. Balanced diets containing the necessary macro- and micronutrients, plenty of water and management to prevent and cure diseases ensure long-term well-being. In an industry and a world full of supplements and additives – whether organic or synthetic, injectible or edible – farmers must look at the benefits and implications of each. First, does it work? At what dose? How much does it cost? Are the benefits worth more than the cost?

One popular home remedy is apple cider vinegar (ACV). Recommended for both humans and animals, companies such as Bragg maintain that the pungent liquid provides a host of internal and external benefits, including weight control, potassium (an essential micronutrient), enzymes and removal of “body sludge toxins”¹. Raw (unpasteurized) and unfiltered apple cider vinegar contains the “mother” of vinegar, a mass of bacterial enzymes found at the bottom of the bottle. Studies of the effects on humans have shown as many benefits as problems, and despite being touted as “rich in potassium,” 1 tablespoon (approximately the recommended daily dose for people) contains less than 1 percent of the daily recommended dose of potassium.



hard to say how much is actually in the normal dose. Still, anecdotal evidence abounds. Many farmers swear by its use as a supplement or water additive for livestock, particularly goats. Apple cider vinegar's low pH makes it a mild disinfectant and it is recommended as a topical treatment for skin conditions, particularly on sensitive areas². It is also given orally, reported to provide potassium, reduce pH of the gut (and body?), and improve gastrointestinal microflora among other things. pH changes in the rumen may influence the microbial populations in the ruminant digestive tract, which does have implications for digestion. Allegedly, apple cider vinegar will promote good gut bacteria and improve digestion of feedstuffs, thus enhancing performance (growth, milk yield or coat condition). Some say it also repels flies after being ingested³. No single dose has been established, but common rates are a teaspoon per goat every few days, or provided in water at a rate of about one-quarter cup per gallon (see footnote 2).

While normally mixed with honey or sweeteners to ease ingestion by people, livestock seem to enjoy the tang of some ACV in their water trough. In fact, one explanation for some of the benefits – bet-



Dairy goats grazing

ter milk yield, digestion and overall health – may simply be due to increased water consumption. One source notes that in areas with alkaline water, ACV balances the pH and makes the water more palatable and less disruptive in the body⁴. The acidity may also help keep water troughs cleaner by killing or inhibiting the growth of “scum.”

There is one particularly odd rumor, though: The reduction in pH allegedly extends to the blood and reproductive tract, which promotes the survival of female (X-chromosome) sperm. Thus, an ACV-supplemented doe should have doelings herself instead of bucklings! The effect of vaginal pH on sperm has been documented in hamsters⁵, though timing of insemination was a factor: It appears that lower vaginal pH occurs later in estrus. Can consumption of moderate amounts of ACV influence pH enough to affect offspring gender?

(Continued on page 11) ➡

Effects on Livestock?

Acetic acid (the acid in ACV) is used by ruminants as an energy source (and is coupled with milkfat production), but it is

1 “Bragg Organic Apple Cider Vinegar.” Bragg. n.p., n.d. Web. <<http://bragg.com/products/bragg-organic-apple-cider-vinegar.html>>

2 Coleby, Pat. “Vitamins & the Use of Herbal, Homeopathic & Natural Remedies. Natural Goat Care. Austin: Acres USA, Inc., 2001. AcresUSA. Web. <www.acresusa.com/toolbox/press/goat10.htm>

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5 Pratt, Nancy C., U. William Huck, and Robert D. Lisk. “Offspring sex ratio in hamsters is correlated with vaginal pH at certain times of mating.” Behavioral and Neural Biology. 48.2 (1987): 310-316. ScienceDirect. Web. <www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0163104787908648>

Holistic Management: Achieve Triple Bottom Line Benefits

by Ann Adams

Attend the Short Course on Holistic Management at the next PFI annual conference (Jan. 23-25, 2014)! In this article, Ann Adams, director of education for Holistic Management International, gives a brief introduction to this management system that many PFI members use.

As a Whole Farm and Ranch Planning process, Holistic Management helps farmers better manage agricultural resources in order to reap sustainable environmental, economic, and social benefits. This “triple bottom line” of benefits can be achieved by more effectively managing resources. There are two key principles and six key practices that help people manage holistically. These principles and practices, as a comprehensive adaptive management process, have helped thousands of people around the world achieve some pretty amazing results, including:

- 300 percent increase in plant species
- 100 percent increase in soil carbon
- 40 percent decrease in labor
- 50 percent decrease in bare ground
- 800 percent increase in soil permeability
- 300 percent increase in profitability
- 500 percent increase in riparian bird population
- 900 percent increase in rooting depth of plants

The Principles

Holistic Management is based on two key principles: **1).** Nature functions in wholes, and **2).** Understand your environment.

The first principle focuses on the idea of holism, helping us to build symbiotic

relationships in all our management decisions. We have to pay attention to the relationships between the different aspects of the whole. Anytime you change one thing, it impacts other areas of your life. We keep that in mind with Holistic Management by using a holistic goal to help us keep focused on the big picture and reduce unintended consequences.

The second principle helps people understand that all tools do not have the same effect in different environments. We must determine where the environment we are managing is on the brittleness scale (a scale linked to humidity and how quickly dead vegetation breaks down). In a rainforest (a “1” on the scale) there’s a lot of humidity and vegetation decomposes quickly. In a desert (a “10” on the scale), there’s little humidity and vegetation decomposes slowly. With this principle we remember that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. What may be a “best management practice” in one area of the world could cause problems in another area.

The Practices

There are six key steps to practicing Holistic Management:

1). Define what you manage: Look at the inventory you are managing. The two key areas of that inventory are your management team (decision makers) and your assets. When defining the management team, you focus on who is making management decisions at the various levels of managements. Those people are the ones who should help create a holistic goal and who must have ownership in it. All your assets include what some people refer to as your “resource base,” which includes clients and vendors; tangible assets like buildings, equipment and livestock; and money. Knowing your inventory allows you to better manage it. This step can make you further aware of the influences impacting



Ann Adams

the inventory that you manage and how you affect it.

2). State what you want: Working with your other decisions makers on your management team, begin the process of creating your holistic goal – describing the life you want to live based on your deepest values. To create your holistic goal, ask your management team to describe and create the following statements:

- **Quality of Life:** *The quality of life desired*
- **Behaviors and Systems:** *What to create or produce to live that life*
- **Vision:** *What must exist to sustain that life in the future*

These three pieces of a holistic goal help team members define the quality of life they want right now, which motivates them to manage toward the common ground articulated. It also helps them identify the behaviors, systems and processes they must put in place to get there. Lastly, it helps them articulate their vision for the future with the legacy they want to leave in regards to their relationships with their communities and the land by describing how they have to behave, the future landscape and the future community.

“Anytime you change one thing, it impacts other areas of your life. We keep that in mind with Holistic Management by using a holistic goal to help us keep focused on the big picture and reduce unintended consequences.”

In this way the holistic goal provides guidance for both short- and long-term decision-making in a way that focuses on desired outcomes and less on problem solving that can lead to unintended consequences.

3). Aim for healthy soil: This practice uses four fundamental ecosystem processes in nature, so you can begin to assess the health of your land and consider it in your management decisions. The four ecosystem processes are: water cycle, mineral cycle, energy flow and biological communities.

The earliest indicator of ecosystem health is soil cover and soil health. If there is 100 percent soil cover, made up of living and decaying plants and a great diversity of species, you likely have a healthy environment. You must have a good understanding of ecosystem health to be able to do the next practice effectively.



Parker Beard and his family practice Holistic Management on their farm near Decorah.

4). Consider all tools available: The tools for managing ecosystem processes fall into six broad categories. From these we can select the most appropriate tools to create the outcomes we want based on our knowledge of current ecosystem health while keeping in mind the environment within which we are managing (what natural rules are at play). The tools are:

- Human Creativity
- Technology
- Rest
- Fire
- Animals and Living Organisms
- Money and Labor

Human creativity and money and labor are required for using the other tools. Holistic Management helps family farmers improve their creativity and explore how they can better manage resources. In land management, fire, rest and technology are the tools most used to modify our ecosystem. However, the impact from animals and living organisms can help improve land health, water infiltration and the land's ability to sequester carbon through grazing and animal impact by many different species – thus providing multiple benefits with fewer negative consequences.

Tools are neither good nor bad and should be managed within the context of the whole under management. Consider your holistic goal and the degree of brittleness of the environment you manage, along with other factors before you decide whether a particular tool is suitable.

5). Test your decisions: The seven Holistic Management testing questions help us sift through the many factors and complex variables to get to the heart of the matter and help improve decision-making. Ultimately, we are looking at whether the action or decision meets the triple bottom line you have articulated in your holistic goal. These seven tests supplement other considerations when making a decision (research, intuition, cash flow, etc.). The seven tests are:

- 1. ROOT CAUSE:** Does this action address the root cause of the problem?
- 2. WEAK LINK:**
 - **Social:** Are there any social concerns regarding this action?
 - **Biological:** Does this action address the weakest point in the life cycle of this organism?
 - **Financial:** Does this action address the weakest link in the chain of production? In my enterprise, what single thing will have the greatest positive impact on my chain of production?
- 3. COMPARING OPTIONS:** Which action gets the “biggest bang for the buck” toward your holistic goal? Where is your highest return?
- 4. GROSS PROFIT ANALYSIS:** Which enterprises contribute most to cover the fixed costs (overhead) of the business?
- 5. INPUT ANALYSIS:** Is the energy or money to be used in this action derived from the most appropriate source in terms of your holistic goal? Will the way the energy or money is to be used lead toward your holistic goal?
- 6. VISION ANALYSIS:** Does this action lead toward or away from the Vision articulated in your holistic goal?
- 7. GUT CHECK:** Considering all the testing questions and your holistic goal, how do you feel about this action or decision now?

6). Monitor your results: Before you begin to implement a decision, consider any unintended consequences that could arise from your actions. Determine the earliest warning signs that might mean you're going off track. Monitor those indicators carefully; take action if things start to go wrong or circumstances change. This is a proactive feedback loop. ■

Get a free "Introduction to Holistic Management" manual by clicking on the "free downloads" button at www.holisticmanagement.org

Antibiotics in Organic-Labeled Livestock: Do They Belong?

Compiled by Erica Andorf

Organic programs prohibit the sale of products that have been treated with antibiotics. Is it the farmer's responsibility to treat the animal and lose the organic label, or should the animal be left untreated?

In April, staff member Margaret Dunn proposed a debate on the livestock email discussion list regarding the use of antibiotics in animals and where they fit into a farmer's practice when the animal is sick. Here is what some members had to say.

He added that he has been told "antibiotic resistance is a growing problem in livestock, just as it is in humans," and that "in cases where those resistant bacteria can cross-infect from animals to humans, we should strongly consider the pros and cons. Parasites are different but the same thing is occurring. Using an anthelmintic to treat parasitic worms on a schedule instead of when an animal needs treatment to keep from dying has resulted in parasite populations that are immune to our common wormers in some portions of the United States."

