

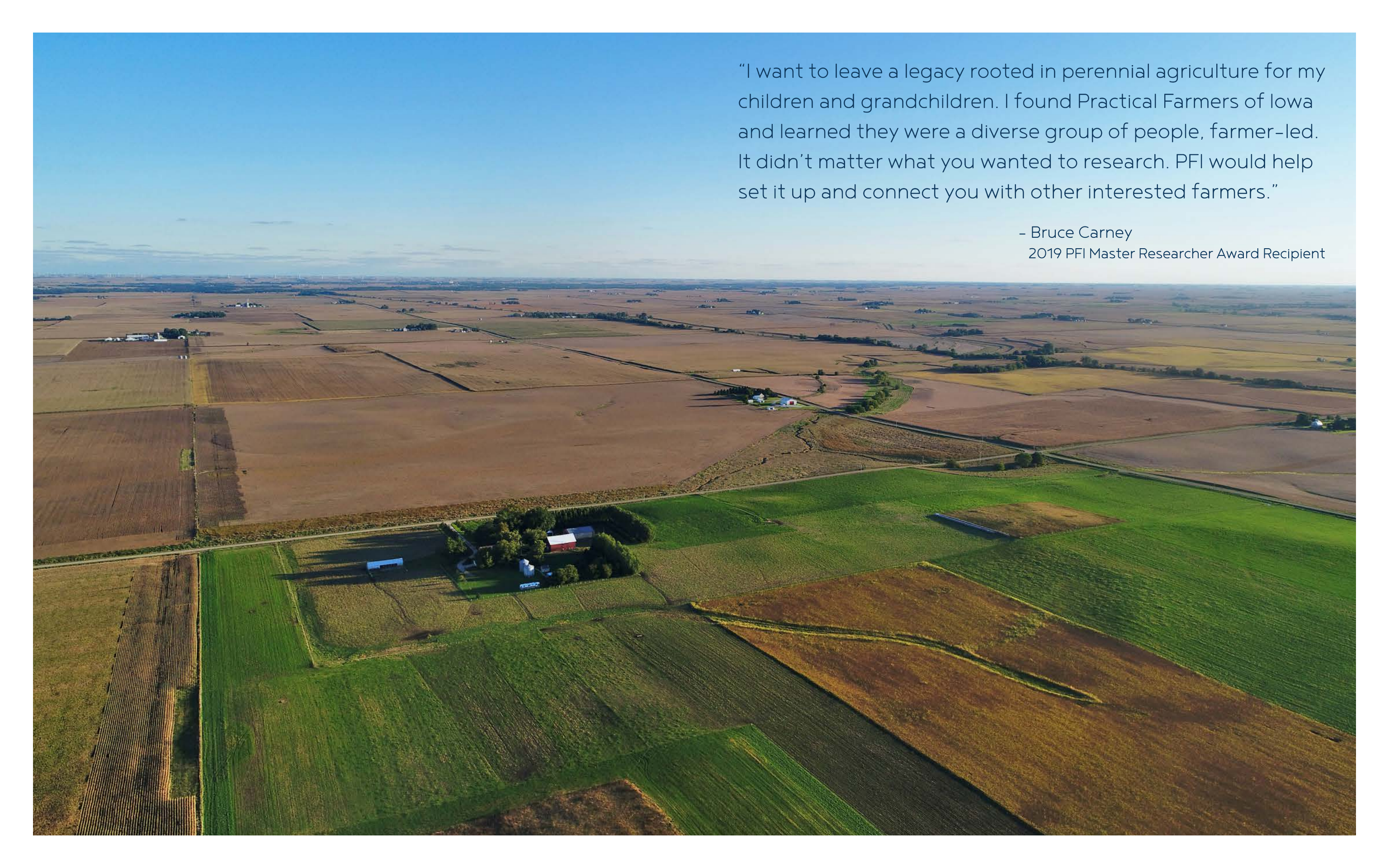


PRACTICAL
FARMERS
of Iowa



2019
Annual Report

PRACTICALFARMERS.ORG



“I want to leave a legacy rooted in perennial agriculture for my children and grandchildren. I found Practical Farmers of Iowa and learned they were a diverse group of people, farmer-led. It didn’t matter what you wanted to research. PFI would help set it up and connect you with other interested farmers.”