Effect on Meat Quality, Reputation and Profitability

Jack Knight, a member from Luana and an organic inspector, said organic producers are aware of the rules and can still profit from the treated animals by selling the meat locally with neighbors, lockers or farmers markets where the label is not required, or taking animals to the sale barn. He also made the point that "wiggle room for selling treated animals and still using the [organic] label instantly loses credibility for that label." Dan agreed: "We must remember our way of raising animals is always as much a marketing issue as it is a production issue."

Kevin Dietzel, a member from Jewell (who previously worked on organic farms in Germany) stated that organic certification in Europe doesn't require that animals treated with antibiotics be removed from the herd. He said that documentation is required showing there was a need for antibiotic use and that the farmer adhered to withholding times after administering antibiotics.



Focus Should be on Prevention

Francis Thicke, also of Fairfield, said he believes we need to question the notion that antibiotics are always the last resort. "Prevention and creating good health are the first line of defense against disease," Francis wrote. He added that new herbal treatments are becoming available all the time and some of those seem to be as effective as or sometimes more effective than antibiotics. Francis thinks the problem with using antibiotics for organic farming is that dependency develops and alternatives will no longer be sought.



Antibiotic Resistance Concerns

Jess Jackson, a member from Fairfield and an NRCS grazing specialist, said in his experience, antibiotics are used to treat bacterial diseases. "When we moved to Fairfield in 2004, a course of azithromycin would cure anything," he commented. "In most cases now, our doctors will prescribe a second course without us asking because so many diseases are becoming resistant to the Z-pack. They will not give me a shot of penicillin because 'it doesn't work anymore.' It is my understanding that adding antibiotics to the feed of certain livestock is a common practice, and that those antibiotics and the ones used for humans are the same."



He feels we need to do a better job of finding people, products and procedures on the cutting edge of non-antibiotic health care.

Dan Wilson of Paullina agrees. "There are many ways to treat animals," he said, noting that he has not used antibiotics for a number of years.



Todd Churchill of Cannon Falls, Minn., who operates Thousand Hills Cattle Company,

looked at the issue from the perspective of meat quality. "In my opinion, an animal that needed an antibiotic was so sick and immune compromised that the meat from that animal will no longer be a great eating experience."

Grazier Ryan Herman, of New Albin, reflected on the challenge antibiotic use presented to a producer's profitability. "The larger problem with the fear of losing your premium from antibiotic treatment is then there is truly no margin left," he wrote. "We each need to create a farming system that makes money, a fair living, if our animals are sold for conventional prices. Then, as we improve our management and the animals' genetics, we can begin to drop production crutches like antibiotics or corn feeding, thus deserving a niche market premium."

Treatment is Sometimes a Duty

Doug Wirth expressed concern over the effect a diseased animal can have on other livestock. His answer is for farmers to take responsibility to provide

food, water and a safe, comfortable living environment for the livestock. It sometimes requires calling a veterinarian and treating the animal.

This discussion is one of many PFI members have access to through our email discussion lists. Members with different opinions come together to

discuss, analyze and debate issues from all angles. If you have questions you'd like to ask of the membership, or if you'd like to participate in conversations like this, join any or all of our five members-only email discussion lists: General, Cover Crops, Horticulture, Livestock and Policy. To join, send an email to erica@practicalfarmers.org or call (515) 232-5661. ■

Leave A Legacy



“Investing in a gift annuity with a worthy organization like PFI is a wonderful way to distribute our assets.”

— Tom and Ruth Neuberger

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

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

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

Want to learn more? Contact Teresa Opheim, Executive Director, (515) 232-5661 or teresa@practicalfarmers.org.

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

Apple Cider Vinegar (cont'd)

◀ (Continued from page 7)

Putting Apple Cider Vinegar to the Test in On-Farm Research

Some Practical Farmers are eager to find out. Dawn Anderson, Joanne Peters and Kathy Rose are supplementing their herds with raw ACV this summer as part of a research trial through PFI's Cooperators' Program. While the setups vary slightly, all will monitor their animals for overall health and well-being, weight or condition if possible, and the number and gender of offspring (come next spring). Joanne's does are in a single lot and will be bred by the same buck while being supplemented with ACV. Dawn and Kathy will dose animals individually every few days, allowing two treatment groups from the same lot.

While certainly not harmful, ACV supplementation has little definitive research to prove its benefits. With some monitoring and recordkeeping, PFI members hope to test the rumors of ACV. Hopefully we'll see a bunch of beautiful does next spring!

PFI is always looking for new ideas for on-farm research projects. Got an "old wives' tale" cure you'd like to investigate? Curious about changing your feeding or management to improve efficiency, profitability, quality or yield? Contact Margaret at (515) 232-5661 or margaret@practicalfarmers.org. ■

The Peters' goat research was featured in a KCAU TV news segment on June 17 (www.kcautv.com/story/22613815/goat-farmers-trying-apple-cider-vinegar) and a "Storm Lake Pilot Tribune" article on June 10 (www.stormlakepilottribune.com/story/1976785.html)

Sustaining Community: Selling the Family Farm to the Right Family at the Right Price

by Teresa Opheim

If it takes a village to raise a child, as an old adage says, how can the children, having left the village, repay and help sustain the village in response to its life-giving nurture? The village in this instance had provided an extra measure of support to the mom and her three young kids when death took the dad from the family.

Former Montgomery County farmland owners Dale Nimrod and his siblings came up with a response that enabled a family active in their home community to take over their farm. The family, unknown to the owners, was selected because of their participation in community and church and their demonstrated desire to own and operate a farm there. A creative approach to pricing the transfer was obviously necessary.

But let's start at the beginning.

Leonard Nimrod, the dad in this story, grew up on the farm near Stanton settled by his Swedish immigrant parents, stayed on, and shared in its operation. In 1934 he married a local school teacher, Janet Meyers, recently transplanted from New York. By 1944 Janet and Leonard managed to cobble together financing needed to purchase a farm of their own a couple miles away. That winter they looked forward to the March 1 possession date, when they would move their three young children to the farm. But in February Leonard was diagnosed with a brain tumor. While doctors were trying to save him with surgery, Janet, from his hospital room in Omaha, was arranging the March 1 move 60 miles away. Leonard died that July and never got to farm the new place.

At the time, Dale Nimrod was 5, his brother, Vance, was 8, and sister, Faith, was 2. Janet decided to stay. "My mother looked on it as a kind of calling that we should be raised at that place," Dale says. "She managed to make it work. The church and

the community were very instrumental in making it possible. I'm sure they put in the first crop. Countless acts of kindness followed. When the dad of a friend of mine, for example, was going to buy cattle in Omaha, he thought I should be along to learn how to do that. It was just things like that, on and on and on, a support network that was very tangible."

The three kids thrived in this supportive community and then left for college and careers. Dale married Sunny, and they raised their three sons on the rolling hills near Decorah, where Dale taught chemistry at Luther College. Vance and Faith settled their families in Mississippi and Des Moines. Janet continued to live on the farm and eventually transferred ownership to her three children, each getting 80 acres. The cropland was jointly rented out.

In 2004, the farm manager – who in 1948, unmarried and 24 years old, had moved out to the Nimrod Farm to work the place – decided to retire from farming. "By that time it was clear that none of us siblings, now in

our 60s, was interested in taking up farming at that point or moving back to our home town. So it was time to turn the farm over to someone else."

Land, Community Care More Important than Price

"We were no different from many aging land owners facing this very common situation – we aspired to find a nice young family who would appreciate the land, the community and the church, and would invest themselves in caring for all three," Dale says. "But far too often I have seen owners who fervently hope for such an outcome put their place up for auction with little more than their fingers crossed regarding their community. It is a misperception, I think, that selling to the highest bidder is the only way to be fair when disposing of property. We were determined to make the desired outcome a reality, and we were convinced that such an outcome would go much farther than, say, making a cash gift in sustaining community.

"So I started by calling the Lutheran pastor in Stanton and asked for names of anybody who might be looking to farm. That's how we connected with Mark Peterson," Dale recalls. "He had established himself and shown interest in the town and interest in the church. Mark was renting some land and owned some machinery, and this was really the kind of thing he was looking for. So we worked through how to establish a purchase price."

The Nimrods asked the Petersons to use some farm productivity spreadsheets from Iowa State University to calculate the production value of the farmland, which, as Dale says, "has little, if anything, to do with the market price." Mark put together a cash flow statement, which included a land payment to the Nimrods. He based it on 2004 prices and yields, and a land payment based on the interest rate at the time and 20 years worth of payments.

(Continued on next page) 

“There are things more important than money. It is a misperception that selling to the highest bidder is the only way to be fair when disposing of property.”

Committed to Fairness

“We wanted to get close to the real economic value of the farm, which is below the market price of course,” Dale reports. “We siblings looked over the figures carefully and concluded he did his calculations correctly. Then we set the purchase price at 25 percent higher than its calculated production value.”

Mark Peterson says, “When Dale first called, I thought he was looking for an agent to sell the farm, and I had my real estate license. Then the light bulb went on. Dale said he wanted to sell the farm to us. I said that we weren’t in the position to buy a farm. He said, stick with me and we’ll figure it out. Dale and his family had deep ties to the farm, but they could see that there was no one in their family who could carry it on and they wanted it to be a family farm. He wanted to give someone the chance to make it on their own. In his own way, he was trying to keep Stanton going.”



▲ **Above:** Dale and Sunny Nimrod stand on their farm near Decorah.

▼ **Below:** Melanie Peterson stands in a field of rye – land that the Nimrods sold to her and Mark so they could farm in their southwest Iowa community of Stanton.



Mark and his wife, Melanie, also made two major investments to achieve the happy ending of this story. The second was a number of major land improvements, including his recent work with Practical Farmers to add cover crops. The first was to use their home equity in Stanton to buy back the acreage that contained the farmhouse, which the Nimrods had earlier sold off. The Petersons evicted the raccoons, renovated the house, and moved their

family of five boys from town to the country to their new home on their new farm.

Reports Dale Nimrod: “We are just enormously pleased that this farm is in the Petersons’ hands. I hear about people who have land for sale and it’s like it would be a sin if you sold it for less than what an auctioneer could get for you. I just can’t understand it. There are things more important and much more satisfying than money.” ■

Young Farms Use Savvy Marketing for Big Reach

by Sally Worley

Vegetable farmers work hard to produce beautiful, healthful food for their communities. However, when it comes time to market it, some shy away from the task. Sometimes it's lack of time, other times it's because their humble nature holds them back.

Beginning farmers from TableTop Farm near Nevada and Grade A Gardens in Johnston have made quite a name for their businesses in their start up years. These farms have some common marketing techniques that have helped them reach their desired customers.

Farm Synopses

TableTop Farm is operated by young couples Sally and Luke Gran and Kim and Chris Corbin. In their third year of farming together, they sell 55 percent of their product through 200 community supported agriculture (CSA) shares, 35 percent at the farmers market and 10 percent wholesale to specialty grocery stores like Wheatsfield and Gateway Market, as well as restaurants.

Grade A Gardens is operated by Jordan Clasen and Thomas Burkhead. This is their first year marketing through a CSA and they are offering 43 shares. They also offer wholesale in Des Moines to Gateway Market, Centro, the Cheese Shop, Greenbriar, Glen Oaks, Bistro Montage, Hoq and Local Yocals. Their biggest market is the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market.

Branding

TableTop Farm – TableTop began as an idea the summer of 2010 when Sally Gran and Chris Corbin were both farming solo. By the 2011 growing season they had their brand in place. “In the fall of 2010 we named our farm, wrote up our mission statement and business plan,” Sally says. Farm partner Kim Corbin doubles as mar-

keting manager at Wheatsfield Co-op and is a professional graphic designer. Before the farm launched, Kim created a logo and set up templates for the website and CSA brochure.

TableTop Farm branding permeates the farm's website, Facebook page, logo on menus, posters and brochures at CSA drop sites through its display style and on t-shirts. The more often a customer sees the farm name, the more it will stand out.

Sally: “We are in the process of getting stickers to place on bags. We have twist ties with our name on them. We had to buy 50,000 but the price per tie is the same as for plain ties.” Sally heard about Bedford Industries, which sells the twist ties, from Chris Blanchard of Flying Rutabaga Works.

Grade A Gardens – From wheatgrass to garlic to the whole bounty, this is the fourth season Thomas and Jordan have grown food together. “When we first started selling wheatgrass, I spent \$600 to get a logo professionally designed,” Jordan says. “Our first logo draft was an ‘A’ super hero with a cape and peace sign. Our designer said it might work with people our age, but it was not professional, sleek or modern. He really cleaned it up and made it more legit.” As the Grade A name evolved from

Grass, to Garlic, to Gardens, the “A” in the logo has carried customers along. “People might not remember our name,” Thomas says, “but they’ll remember the A.”

Jordan and Thomas constructed a 10-foot “A” out of barn wood and painted it lime green. They set that up at each farmers market and at their CSA distribution at the Cheese Shop.

They also put decals on their delivery van, which makes the vehicle a conspicuous branding tool, have labels for their products and printed signs for the farmers market, and stamp their paper sales bags with the Grade A logo. Jordan: “Everything goes out with a label. When people are having dinner parties their friends see it and it’s a good conversation piece that might bring us new customers. Chefs see it. We write pack dates on our label so people can see how fresh they are.”

Professionalism

Both farms operate with a high level of professionalism, from production and product to customer service and marketing.



◀ **Left:** Jordan Clasen (left) and Thomas Burkhead stand by the wooden “A” they built to use in their business marketing and branding.

▲ **Above:** A Grade A Gardens product label incorporates the farm's characteristic green “A” for branding continuity.

You have to make people comfortable with your product. If they don't know what garlic scapes are and you don't tell them, they won't buy them. You have to educate people without making them feel stupid.

TableTop Farm – TableTop has a working business plan (versus one that was written and never referred to again) that outlines its target markets and marketing strategy. The team also has revenue goals, which helps it know where to focus its marketing efforts. The business is run like one, with systems in place for efficiency and quality.

Grade A Gardens – Jordan started Grade A Gardens while working as produce manager at Gateway Market. Jordan: “I saw that appearance sells and learned ideal sizes and varieties. I got to see what sold. You can’t buy that kind of experience.” In his five years at Gateway Market, Jordan also worked with customers and vendors and became a true produce peddler.

Eye-Catching Displays and Product

Guarantees – Both TableTop and Grade A create a high-quality, professional product. “Jordan and I are both foodies at heart. We grow for flavor, quality and taste,” Thomas says. “We make sure what we take to market and put in boxes is the best. If you have a quality product it can kind of sell itself.”

Jordan adds: “We guarantee everything will last a week; if not we’ll replace it.”

Both farms also set up professional displays. Kim Corbin offers this advice: “Find a way to stand out at market, such as a bigger vegetable spread, or a bigger, beautiful sign.”

Thomas says it can be “a fine art” to make a display look good. “You don’t want a whole pile of lettuce getting wilted. There are ways to make a box look full with only five bunches of something.”

Community and Media Outreach

Both TableTop and Grade A are involved in their communities. Sally grew up in Nevada so had some connections when starting out. Through Practical Farmers’ community, TableTop connected with Gary Guthrie. He retired the year TableTop was forming and recommended his customers transition



▲ **Above:** Sally Gran (left) leading a tour of TableTop at a farm field day.

Jordan grew up in Johnston, which is what has led Grade A to land access as well as relationships within the Des Moines food industry. *Des Moines Register* food writer Jen Miller is a Grade A CSA member, which is very conducive to getting press about the farm. Jordan: “We’ve been blessed by knowing the right people. Community is key.”

Grade A and TableTop both receive regular requests to be featured in news articles. “I don’t like the personal attention,” Jordan says, “but I appreciate the business promotion. We always try to accommodate media requests.”

Market, and Market Again

TableTop Farm – One reason marketing goes well for both farms is they realize marketing is vital to the success of their farms. Sally: “We are working to scale up the farm and expand our market. It is a business and we need new customers, so we repeatedly market. Rather than saying, ‘We need more members,’ we’ll say: ‘There’s still space, you still have the opportunity to join.’” TableTop invests in paid Iowa Public Radio advertising to help reach new customers continually.

Grade A Gardens – Thomas and Jordan respect the marketing strategies of the farm’s landlord, Paul Rottenberg, president of Orchestrate Management. Thomas: “Centro just started a new promotion: half-price pizza and half-price Peroni beer

to TableTop for their CSA. Sally says the TableTop team is also “active in the community,” which leads to invitations to speak at events. Despite their busy schedules, she says “we do what we can to be available.”

on Mondays. Centro is super successful, always packed. We asked, ‘Why would you be doing this promotion that’s not making you money?’ Paul said, ‘Every day I think we’re busy right now, but we need younger people to start eating at Centro so they’re eating there in 10 years. We need to constantly be cultivating new customers.’”

Jordan: “You have got to be a visionary thinker, thinking about the long-term.

“Make sure you always smile, smile, smile!”

This advice from Sally is something she practices whenever she’s dealing with customers or marketing the farm. Exuberance radiates from all these farmers. Kim says that since she started marketing, she’s “been interested in the theory that consumers can be persuaded to make a decision if they are having fun and they see others having fun.”

Farming is hard work: The weather doesn’t cooperate and it involves a lot of sweat and stress. This season, Sally says the wet spring meant they didn’t get tomatoes and peppers in until the first week of June. “We need to communicate these issues to our members,” she says, “but also let people know what positive is going on. People want to be part of something positive.”

Grade A creates an interactive experience at its market stand. Thomas: “Personality is a huge part of making sales. You have to make people comfortable with your product. If they don’t know what garlic scapes are and we don’t tell them, they won’t buy them. You have to educate people without making them feel stupid.”

Jordan concurs that personality and charisma are crucial. “Bland stands and bland personalities don’t sell.” ■

Read the Spring 2012 issue of *the Practical Farmer* for tips from Kim on how to make your display stand out. Read more about farms’ social media techniques and tips on the PFI blog.

"100 Days, 100 Beginners" Campaign Over Two-Thirds of Way to Goal; Can You Help?

by Luke Gran

Practical Farmers are answering the call to give to the "100 Days, 100 Beginners" Campaign. About \$52,000 has been raised so far – but \$75,000 must be raised by Oct. 1 to continue funding the Next Generation program (current funding runs out on Sept. 30). Throughout the campaign we are announcing 100 beginning farmers (one each day) with a brief profile on our Facebook page (www.fb.com/practicalfarmers). Photos and profiles of beginning farmers are also listed on our homepage (www.practicalfarmers.org). Can you donate \$25, \$50, \$100 or more today to ensure the success of the next generation of Practical Farmers? Here are some of the beginning farmers your donation will help support.



◀ **Dave Schmidt** grew up in Cedar Falls and spent time on his grandparents' farm near Chester. After living in Idaho and northern California, Dave returned to Iowa in 2010 and began grazing cattle on the Doug Roberts farm near Garwin. At a PFI field day he met his future wife, **Meg** (left), and they now graze beef cattle and sheep, raise pigs and experiment with other enterprises on Meg's family crop and livestock farm near Exira. They are committed to cover crops, crop rotations, and being responsible stewards of the land.



▲ **Aaron White** (left), native of Boxholm, answered the call of duty in the Marine Corps and was a teacher for a couple years in Wyoming before returning to his wife's hometown of Carlisle. With the help of his father-in-law, Aaron secured a lease on pastureland and is improving its fence and forage productivity with managed grazing of beef cattle. Says Aaron, "Before PFI, I felt like I was by myself. Now, I've got a group of folks who I can go to for help if I have a question. I'm excited to see all the stuff I'm learning about being put into practice." Next to Aaron is his brother, **Dylan White**. The brothers work together growing a 1-acre patch of melons and edamame.

▼ **Dave and Meryl Hiler** grow corn and soybeans at Hiler Farms near Rockwell City. Dave also works as a seed corn dealer. They farm with multiple family members and recently purchased their own 40 acres from a retired neighbor. Dave and Meryl plan to expand the number of owned acres and are exploring the addition of a specialty swine enterprise to be marketed through Niman Ranch.



▲ Last winter, **Rory Van Wyk** saw the chance to work on the farm of Tom and Mary Cory as a PFI Labor4Learning Trainee as a perfect fit for his stage in life. He applied, was hired and set to work exploring creative solutions to tweak livestock production systems on the farm. As a father with a full-time firefighter job, he needed flexibility of hours and a farm close to Ankeny where he lives. His big goal this year with Cory Family Farm is to improve his relationship marketing skills while learning on the job.



▲ **John Rafkin** and **Wendy Johnson**, (and their daughter, Vivienne) farm together near Charles City. Wendy and her father do all the production and marketing for the 1,200-acre crop and livestock farm. Wendy also researches and adds diversity on the farm, manages a sheep ewe breeding flock and is experimenting with milk goats. John, from Los Angeles, has been on the farm for three years learning a lot about farming and raising sheep. He is an excellent father to Vivienne and helps with "the muscle" when Wendy needs an extra hand.



▲ **Danelle Myer** of One Farm grows diverse vegetable and herb crops near Logan. She spent her childhood on a conventional beef, corn and soybean farm, graduated high school and left. After a 20-year career in marketing and public relations, Danelle concluded she wanted to be an organic farmer. She participated in an agro-ecology apprenticeship program in California and then moved home to the family farm, where she started her own horticulture operation. Danelle currently rents land from her parents but is purchasing her own farmstead nearby and will move her entire operation over the next two years.



◀ **Morgan Hoenig** established her farm, Mogo Organic Farm, on family land near Mount Pleasant. Mogo Organic provides chemical-free produce to consumers in Henry County at farmers markets and Green Share CSA, a multi-farm collaboration. Morgan is very active in building her farm's image by giving talks and hosting farm tours. She had the opportunity to show President Obama and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack her Iowa specialty crop farm in 2010. To build her agritourism presence Morgan recently renovated her barn with a walk-in cooler, retail space and vegetable processing capability.