– Bruce Carney
2019 PFI Master Researcher Award Recipient

Our Mission

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Our Vision

An Iowa with healthy soil, healthy food, clean air, clean water, resilient farms and vibrant communities.

Our Values

Welcoming everyone

Farmers leading the exchange of experience and knowledge

Curiosity, creativity, collaboration and community

Resilient farms now and for future generations

Stewardship of land and resources

PFI Staff

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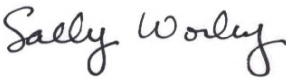
From the Director

Practical Farmers of Iowa's big tent continued to grow in 2019: 4,250 members, an all-time high, came to PFI to openly learn and share with one another. I am proud of the diversity of members' enterprises, practices, paradigms and interests. I am grateful for their commitment to sharing their experience and knowledge with others.

Thanks to strong member leadership and engagement, we continue to build a supportive network by getting people together; conducting on-farm research; and sharing stories full of the what, how and why of our members' actions. As our network and reach expand, we are also broadening our borders beyond Iowa and to a more diverse group within Iowa.

As 2020 dawned to mounting anxiety and an unfolding global crisis, we have witnessed the resilience of Practical Farmers' community – and the need to stay connected and support each other. The upheaval of 2020 will leave its imprint on everyone, but there is a silver lining: the enormity of the pandemic has magnified the vulnerabilities in our food and farming system, those that PFI farmers have been working to overcome. As we emerge and rebuild on the other side of the crisis, we have an unparalleled opportunity to move forward with invigorated purpose and hope.

The PFI community is here for you. While some of the world is on pause, planting and farm work continue. We will survive 2020, and thrive into the future by collaborating with each other. For now, I look forward to connecting virtually. Soon, we will all come together again in person to enjoy the beauty and diversity of Iowa farms. Together we will make positive change.



Sally Worley

From the President

Thank you for being a part of Practical Farmers of Iowa! It is apparent that here, we build community. PFI began in the midst of the farm crisis of the 1980s. Some farmers decided they wanted a different trajectory for their future. Thirty-four years and 4,250 members later, we have forged a community that is strong and resilient. I bet that if you started a conversation with someone on the street you've never met, and they told you they were a PFI member, you'd feel an instant bond.

Building community takes time and effort. As time passes, the elasticity and resiliency of the network increase. We see this in almost all aspects of the natural world – such as the soil we are working to regenerate. Bonds are strong and they are resilient over time.

As we navigate our farming future in a changing political landscape, a changing climate, a changing economy where there will be some rough times – and in this worldwide pandemic – remember that we are doing it together. Farming in general is full of variables, ups and downs and wins and losses. Just remember that you always have us, a base of people who believe in you and what you're doing, and whom you can learn from and lean on. We are in this together, weathering this storm figuratively and literally.



Wendy Johnson

Getting People Together

Fostering meaningful connections is at the heart of our work – whether it’s bringing farmers together to learn from one another, supporting beginning and transitioning farmers or partnering with other groups to expand our reach and impact. Thanks to these productive partnerships, the breadth and depth of our community continues to grow. Kayla Koether, aspiring farmer and Iowa State University food systems specialist near Decorah, says, “These connections have kept us inspired and connected, and helped us feel purposeful in sharing and receiving knowledge and working towards a revitalized rural landscape.”

With the help of members, peer agricultural and conservation organizations, universities and private industry, we organized **240 unique conference sessions, field days, workshops, phone and online learning experiences, meet-ups and informal socials** where farmers and friends of farmers could connect and learn.

Matching events to members’ needs and interests

When we say farmers drive our programming at PFI, it’s not idle talk. We listen to feedback from our members and respond to their evolving needs and interests. For instance, organic field days continue to attract significant interest from farmers. To meet this need, we planned a suite of field days in 2019 exploring facets of organic production – and they were once again a big draw: 128 gathered at Rosmann Family Farm near Harlan to learn about farm resilience in a changing climate. Another 110 people gathered at the Wangsness farm to learn how flame-weeders and electricity can be used to manage weeds.

Habitat and edge-of-field conservation are also areas of growing interest among PFI members. In response, we planned a series of events in 2019 delving into varied nuances of these topics. At a field day near Lewis, for instance, tenant Bob Zimmerman shared how he worked with landowner Del Brehmer and Pheasants

Forever to develop 560 acres into a wildlife oasis. Joined by Pheasants Forever biologists Nicholas Salick, Kelsey Fleming and Josh Divan, Bob discussed the history of the South Place Farm that he’s managed for the last 20 years with wildlife conservation as a specific goal.

The operation epitomizes a fruitful partnership. From upland buffer strips to sedimentation basins with stop-log control structures, Bob has worked with Pheasants Forever to install a variety of conservation practices that benefit wildlife, water quality and agricultural resiliency. “It really is a partnership,” Bob says. “It wouldn’t have got done without the technical and cost-share know-how that Pheasants Forever provided.”

One attendee said of the field day: “It was hands-on practical. I learn best seeing and touching, not so much reading.” The field day inspired that attendee to plan on incorporating quail and pheasant strips on their land.

Creating communities of support

While many of our events focus on specific topics, some PFI events are centered on building relationships. We know farmers learn best from their peers, and we made a point to plan gatherings in 2019 for fruit and vegetable farmers, graziers and farmers who use or are curious about cover crops, as well as socials hosted by members across the state.

Danelle Myer operates One Farm near Logan and hosted a fruit and vegetable farmer meet-up in 2019. For her, the chance to connect informally with other growers helped her realize the vital role such gatherings play in fostering a nurturing community of farmers who care about each other’s success. “The meet-up was a pivotal moment for me,” Danelle says. “It was a full house, overwhelming in a good way. It made me realize PFI is creating a community of growers that wouldn’t be connected and cooperating otherwise.”



Bob Zimmerman



Logan fruit and vegetable farmer meet-up

Our annual conference and field days brought people together to connect over common interests. More than **730 people gathered** for our 2019 annual conference, Cultivating Connections, and **2,250 attended 48 field days**.

Working together toward shared goals

Partners have always been integral to our work. Late PFI member Chris Blanchard liked to invoke an old adage, “Many hands make light work.” While our missions may vary, we and our partners believe collaboration enables us all to rally around shared goals and amplify our collective impact. Expanding cover crop acres in Iowa and supporting more farmers who want to add cover crops are mutual goals for many Iowa groups. Not only do cover crops benefit soil and water quality, they can help farmers control weeds, manage variable weather conditions and reduce input costs.

In the spirit of collaborating toward this shared goal in 2019, PFI partnered with 18 organizations to bring nearly 100 farmers and 30 non-farmers together to learn the latest cover crop research and practice sharing cover crop stories.

PFI partnered with 18 groups on a cover crop boot camp

- Coalition to Support Iowa’s Farmers
- Iowa Ag Water Alliance
- Iowa Cattlemen’s Association
- Iowa Corn Growers
- Iowa Dairy Association
- Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship
- Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
- Iowa Learning Farms
- Iowa Pork Producers
- Iowa Poultry Association
- Iowa Seed Association
- Iowa Seed Corn Initiative
- Iowa Soybean Association
- Iowa State University
- Iowa Turkey Federation
- La Crosse Seed
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Soil Health Partnership



Molly Schintler

“PFI goes above and beyond in keeping programs farmer-centered and farmer-led.” – Molly Schintler

Helping the next generation

Native Iowan Molly Schintler started farming in New York. She found PFI soon after moving back to Iowa, and is currently farming near Mechanicsville at Echollective Farm. Molly is part of PFI’s Savings Incentive Program, which provides business plan assistance, education, access to a peer network and mentoring over a two-year span. With the support of generous donors, participants’ savings are matched upon graduating from the program and are meant to be put toward the purchase of a farm asset.