▲ **Jordan Scheibel** (right, speaking with Julia Slocum) started working full-time for Andy and Melissa Dunham's Grinnell Heritage Farm in 2010. This past season Jordan grew his own crop of produce and herbs on a plot at Grinnell Heritage Farm, part of which he sold through the Grinnell farmers market, Grinnell Local Food Buying Co-op, the Iowa Valley Food Co-op and directly to consumers. Since then Jordan has stepped out on his own, launching Middle Way Farm, and will be marketing his produce through a CSA and farmers market.



▲ **Nick Mabe** has spent the last four years working in organic produce and fruit production, the last two as field supervisor for Hoch Orchards and Gardens in La Crescent, Minn. He hopes to run his own operation in the future and values the support the Next Generation Program provides to beginning farmers. Says Nick, "PFI members contributing to this program play a role in our success as new farmers. This program will allow me and others to start with a more solid foundation."



◀ **Emilyrose Pfaltzgraff** is one of the 300 out of 1,200 beginning farmers in our network who is "not currently farming," though she has spent the past few years working for farmers. She has grazed livestock and helped put up hay near Grinnell for a full season as a farm intern. For the last few seasons she has worked at a livestock and garlic farm in Minnesota. This spring she worked at local greenhouses in Hampton and Belmond, Iowa. Emilyrose is currently the "relief" milker for Gibraltar Farms near Iowa Falls. Meanwhile, she is helping to manage the diverse livestock and sizable farm gardens at her parents' acreage near Hampton while exploring new entrepreneurial endeavors.

Practical Farmers' On-Farm Research Will Feature 44 Projects on 68 Farms in 2013

by Drake Larsen and
Tomoko Ogawa

Practical Farmers of Iowa comprises a diverse group of people – but common characteristics among all are curiosity and a willingness to learn and to try new things. That is where the spirit of Practical Farmers lies. To help support this culture of curiosity and information-sharing, PFI continues to facilitate our members' on-farm research efforts. These research trials are important because farmers generate the questions themselves and research is conducted on working farms where questions are tested under real in-field conditions, and farmers and others can observe results with their own eyes.

Many PFI farmers are eager to produce knowledge that is applicable to their own farms and those of fellow farmers. Tim Sieren, who farms near Keota, says he contacted Sarah Carlson after reading one of her "Wallaces Farmer" articles. "I would like to find a way to profitably include a small grain cover crop in my rotation without sacrificing income potential," Tim says. "I know cover crops have much value. I wanted to learn how to put a number on that value, so I thought the research project would be a good way to do that."

Sioux Center area farmer John Wesseliuss agrees. "I am convinced that the more someone knows about the systems and structures of their operation, the better they are at what they do," he says. "Data is money." Every winter, we hold the Cooperators' Meeting, at which our members learn from each other by listening to the presentations on the previous year's on-farm research projects. Attendees also brainstorm ideas and formulate methodology for the coming year. Based on this process, we set up 44 projects on 68 farms for 2013, covering diverse topics from our field crops, horticulture, on-farm energy and livestock program areas.

Cover crop projects: Given growing farmer interest, several projects this year – both in-field crop and horticulture – involve cover crops, including: comparison of cover crop types, herbicide injury in cover crops,



▲ Above: John Wesseliuss (center, green shirt) speaks at a PFI field day

grazing cover crops, use of cover crops in kale production and interseeding into standing cash crops.

Field crop research projects include frost-seeding versus fall seeding for establishment of red clover, GMO versus non-GMO corn and soybean comparisons.

Horticulture research includes projects such as the comparison of mulch type for melon production and a significant multi-farm effort to improve crop insurance for fruits and vegetables through yield-data collection.

Livestock research includes projects focused on fly monitoring in cattle, a comparison of grass- versus grain-finished sheep and improving feed efficiency in organic hogs.

On-farm energy research: Cooler efficiency, on-farm wind production and biomass gasification are priorities for on-farm energy research. A full list of projects and locations is listed on page 21.

Research cooperators also share their findings at events such as field days and the Annual Conference. We also publish research reports, which are available for free at practicalfarmers.org. Our Cooperators' Program is supported by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. ■

FARMERS PARTICIPATING IN 2013 (by county)

Adair

→ Wendell Zimmerman – Greenfield

Audubon

→ Vic and Cindy Madsen – Audubon
→ Dave and Meg Schmidt – Exira

Benton

→ Eric and Ann Franzenburg – Van Horne
→ Dustin Kaestner – Luzerne

Boone

→ Jeremy Gustafson – Boone
→ Mike Salama – Boone
→ Dick and Sharon Thompson – Boone

Bremer

→ Rob and Tammy Faux – Tripoli
→ Rick Juchems – Plainfield

Buchanan

→ Dick Sloan – Rowley

Buena Vista

→ Joanne Peters – Newell

Carroll

→ Whiterock Conservancy – Coon Rapids

Cass

→ Denise O'Brien – Atlantic

Cedar

→ Mark Quee – West Branch

Cherokee

→ Nathan Anderson – Aurelia

Chickasaw

→ Tom and Irene Frantzen – New Hampton

2013 PFI COOPERATORS' PROGRAM PROJECT TITLES

Field Crops

1. Corn Hybrids Following Winter Rye Cover Crop
2. Demonstration Comparison of Frost-Seeded Red Clover versus Fall Seeded Mix
3. Economics of Adding a Third Crop
4. Herbicide Injury Tolerance of 5-6 Cover Crop Species
5. Interseeding Cover Crops into Standing Crops
6. Interseeding Cover Crops at Corn V5
7. Non-GMO / GMO Corn Comparison
8. Non-GMO / GMO Soybean Comparison
9. Organic Corn Yield Trials
10. Over-Seeding Cover Crop Mix
11. Wyndam Pea for Nitrogen Replacement before Corn (cancelled for this year due to the weather)
12. Red Clover Versus Fall Cover Crop Mix
13. Reducing Livestock Feeding Costs by Growing Higher Nutrient Dense Crops
14. Sidedress Nitrogen Following Winter Rye Cover Crop
15. Spring Cover Crop Biomass Evaluation

Horticulture

1. Clover Cover Crop for Kale and Brussels Sprouts
2. Evaluation of Soybeans as a Cover Crop in Asparagus Production
3. Mulching Comparison for Melon Production
4. Quick Turnaround Cover Crops for Horticulture Systems
5. Sweet Pepper Variety Trial
6. Yield Data Collection in Horticulture Crops

Livestock

1. Apple Cider Vinegar Supplementation for Goats
2. Fly Monitoring in Cattle
3. Grazing Cover Crops
4. Grass Versus Grain finishing for Sheep
5. Limit Feeding Hogs
6. Ivomec Treatment of Hogs
7. Pasture Production Comparison With and Without Raw Milk Fertilization
8. Pasture Monitoring
9. Poultry Record Keeping
10. Grain-Free Hog Diets
11. Winter Feed Monitoring

On-Farm Energy

1. Getting Baseline Data on Farm Metered Energy Sources (electricity, diesel, gasoline, LP and natural gas)
2. Ground-Truthing Changes: Conservation and Renewable Energy Changes, including:
3. Biomass Burning (Shelled Corn, Wood Chips)
4. Solar Thermal & Gasification (Corn Cobs)
5. Wind Energy
6. Cooler Efficiency
7. Gasification (Wood)
8. Solar PV
9. Solar Thermal
10. Underground Storage and Curing Structure
11. Wind Energy
12. Aerobic Compost Heat Generator

***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.**

Linn

- Mike and Cheryl Hopkins – Walker
- Emma Johnson – Central City

Lucas / Marion

- Sean Skeeahan and Jill Beebout – Chariton

Mahaska

- Joel and Sam Groenenboom – Oskaloosa

Marshall

- Mark Runquist – Melbourne

Mills

- Steve McGrew – Emerson

Montgomery

- Mark Peterson – Stanton

Palo Alto

- Harn Soper and Dennis McDonald – Emmetsburg

Polk

- Tom Cory – Elkhart
- LaVon and Craig Griffieon – Ankeny
- Aaron Heley Lehman – Polk City
- Ben Saunders – Granger

Poweshiek

- Andy and Melissa Dunham – Grinnell

Shelby

- Bill Buman – Harlan
- Clark McGrath – Harlan
- Ron and Maria Rosmann – Harlan
- Ellen Walsh-Rosmann – Harlan

Sioux

- John Wesselius – Sioux Center

Story

- Sally Gran – Nevada
- Gary Guthrie – Nevada
- Joe Lynch – Ames
- Alice McGary and Nicholas Leete – Ames
- Mark Tjelmeland – McCallsburg

Tama

- Mark Pokorny – Clutier

Taylor

- Kelly Tobin – New Market

Warren

- Matt Russell and Patrick Standley – Lacona

Washington

- James Nisly – Kalona
- George Schaefer – Kalona
- Rob Stout – West Chester
- ISU Southeast Research and Demonstration Farm – Crawfordsville

Webster

- Dave Nelson – Fort Dodge
- Dawn Anderson – Badger

Winneshiek

- Bill Pardee – Decorah

Wright

- Tim Smith – Eagle Grove

Out of State

- John Arbuckle – La Plata, MO (Macon County)

Clay

- Paul Kassel – Spencer

Clinton

- Greg King – DeWitt

Dallas

- Craig Fleishman – Minburn
- Rick and Stacy Hartmann – Minburn

Emmet

- ISU Armstrong Research and Demonstration Farm – Armstrong

Franklin

- Margaret Smith and Doug Alert – Hampton

Greene

- Jim Funcke – Jefferson
- Scott Shriver – Jefferson

Grundy

- Fred Abel – Holland

Hancock

- Tim Landgraf and Jan Libbey – Kanawha

Hardin

- John Gilbert – Iowa Falls

Humboldt / Pocahontas

- Bob Lynch – Gilmore City

Ida

- Jerry Sindt – Holstein

Jefferson

- Francis Thicke – Fairfield

Johnson

- Susan Jutz – Solon

Keokuk

- Tim Sieren – Keota

Outreach Leaders Speak Out on Water Quality, Conservation

by Drake Larsen

Agriculture has been in the news a lot lately, from the Farm Bill on the national policy docket, to the inauguration of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, to a whiplash of weather leading to excess nitrates in Iowa's rivers and wreaking havoc with planting. In response, Practical Farmers' Outreach Leaders have been telling their farm stories to help center the conversation on farming that protects the land, builds community and brings the next generation back to the farm. Below are selections and excerpts from four newspaper articles published recently by or about Outreach Leaders.

1. "Farmers Have Conservation Tools"

by Dick Sloan

Originally printed May 11, 2013 in The Gazette – Cedar Rapids, Iowa



Farmers who want to protect the environment and their communities' future do have opportunities to refine their conservation plans and integrate several new techniques.

By adopting the Natural Resources Conservation Services' soil health management plan, farmers agree to add plant diversity and intensity (growing plants year-round), and limit physical disturbance (no-till and strip-till) to enhance crop production and soil function while improving air and water quality and energy efficiency.

When farmers begin to think more about the biology of healthy soils, they develop a longer view of all the factors related to soil health.

Another in-field tool to slow water runoff is establishing contoured prairie strips in fields. The strips to the east of my farmstead were planted in 2012 to a mix of more than 20 species of native grasses and forbs. The strategic placement of diverse perennials in my fields will reduce erosion and runoff as well as provide habitat for game, native birds and pollinators.

There is probably nothing we need more to secure Iowa's future than additional wetlands. Planning tools are being developed to identify small areas best suited to wetland development to restore a significant portion of Iowa's historic water storage capacity by using only a fraction of its land.

Applying innovations such as these on individual farms could assure Iowans that the valuable natural resources that we enjoy will continue to be available in a resilient future.

Dick Sloan farms near Rowley, growing corn and beans and raising hogs. Interested in soil and water conservation, Dick serves as an assistant commissioner with the Soil and Water Conservation District in Buchanan County.

2. "These Farm Changes Have Reduced Nitrates"

by Tim Smith

A letter to the editor originally printed June 9, 2013 in The Des Moines Register

My farm has belonged to my family since 1881. We grow corn and soybeans near Eagle Grove. I believe that every responsible farmer can and should make decisions on their farm to help reduce nitrates in Iowa's waterways. We have started using cereal rye as a cover crop. We also



apply nitrogen in the late spring, instead of fall, which is closer to when the corn needs it. Finally, we installed a bioreactor to help further reduce nitrogen leaving the farm through sub-surface tile drainage. Initially, I wasn't sure what real benefits to water quality these practices would bring. This spring, data showed that the nitrate concentrations in water flowing out of my tile were consistently more than 50 percent less than the water in Eagle Creek. As I continue to monitor the water coming off of my farm, I see now that there are solutions to our water pollution problem that I can implement today while still growing corn and soybeans successfully.

Tim Smith farms near Eagle Grove, growing corn and beans in a strip-till system. Farming in a watershed targeted by the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, Tim has been actively working on nutrient loss reduction strategies and monitoring the outcomes.

3. "Conservation Makes Sense for Farmers, Shrimp"

by Mark Peterson

Originally printed June 14, 2013 in the Iowa View section of The Des Moines Register

It is well understood around here that hard work and farming go hand-in-hand. With that hard work, though, comes great rewards. Farmers feed the world. In communities like Stanton, where we live, farmers help to drive the local economy and serve as anchors. Some of us sell food locally, others to national outfits. In short, the farm business is good business locally and it is good for America.

What happens on Iowa farms should stay on Iowa farms. In the process we become what I only somewhat jokingly refer to as



"shrimp huggers." What do I mean by that? If we keep our nutrients on the farm, they don't go down the river in the process, polluting the water and increasing the dead zone in the Gulf. So by doing this we become shrimp huggers!

Farmers across the country are now in our busy season, caring for crops, packaging up community supported agriculture (CSA) shares, heading to farmers markets and otherwise feeding the nation. It is hard work, and we wouldn't have it any other way.

Let's make sure our hard work results in a business model that is around for generations to come.

Mark Peterson farms near Stanton, Iowa, growing mostly corn and beans in a no-till system. This year for the first time Mark is raising cereal rye for seed. Mark is also a PFI board member.

4. "Local Farmer Spreads Benefits of Cover Crops"

Featuring Jeremy Gustafson

Cover story by Anthony Capps, originally printed April 1, 2013 in the Ames Tribune



Jeremy Gustafson's farmland was quite erodible and soil quality wasn't anything amazing. When it rained, the water would just hit the ground and then runoff. So about six years ago, Gustafson began using cover crops. Gustafson, of Boone and a farmer since 1995, said most kinds of grass will work as a cover crop, but cereal rye and oats are the most common. Cereal rye is the current top choice in Iowa. Radishes are also a good choice because they will scatter nutrients, he said. Gustafson got started with help from the the Natural Resources Conservation Service and has been working closely with Practical Farmers of Iowa to use cover crops.

Gustafson said cover crops are more about the long-term benefits. "You're watching your soil become more active and a better quality," he said. "It gets better with time. If you go out and scoop a shovel and crumble it, it's more like coffee grounds — not compact or chunky. It's a granular soil."

Jeremy Gustafson farms near Boone growing corn and beans and raising hogs. Last year, he was awarded the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award for his work with cover crops and other conservation practices.

These are just a few examples of the Outreach Leaders' efforts. Read more about the successes of this program on page 26 of this newsletter. ■

Lisa Schulte Moore a Leopold Fellow

PFI member Lisa Schulte Moore, an associate professor and ecologist at Iowa State University, was one of 20 researchers from across North America selected to receive a Leopold Leadership Fellowship, coordinated by the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University. The program offers two intensive training sessions a year apart to help fellows gain the skills, approaches, and theoretical frameworks for translating scientific knowledge to action and for catalyzing change to address the world's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges.



In June, Lisa — whose research focuses on investigating agricultural and forestry practices to help stem biodiversity loss, enhance water quality, curtail climate change and improve the quality of life — and the other fellows met for the first week-long training session, which focused on how to give good interviews on camera, write opinion articles for national newspapers and address Congress, in addition to other high-impact outreach skills. ■

Read more about Lisa and the fellowship at www.ag.iastate.edu/features/2013/communicating-new-vision-iowa-agriculture

Committee of Old Farmers

— A poem by Phil Specht

*Loud as I drive a country road
the committee of old farmers in uproar
no longer content to offer advice
when to plant, when to cut hay
the price of corn
the weather
now furious at the ground laid bare
violated by the downpour into gullies
finally holding my head in hand
I stop the pickup.
Most helpful when unanimous
but now arguing over where they went wrong
(for all old farmers love the land)
these the voices in my head
Father, Grandfather
neighbors Bob and Enoch and Henry
(three Henrys) intolerant of the mistake
of forgetting the lesson of the dust bowl
.... Ding Darling Big Hugh Bennett
forgetting Aldo Leopold
driving me to quiet all old advice
so I can finish my travel
for I too, upset by what I see
reach for answers deep
memories, voices, loves.*

Phil Specht runs a dairy farm near McGregor in northeastern Iowa. He first posted this poem on PFI's blog in response to Teresa Opheim's May 31 post "Washing Away Our Black Gold," about the record wet spring and its damaging effects to Iowa's land and soil. (If you want to read the poem in context, you can view the post at practicalfarmers.org/blog/2013/washing-away-our-black-gold). Phil gave us permission to re-print his poem here.

Cover Crops and Prevented Planting Information Guidance

by Sarah Carlson

The 2013 planting season has been a struggle not only to get crops in the ground but to understand the rapidly developing crop insurance and cover crop policies. Farmers and ranchers may have numerous questions regarding the use of cover crops on acres qualifying for prevented planting provisions under crop insurance policies. Below is clarification of the options farmers and ranchers may pursue when prevented planting occurs. For some producers, taking a reduced prevented planting payment and haying or grazing a cover crop may be the most economically beneficial option. Be sure to discuss all options with your crop insurance agent.

Cover crop options for farmers and ranchers with prevented planting on fields without a double-cropping history can pursue the following strategies:

1. To Maximize the Prevented Planting Payment:

- a). Declare prevented planting after the final planting date, leave the acreage idle (exposed, unplanted soil vulnerable to erosion, nutrient leaching and weed growth) and receive 100 percent of the prevented planting payment for that acreage.
- b). Declare prevented planting after the final planting date, plant a cover crop, but do not hay or graze the cover crop until Nov. 1 and receive 100 percent of the prevented planting payment for that acreage.

- c). Declare prevented planting after the late planting period (if one exists for the insured crop), leave the acreage idle (exposed, unplanted soil vulnerable to erosion, nutrient leaching and weed growth) and receive a reduced prevented planting payment for that acreage.

2. To Provide Some Prevented Planting Payment With the Option to Provide Some Forage:

- a). Declare prevented planting after the late planting period, plant a cover crop, but do not hay or graze the cover crop until November 1 and receive a reduced prevented planting payment for that acreage.
- b). Declare prevented planting after the final planting date and late planting

period, plant a cover crop after this period, hay or graze the cover crop prior to November 1 and receive a prevented planting payment equal to 35% of the original prevented planting guarantee for that acreage.

3. To Maximize the Forage Opportunity:

- a). Declare prevented planting and plant a cover crop before the final planting date or during the late planting period, hay or graze the cover crop prior to November 1 and receive no prevented planting payment.

For farmers and ranchers unfamiliar with cover crops, the following table provides some guidelines when considering options under prevented planting conditions. Consult with your agronomist before making any changes to your cropping plan. Also, be sure to consult with your county Natural Resources Conservation Service office about cropping options under any program including EQIP, CSP, or other working lands contracts. ■

(Continued on next page) ➡

Farewell PFI!

— Patrick Burke



Three years after moving to a flooded Ames, my wife Sarah has finished her master's program at Iowa State and we are heading closer to my stomping grounds in southwest Pennsylvania. It is with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to this incredible organization, all of you and the beautiful state of Iowa.

I won't deny my excitement at being closer to my family and the wooded hills of my youth, but I also can't deny the pang in my chest at the thought of leaving Iowa. I was just beginning to understand the love

for this fertile land that many of you have known since birth. Seeing your farms and hearing you speak about the land you steward, I understand. I hope to someday be as rooted to a place as you are to Iowa.

As far as jobs, Practical Farmers will be a tough act to follow (how many desk-jockeys can honestly say they look forward to their Monday morning staff meeting?). I hereby pass the reins of office management to the capable Erica Andorf, who is trained, enthused and ready for the task.

My next step is a total career change. I'm starting a freelance Web development

business called Gung-ho! Creative (www.gung-ho.co), and PFI will be my first client: I'm redesigning the website to be more streamlined and intuitive to use, to better match our branding and to work well on mobile devices. Look for those changes in the fall.

In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact me at patrick@gung-ho.co if you need any help with a Web project. It has been my pleasure and privilege to support PFI's work these past three years and to get to know many of you. Thanks for the knowledge, the friendship and the amazing food you've shared! ■

Table 1: Prevented planting options and economics

Prevented Planting (PP) Options	PP Payment / Acre	Nitrogen Storage*	Soil Erosion Prevention Value [^]	Fallow Syndrome Yield Reduction ⁺	Average Cover Crop Seed Cost / Acre	Potential Forage Value / Acre	Return / Acre
1. Option 1a: PP after final plant date, leave acres idle	\$600 (100% of original PP guarantee)	\$20 - \$40 loss AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 loss AVG: \$14	\$30 - \$90 loss AVG: \$60	\$0	\$0	\$496
Option 1b: Do not hay / graze a cover crop	\$600 (100% of original PP guarantee)	\$20 - \$40 AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 AVG: \$14	\$0	\$50	\$0 - \$200 (if harvestable after Nov. 1)	\$794 - \$594
Option 1c: PP during late planting period, leave acres idle	\$594 - \$450 (100% - 1% daily reduction; max 25 days)	\$20 - \$40 loss AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 loss AVG: \$14	\$30 - \$90 loss AVG: \$60	\$0	\$0	\$490 - \$346
2. Option 2a: Cover crop planted after late period	\$594 - \$450 (100% - 1% daily reduction; max 25 days)	\$20 - \$40 AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 AVG: \$14	\$0	\$50	\$0 - \$200 (if harvestable after Nov. 1)	\$588 - \$444: \$788 - \$644
Option 2b: PP after late planting period, plant a cover crop, hay or graze before Nov. 1	\$210 (35% of the original PP payment)	\$20 - \$40 AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 AVG: \$14	\$0	\$50	\$400 - \$1,000	\$604 - \$1,204
3. Option 3: PP before the final planting date, plant a cover crop, hay / graze before Nov. 1	\$0	\$20 - \$40 AVG: \$30	\$7 - \$21 AVG: \$14	\$0	\$50	\$400 - \$1,000	\$394 - \$994

Values in shaded rows listed in bold italic represent expenditures; numbers in unshaded rows represent additions.

Average of the range for Nitrogen Storage, Soil Erosion Prevention and Fallow Syndrome Yield Reduction are reported and used in the final calculations. Ranges are reported using the PP payment/acre and Potential forage value/acre. Estimates are taken from:

* Kaspar, T.C., and J.W. Singer. 2011. "The use of cover crops to manage soil." p. 321-337. In J.L. Hatfield and T.J. Sauer (eds.) "Soil management: Building a stable base for agriculture." American Society of Agronomy and Soil Science Society of America, Madison, WI

Clark, A., (ed.) 2007. "Managing cover crops profitably." Sustainable Agriculture Network, Beltsville, MD

[^] Duffy, M. (2012). "Value of soil erosion to the land owner." (No. 34959)

⁺ Ellis, J.R. 1998. "Post flood syndrome and vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi." Journal of Production Agriculture. Volume 11, no. 2: 200-204

Troeh, Z.I., and T.E. Loynachan. 2003. "Endomycorrhizal fungal survival in continuous corn, soybean, and fallow." Agron. J. 95:224-230

Post Flood and Fallow Syndrome examined by Daniel Wiersma and Paul Carter, Crop Insights. Pioneer International.

On the Blog: "Good Cover Crops Make Good Neighbors!"

Did you have to declare prevented planting? Seeding prevented planting acres with cover crops could provide livestock with extra feed.

Check out a recent PFI blog post by Livestock Coordinator Margaret Dunn on considerations when graziers and crop farmers partner together. The post, "Good

Cover Crops Make Good Neighbors," was published on July 19. View it at: practicalfarmers.org/blog/2013/good-cover-crops-make-good-neighbors. ■

New Healthcare Opportunities on the Horizon for Iowa Farmers

by Drake Larsen

Many PFI members that live or work in rural areas are familiar with the idea of a cooperative business, or co-op for short. Co-ops are businesses that are owned and democratically controlled by members, with decisions motivated not by profit but by a goal to provide high-quality goods or services at an affordable price. Grain co-ops, such as Heartland Co-op, grocery co-ops, such as the Iowa Food Cooperative, and community credit unions are familiar examples.

Health care cooperatives, operating on the same business principles, are a new arrangement that will soon offer alternatives to the individual and small-group health insurance markets they use today.

From the Practical Farmers' member survey we know that many of our members currently purchase health insurance in the individual and small group markets, and accordingly, are likely to purchase health insurance through this new cooperative arrangement in the future.

Love it or loath it, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – often colloquially referred to as "Obamacare" – is the most significant overhaul to health care in the United States since the passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. The

Affordable Care Act calls for the formation of the Consumer-Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP) Program, to facilitate the creation of qualified nonprofit health insurance issuers that offer competitive health plans to individuals and small groups. The new health care law mandates that health care co-ops must be not-for-profit and operate with low overhead (including constrained CEO salaries) in order to provide cost-efficient health care.

"Change is coming," says health care advocate and PFI member Susan Wallace. She says many peoples' gut reaction tends to be "I don't want the government making my health care decisions for me," but that "the reality is the insurance companies already make these decisions for us, and basically will continue to do so." She is excited about the prospects of the cooperative business model and explains, "The key is having more insurance options, at different premium levels, and having assistance in educating ourselves about health care and health insurance."

Along with other changes in the Affordable Care Act – such as providing insurance coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions, greater access to preventative services like mammograms and colonoscopies, and allowing young adults to remain on their parents' plan until age 26 – the cooperative health insurance model represents a big change to business as usual.

CoOpportunity Health to Serve Iowa and Nebraska

CoOpportunity Health has been approved by the federal government and will be the health care cooperative that will service Iowa and Nebraska. CoOpportunity Health (www.coopportunityhealth.com) was funded last year with a federal low-interest loan of \$112 million and is headquartered in Des Moines. The cooperative's insurance portfolio will include health plans for



individuals and families, small employer groups of up to 50 employees, and large fully insured or self-funded employers with more than 51 workers.

Initially named Midwest Members Health, CoOpportunity Health was one of the first nonprofit exchanges to be approved. To date, 24 CO-OPs have been approved in 24 states. Each co-op is coming together differently, as all are autonomous business ventures, but they follow a common set of rules spelled out in the Affordable Care Act. The co-ops are not allowed to develop and offer their own insurance policies, but rather act as an exchange, or health insurance marketplace. The role of the cooperatives is to foster competition, provide open access to healthcare benefits to more people and bring greater transparency to the health care market.

The enrollment period for joining a health insurance cooperative in the first year is Oct. 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014 and the first plans will be active on Jan. 1, 2014. CoOpportunity Health is now increasing outreach efforts to educate the public about the changes on the horizon. A free guide – the "Consumer Guide to the New Health Insurance Marketplace" – along with more information, can be requested on CoOpportunity Health's website at www.coopportunityhealth.com/readytohelp. ■

Insurance companies already make [health care] decisions for us and will continue to do so. The key is having more insurance options . . .

– Susan Wallace

On-Farm Energy Generation and Nature's Cycles at Growing Harmony Farm

by Rich Schuler

I visited Gary Guthrie for an interview on the summer solstice, the event marking the first day of summer. That day, June 21 in the northern hemisphere, is the longest period of daylight hours in the year, and weather permitting, the day that receives the greatest solar energy. The summer solstice seemed a perfect time to reflect on nature's cycles and how wind and solar energy complement each other throughout the year.

Gary connected his Skystream 3.7 (2.4 kW) wind turbine to the grid in March 2009, and it has proven to be a reliable electrical energy source for the farm. The average annual monthly energy production for the Southwest Power turbine has ranged from 358 to 390 kWh. However, the four lowest wind energy-producing months are June through September, so Gary added a 1.2 kW solar photovoltaic array in December 2012. The new array produces the most energy during those wind-deficient summer months. Since then, the farm's total electrical energy production for January through May (3,360 kWh) has exceeded its use (3,165 kWh).

I asked Gary (questions in bold below) about his on-farm energy systems, how he arrived at his current set-up and why renewable energy matters to him. Here's what he had to say:

Deep in our hearts we are concerned about global warming. Maybe I can't change the whole world, but at least I can do my part to respond.

Gary Guthrie and three of his four on-farm energy systems: solar photovoltaic array (left), LP storage tank (center) and wind turbine. (The other is chopped wood used for winter heating).



What are the energy sources for your farm (other than wind and solar PV)?

The majority of heating comes from wood, mainly procured from neighbors and friends. I tend to have two or three years' supply on hand. We supplement the wood heat with propane.

What energy efficiency steps did you take before installing renewable technologies?

We have all compact fluorescent lights and toggle switches on the TV and microwave. We upgraded our propane system and went from using 1,200 gallons of propane per year to 600. We also kept our farm small.

How does staying small help?

I've now cut back to help care for my aging parents, but at my largest I provided vegetables to 75 families, three Ames restaurants and a grocery store, on about 2 acres. Once you get much larger than that, you have to start investing in other infrastructure. You need a bigger vehicle to deliver, you need a large walk-in cooler, etc. – and all that requires greater energy use and cost.

How did you pay for the wind and solar PV energy systems?

We received a 30 percent federal tax credit for the \$15,000 wind turbine. The solar had the 30 percent federal tax credit, a 15 percent state tax credit, and Alliant Energy had a rebate program, which was a full third of the price. We spent just a couple thousand dollars on a \$9,000 solar array!

Why are you interested in energy conservation and alternative energy?

As we get older and think about retirement, you want to reduce costs. We don't want to have an electric bill to worry about in retirement until we decide to move off the farm.

More importantly: Deep in our hearts we are concerned about global warming. Maybe I can't change the whole world but I can at least do my part to respond. With my Franciscan background and my wife Nancy's Mennonite tradition, care of creation guides us. We want to leave our earth for not just our next generation but seven generations. ■

Update From the Media Frontline: Outreach Leaders Are Speaking Up

by Drake Larsen

Practical Farmers' Outreach Leader Program is nearing the end of its first successful year working to help members share their farm stories and become advocates for sustainable agriculture in Iowa media. The inaugural group of 11 leaders received media training in the summer of 2012, and a second cohort of nine attended an advocacy and storytelling retreat in March led by communications consultant John Capecci. Together, the 20 Outreach Leaders have successfully secured 78 outreach events – including 30 radio spots, 17 articles in farm publications, 16 public speaking events, 12 newspaper essays and three online features.

Several of these Outreach Leaders have also been featured in the dozen advertisements Practical Farmers has run in small-town newspapers and Wallaces Farmer magazine. Eleven more advertisements are slated to run this year, five in small-town newspapers, five in Wallaces Farmer and one in Iowa Farmer Today. The goal is to attract both farmers and non-farmers to PFI, promote the field day schedule and Cooperators' Program, and share their farm stories as well as our key message: "Growing more than crops, bringing more than food to the table."

In exchange for the training opportunity, participants in the Outreach Leader Program are expected to exercise their communication skills throughout the next year by helping to articulate PFI's mission and message. This includes giving two spoken presentations or publishing two articles in the press, as well as being available for media interviews as opportunities arise.

Twenty-five written articles featuring Outreach Leaders have been published in farm press – Wallaces Farmer, Agri

News and Iowa Farmer Today – and newspapers across the state. Some of these have been journalist-authored articles where leaders were interviewed, such as Jean Caspers-Simmet's coverage of the Frantzen legacy gift to PFI. Many popular press articles have been authored by the leaders themselves, such as a recent letter to the editor by Tim Smith and a guest essay by Mark Peterson in The Des Moines Register, and a feature article in The Gazette (Cedar Rapids) by Dick Sloan (see excerpts of these articles on pages 20-21). Other leaders have been featured in articles written by Practical Farmers' communications staff Drake Larsen and Tamsyn Jones.

PFI board member Mark Peterson has excelled at spreading the message over radio: He has secured more than 20 radio spots on multiple stations from his local KMA Radio in Red Oak to the popular "Big Show" on WHO Radio, which is broadcast statewide. Ellen Walsh-Rosmann spoke about the role of women in agriculture on Iowa Public Radio's "Talk of Iowa," and Jeremy Gustafson and Ann

Franzenburg have been featured on IPR in Harvest Public Media stories. Other leaders have been guests on WHO's "Sportsman's Notebook" to talk about on-farm habitat and conservation, and have been featured in Iowa News Service stories that are picked up by media outlets in Iowa and neighboring states.

Public speaking engagements include presentations at field days and cover crop training sessions with local Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners and Natural Resources Conservation Service agents. Outreach Leaders Dick Sloan and Mark Peterson have also travelled to Washington D.C. to share their stories with leaders in Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As you can see, the PFI Outreach Leaders have accomplished a lot already, but they're not finished yet: They have a goal to secure at least five media spots per month for the rest of the year.

If you are interested in becoming a future Outreach Leader, contact Drake at (515) 232-5661 or drake@practicalfarmers.org. ■



◀ A sample of the media coverage Outreach Leaders have secured in the past year. Topics have ranged from advocating cover crops and conservation practices to protect water quality, to the challenges of finding affordable health insurance for farmers.

Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness

by Fred Kirschenmann

Lisa Hamilton is one of our great artists. A skillful story teller, she is able to investigate complex issues and turn them into delightful, compelling stories. She has published stories in numerous magazines, including Harpers, Orion and The Atlantic. She was recently selected as one of the journalists to receive the prestigious 11th Hour Food and Farming Journalism Fellowship.

Her book, "Deeply Rooted," tells the stories of three farms, one in Texas, one in New Mexico and one in North Dakota. Each of these farms is unique and all are what we today call "unconventional" – that is, they are farms that have avoided the treadmill that Paul Thompson described as farms driven by a single ethic: "produce as much as possible, regardless of the cost." They are all farms that refused to buy into the "get big or get out" mandate and instead focused on a desire to "stay well and stay in."

This is not to imply that these farms are disinterested in financial sustainability, but Lisa found them to be "deeply rooted" in values that transcend yield and short-term economic return. All were focused on caring for the land, on the health of their communities, the uniqueness of place and mimicking nature. In other words, they are all farmers who operate on a principle articulated by Wendell Berry: "It All Turns on Affection."

Fred Kirschmenmann

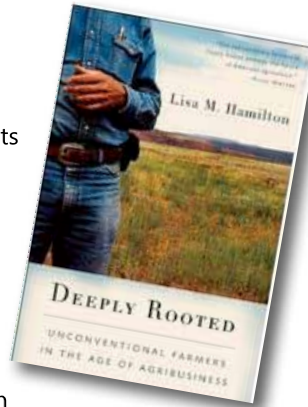


The centrality of affection became clear in many parts of Lisa's stories. For example, based on the time she spent with the rancher in New Mexico she soon learned from him that being on his farm "was less about being a rancher or a sheepherder per se. Those were just means of doing what really mattered: being on the land, and through that, being free." These farmers know that all farmers realize this is how agriculture "should be, but for a long time now it has been overshadowed by the constant need to produce more, faster, just to stay in business."

These farmers know that none of this is easy but that it is doable, and that it can be sustainable, especially in the face of future challenges. In an effort to prepare for those challenges the farmers in North Dakota, for example, became part of a "Farm Breeder Club" that focused on breeding seeds "for the future."

They recognized that all the "inputs" that provided the "scaffold of external supports" for industrial agriculture – "cheap fuel to run machinery, fertilizer manufactured from natural gas, imported water for irrigation, pesticides to eliminate insects, weeds, and diseases" – would no longer be readily available in the future, and that they needed to transform agriculture. As Lisa recounts in her book, "the world could not eat . . . without those external supports . . . oil and gas reserves were dwindling, aquifers were being drained [and]. . . climate change had already begun to amplify the challenges."

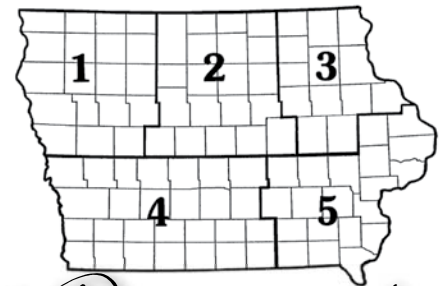
Consequently, the Farm Breeder Club focused on developing seeds that "would thrive without the scaffold and be resilient enough to withstand whatever curveballs climate change threw them." But it was not just about new adaptive seeds, it was also about a new system of farming. Instead



of maximum, efficient production for short-term economic return, "the goal here is to get the maximum from the minimum" by engaging nature's free ecosystem services and designing systems that were as self-renewing and self-regulating as possible – mimicking nature.

Having been privileged to get to know many of the farmers in PFI, it is clear to me that these "deeply rooted" farmers are also the farmers of PFI. ■

Fred Kirschenmann is a Distinguished Fellow at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; a professor in the ISU Department of Religion and Philosophy; and serves as President of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, New York. He also continues to manage his family's 1,800-acre certified organic farm in south-central North Dakota.



Welcome, new members!

District 1–Northwest

- Marc Chapman, Le Mars
- Kent Dittmer, Holstein
- Jerry Groth, Battle Creek
- David Kiel, Orange City
- Barry Kusel, Manning
- Jason and Julie Madden, Akron
- Doug and Joanne Peters, Newell
- Corey Schink, Sioux City
- Paul and Lavonne Sporrer, Dedham
- Dick Sporrer, Dedham
- Neil Vonnahme, Arcadia

District 2–North Central

- Saul Abarca-Orozco, Ames
- Ames Community School District, Mike Todd, Ames
- Jacob Bolson, Hubbard
- Jack Boyer, Reinbeck
- Fred Fillman, Paton
- Julie and Jeff Forgy, Dows
- Kara Grupp, Ames
- Logan Handsaker, Ames
- Keith Hauge, Jewell
- Adam Ledvina, Toledo
- Arliss and Jacque Nielsen, Woolstock

(Continued on page 30) ➔

Erica Andorf Joins PFI as New Office Manager

I was born and raised in Iowa. I grew up on a large farm in Rowley for the first 14 years, spending most of my time outside from the time the sun came up until it set. I loved to snack on peas, carrots, strawberries and whatever else was coming up. We then moved to 14 acres in Brandon where my parents developed a half-acre organic garden. They taught me the importance of farming and gardening. My mother also canned and froze vegetables for consumption all year long.

Through the years, I attended Hawkeye Community College, worked in various office settings and raised two children, Blayne and Marcus. In 2009, after tremendous flood damage to my home I moved to the Ames area to be closer to my brother.

I have 20 years of combined office and management experience that includes non-profit experience. I am currently finish-



From left to right: Erica Andorf, Marcus and Blayne Coleman, and Rod Foreman.

ing my Business Administration degree from DMACC.

I am excited to join the PFI staff and become part of an organization that supports and honors farmers across America, and that's trying to make the world a more sustainable place. It is impressive how much passion and hard work the staff here put into their positions.

Farm to School Seeking Produce Through Online Directory

Farm to School is in need of locally grown produce. Tools have been put in place to simplify the ability for food service to procure the products they are looking for. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) recently partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to create an online bid sheet tool. School Food Authorities (SFAs) are able to go to the online directory, search for the product they are seeking in a vicinity near them and send a bid request to growers. With the use of geographical preference the grower

can obtain a fair and reasonable price and have a solid, repeat market.

The directory is free. Growers in the directory will have access to additional upcoming marketing opportunities as well as fresh fact brochures for distribution to their customers. The Fresh Facts offer information including: nutrition, recipes, fun facts, picking, storage, Iowa history and a place for growers to affix their label; and they are FREE!

Enroll in the directory today by visiting www.idalsdata.org/fmnp/index.cfm. ■

Sarah Carlson Segues to New PFI Role

Sarah Carlson has a new job title at Practical Farmers: Midwest Cover Crop Research Coordinator. In this role, she will capture information from farmers inside and outside Iowa about their most pressing cover crop research questions. She will also comb through already published literature and on-farm trial results from PFI and other organizations to place articles in the farm press about

potential solutions, and she will work with researchers and funders to increase the amount of cover crop-related on-farm and university research being conducted across the Midwest. Sarah will still attend and organize cover crop events in Iowa, and her PFI contact information remains the same. Starting in August, Stefans Gailans will join PFI's staff as the new on-farm research coordinator. ■

CSA Mini School – Coming in December

Save the Date: Join PFI Dec. 13-14 for a two-day CSA mini school. Presenters will include Steve Pincus, of Tipi Produce in Evansville, Wisc., and Rebecca Graff, of Fair Share Farm in Kearney, Mo. Location and more details coming soon!

I know this is an organization where my children can be proud of where I spend my day.

In my spare time, I enjoy going to my children's sporting events, reading non-fiction, watching movies, practicing FengShui and working to make my yard look beautiful with flowers and herbs. ■

New Round of SIP Applications Opens

PFI is now accepting applications from beginning farmers to the fourth round of the Savings Incentive Program. Those admitted will be part of the class of 2015.

Applications will be accepted from Aug. 1 to Oct 4. Selections will be made in early November. There are 25 spots available – but only viable applicants will be accepted. Those admitted are selected by a committee of PFI members using a scoring system that rewards a noticeable commitment to developing applicants' independent farming goals and dreams. To date, about 60 people have been or are currently active in the program.

Those accepted to the program will be able to:

- Open a farm savings account and save up to \$100 per month
- Meet with their assigned mentor three times during the first year
- Use program resources to create a viable business plan
- Attend at least four PFI events each year

Upon completion of all program requirements, PFI will match participants' program savings up to \$2,400. Applications are available online (practicalfarmers.org), or paper versions may be requested by calling (515) 232-5661. ■

PFI Says Goodbye to a Very Good Friend

Long-time PFI member Dan Specht, 63, of McGregor, Iowa, died as a result of a farm accident on July 8, 2013.

Dan was born May 29, 1950 in Monticello, Iowa, the son of Max and Loretta Thalacker Specht. His education began in a one-room school, followed by graduation from Monticello High School. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Northern Iowa. Dan lived and farmed near McGregor from 1973 until the time of his death.

Dan was a passionate conservationist who employed farming practices that promoted diverse plant species as well as habitat for song birds and other wildlife. His love of fishing and hunting gave him joy in his recreation.

Dan was prolific in his ideas and constant in his support for sustainable farming practices, serving as a board member on the Land Stewardship Project; Practical Farmers of Iowa; Award Committee for Sustainable Agriculture, Research and Education (SARE); and the USDA Task Force on the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. He testified often in Washington, D.C., providing expertise on conservation, sustainable agricultural practices and farming issues related to systemic change in policy. His leadership in agricultural issues spanned local, regional, statewide and national arenas.

Dan was a leader and visionary who gave voice to a human food production system that would fit into the natural world and would add to the value of what is done



in the process. Because Dan gave freely of his experience and expertise, in lieu of flowers the family requests that memorial funds be sent to Practical Farmers of Iowa, earmarking the beginning farmer-grazier program in memory of Dan Specht and his profound knowledge and contribution to sustainable farming and living and, as Dan would say, "how it all fits together."

Dan is survived by his four siblings: David Specht, New Lisbon, WI; Elizabeth [Steve] Johnson, Monticello; Paul [Kim] Specht, Monticello; Philip [Sharon] Specht, McGregor; many nieces and nephews; and his very close friend, Mary Damm. He was preceded in death by his parents and his nephew, Nathan Specht.

A memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 20, 2013 at Pike's Peak State Park in McGregor.

Dan was one of PFI's most frequent field day attendees and on-farm research and demonstration cooperators. He was curious, thoughtful and wise. May we continue our work in his memory. ■

“May he be a forever example of what agriculture should be all about: loving the land, caring for all things living and appreciating the beauty all around us.”

— Tom and Irene Frantzen

PFI Members Remember Dan

- Dan really did know just what the animals needed, and he knew just exactly how to move them and keep them healthy and happy.

— James Frantzen

- Dan knew the birds and the plants well and he was just as excited about a plant he would find in a new place as anything.

— Jack Knight

- I will always think of him as one of the best practitioners of what he believed farming should and could be. I will miss those after-meeting beers and sharing of experiences and concerns the most.

— Ron Rosmann

- Dan knew so much about the land and yet he was so humble. I admired his taking the time to go to D.C. and try to bring his sensibilities to policymakers.

— Kamyar Enshayan

- Dan always asked me for advice about how to plan / cook a meal for his field day. I'm sure he cared and loved good food and drink, but I think he was doing this in part because he knew that food was the language I feel fully competent to speak. He had that kind of genuine sensitivity and kindness.

— Tomoko Ogawa

“Dan was one of my heroes, partly for what he believed, but more for living those beliefs.”

— Vic Madsen

◀ (Continued from page 27)

- Cody Prantner, Hampton
- Joseph Reutter, Boone
- Ralph Rosenberg, Ames
- Don Sandell, Fort Dodge
- Steven Stamper, Gilmore City

District 3–Northeast

- Gary Beeler, Peru
- Darrel Branhagen, Decorah
- Ann Bushman, Fort Atkinson
- Robert Ehr, Waterloo
- Michael and Katherine Fisher, Coggon
- Iowa Waste Reduction Center, Dan Nickey, Cedar Falls
- Kristofor Johnson, Pella
- Alen Kajtezovic, Waterloo
- David McKechnie, Atkins
- John Muench, Aurora
- Dale and Sonya Nimrod, Decorah
- Caite and Jim Palmer, Castalia
- Brandon Reis, Cresco
- Douglas Roy, Keystone
- Jeff Seago, Elkader
- Ryan Svoboda, Rowley
- Winneshiek County SWCD, Todd Duncan, Decorah

District 4–Southwest

- Eat Greater Des Moines Food System Council, Aubrey Martinez, Des Moines
- Robert and Ruth Harvey, Redfield
- Justin and Beth Jordan, Lacona
- Kenneth and Kimberly Lager, Bedford
- Jerry Laughlin, Imogene
- Maple Edge Farms, Jon Bakehouse, Hastings
- Amanda McCumbee, Knoxville
- David and Mary Lynne Ohnemus, Milo
- Julia Phipps, Des Moines
- Proteus, Inc. Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, Des Moines

- Charlie and Mary Reeves, Des Moines
- Don Suyeyasu, Des Moines
- Thomas Wind, Jamaica

District 5–Southeast

- William Boland, Fairfax
- James and Jennifer Briggs, Montrose
- Trey Forbes, Lone Tree
- Ryan Goddard, Letts
- Nora Heinichen, Marengo
- Iowa City Summer of Solutions, Eli Shepherd, Iowa City
- Forrest Kelly, Tipton
- Patty and Kenneth Koller, Donnellson
- Bob Lorenz and Colleen Reardon, Tipton
- Dianne Prichard, DeWitt
- Samuel Rollins, Davenport
- Diane Rosenberg, Fairfield
- Dick Schwab, Solon
- Tim Sieren, Keota
- Welter Seed and Honey Co., Dan Welter, Onslow
- James Yungclaus, Grinnell

District 6–Out of State

- Dudley Alexander, Lawrence, KS
- John Arbuckle, La Plata, MO
- Cannon River Watershed Partnership, Elizabeth Kallestad, Northfield, MN
- Devin Chipman, Good Hope, IL
- Debra Cochrane, Valemount, BC, Canada
- John Krzton-Presson, Trinity, TX
- Terri Lawton, Blackstone, MA
- National Wildlife Federation, Patricia White, Washington D.C.
- R.J. Ottaviano, Johnstown, CO
- Jeremiah Spiwak, Deerfield, IL
- Mary Walker-Chyle, Leakey, TX

UPCOMING EVENTS – AUGUST | SEPT. | OCTOBER

Aug. 4 – Farm Dreams Workshop | Winona, MN | Land Stewardship Project | 1-5 p.m.

Farm Dreams is an entry-level workshop designed to help those seeking practical, commonsense information on whether sustainable farming is the next step for them. For more, visit: landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/farmdreams

Aug. 5 – Organic Farm School: Basics of Urban Beekeeping | Minneapolis | Women's Environmental Institute | 6-8 p.m. | \$20

With Erin Rupp and Kristy Allen (Beez Kneez). Learn more at on-site workshops, field days and urban farming projects. Join the new farm-for-food synergy. For more, visit: www.w-e-i.org

Aug. 8 – Compost and Organic Field Day | Beresford, SD | South Dakota State University | 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society will host this all-day event at SDSU's Southeast Research Station. The event includes workshops, tours and demonstrations of the principles and general practices for making compost; several different cover crop blends, merits and species selection; and use of flame weeding in organic row crop production. For more, visit: npsas.org

Aug. 8 – Goat Milk Processing | East Troy, WI | Michael Fields Agricultural Institute | 9 a.m. - Noon

Use fresh goat's milk in the kitchen to make a variety of goat milk products such as chèvre, yogurt and ricotta. This is a hands-on workshop where participants will help prepare the goat milk goods from start to finish. New this year, we will also cover how to make goat milk ice cream. For more, visit: michaelfields.org/events/goat-milk-processing-2/6

Aug. 9-10 – Soil Health Expo | Columbia, MO | University of Missouri | FREE | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

This two-day exposition is hosted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and University of Missouri (MU) and will feature vendors, tours, demonstrations, and two nationally known cover crop leaders (Steve Groff and Joel Gruver). MU professors and technicians from a soil health laboratory established by MU and NRCS will have a training session each day on how to sample fields for soil health and how to interpret the results. Admission is free, but attendees are asked to pre-register by calling (573) 884-7945, sending a text message to (660) 351-4696 or emailing mosoilhealthexpo@gmail.com. For more, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mo/newsroom/releases/?cid=STELPRDB1143333

Aug. 10 – Isolation Methods Workshop | Decorah, IA | Seed Savers Exchange

Gain hands-on skills in Cucurbit and corn pollination, as we discuss the isolation needs of different vegetables. Registration required. For more, visit: www.seedsavers.org

Aug. 20-22 – "Grassfed Rising: Building the Soil-Grass Connection" | Bismarck, ND | The Grassfed Exchange

The Grassfed Exchange will host its annual conference in North Dakota that will include a day-long tour of leading cover cropping operations and two days of seminars and a trade show. The theme this year is soil quality and how grassfed operations can be leaders in this area. Leopold Center Distinguished Fellow Fred Kirschenmann is a keynote speaker. For more, visit: www.grassfedexchange.com/conference

Aug. 21 – Flame Weeding Workshop | Concord, NE | University of Nebraska | 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. | Cost: \$100

Learn proper flaming techniques to control over 10 major Midwestern weeds in seven agronomic crops (field corn, sweet corn, popcorn, soybean, sorghum, sunflower and wheat). This event will feature research presentations, equipment demonstrations and talks by organic farmers with experience using flame weeding. The workshop is limited to 30 people, and includes lunch and a flame weeding manual. Partial scholarships are available to certified organic farmers from Nebraska. For more information or to register, contact Wendy Winstead at (402) 584-3837 or wwinstead2@unl.edu. See the full itinerary at www.moses-organic.org/attachments/events/8.21flameweeding.pdf

Aug. 23-25 – Restoration Ag 101: Keyline Farm Design-Perennial Food and Forage | Iowa City, IA | Cost: \$249

Hosted at VersaLand Farm, this course will be guided by Mark Shepard, a farmer and designer of world-class reputation and author of "Restoration Agriculture." Learn about Keyline design, fruit and nut polycultures, silvopasture, multi-species grazing, alleycropping and electric tractor power on a perennial farmstead-in-progress working to implement these practices. For more details, visit: www.versaland.com/workshops

Aug. 25 – Wild Edibles of Late Summer | Caledonia, IL | Angela Organics | 2-6 p.m. | \$60

Learn to recognize and forage wild edible plants from woodlands and fields – like sumac, bee balm and elderberry – then return to the kitchen to learn techniques to make teas, jellies and more with the herbs, flowers and berries of late summer. For more, visit: www.learngrowconnect.org/node/4872

Sept. 14 – Native Plant Restoration | Grinnell, IA | Iowa Valley Continuing Education | 9 a.m. – Noon | Cost: \$8

The second of two introductory workshops in the series "Restoring Our Rich Natural Heritage with Native Plants," this course begins with a field experience exploring native plantings and restoration of natural areas, with attention paid to moisture availability, sunlight and shade, topography, soil type and history of native plants in the area before 1850. The course continues with a presentation on tallgrass prairie restoration. A Q&A session will follow, and handouts on getting started with native plantings will be provided. Pre-register by Sept. 6. For more: www.iavalley.edu/ivce/ce_schedule/environment.html

Sept. 27 – Farm Preservation in Estate Planning | East Troy, WI | Michael Fields Agricultural Institute | 1-4 p.m.

Learn about issues to consider as you begin to develop, communicate and implement a succession plan for your farm, and what preservation options are available to help you make the best decision for your farm's future. For more, visit: michaelfields.org/events/farm-preservation-in-estate-planning-2

Oct. 11-13 – Seed Saving Workshop | Decorah, IA | Seed Savers Exchange

Learn about the seed industry and the tradition of sharing seed; technical skills like hand-pollination and seed processing; the biological and ecological concepts of seed saving. Registration required. For more, visit: www.seedsavers.org

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

Grow your farm with PFI. Join today!

This annual membership is a:

- ☐ New membership
☐ Renewal

I am joining at the level of:

- ☐ Student—\$20
☐ Individual—\$40
☐ Farm or Household—\$50
☐ Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—\$100
☐ Lifetime Member—\$1,000

My interest in joining PFI is primarily as a:

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

How did you hear about Practical Farmers of Iowa?

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

Sustain PFI

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

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

JOIN OUR GIFT OF THE MONTH CLUB

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

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

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

Thank you!

Individual, Farm or Organization Name*: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Primary Phone (with area code): _____

Alternate Phone (with area code): _____

Email: _____

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

Payment:

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

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

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



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for its connections
to local farmers
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and good stewardship
Communities alive with
diverse connections between
farmers and friends of farmers



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the fresh air and the clean water
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