“PFI is one of the reasons I stayed farming, and stayed farming in Iowa,” Molly says. “PFI goes above and beyond in keeping programs farmer-centered and farmer-led.”

According to Iowa State University, 60% of Iowa farmland is owned by people over the age of 65, and 35% of Iowa farmland is owned by those older than 75 years of age. Farmland in Iowa is changing hands and will continue doing so at an accelerating rate. Practical Farmers of Iowa organized farm transfer events regionally throughout 2019, starting with the performance of the PFI-commissioned play “Map of my Kingdom,” written and directed by Mary Swander. This one-woman play encourages discussion on the personal and complex issues of farm legacy and transfer. In the play, lawyer Angela Martin says, “Many farmers don’t talk much about money or anything else . . . and land transition takes talk. A lot of talk.”

Over 190 people attended the performances. They were followed up with events such as the Next Generation Summit and farm transfer workshops to help farmers and landowners progress on their farm transfer journeys.



Cover Crop Boot Camp

Connecting Ideas and Farmers Through On-Farm Research

At Practical Farmers, we have a robust tradition of farmers using on-farm research to answer their specific farming questions. Farmers lead the process, posing the questions and conducting the research themselves. Results from these trials not only empower farmers to make decisions about their operations, they influence discussion and practices well beyond the farm gate. Research data is published in reports, presented at events, featured in the media and peppered in conversations among farmers. One example of a viral research project is our 60-inch corn trial.

🌱 Since 1987, **241 farmer researchers have conducted 1,443 PFI trials.**
In 2019, **50 farmers conducted 72 on-farm trials.**

A trial is born

PFI member Bob Recker first tried 60-inch row spacing for corn in 2017. After learning about small demonstrations of wide-row corn, PFI farmers immediately saw opportunities for cover crops. On-farm research ideas were born and farmers designed experiments to see if the strategy could work on their farms. For the past two years, PFI cooperators planted corn in 30-inch and 60-inch row-widths, followed by interseeding cover crops in early June. They looked at how row-width affected corn yield and at the biomass produced by the cover crops.

Seeding cover crops in early June, when corn is about a foot tall, presents opportunities for multiple cover crop species, from nitrogen-fixing legumes like cowpeas, sunn hemp and crimson clover to other species like annual ryegrass, rapeseed, radish, buckwheat and many others that can't be seeded in the fall in Iowa. These species require warmer temperatures to germinate and grow than cereal rye. Warm temperatures and timely rains in June encourage good germination. Typically, corn is planted in 30-inch-wide rows that quickly canopy, resulting in little to no cover crop growth. A wider corn row increases the chances of successful growth.

Results so far

After two years of on-farm research, planting corn in 60-inch row-widths has resulted in statistically equal grain yields to corn planted in 30-inch row-widths in four of the 10 trials. In the six other trials, corn yields dropped by 5-30% when planted in the wider rows. Biomass production is especially tantalizing, however. In five of the seven trials sampled over the two years, cover crops interseeded to corn in 60-inch row-widths produced far more biomass – a promising result for livestock farmers seeking ways to extend fall grazing, and a compelling reason for planting corn in 60-inch row-widths.

Potential trial benefits



FORAGE

By the time corn is harvested in the fall, having 1-2 tons per acre of biomass or more of forage in the field is a boon to farmers with cattle or sheep to graze. Any forage to graze in the fall can help farmers save money on hay or other stored feeds they'd otherwise need to feed their livestock.



DIVERSITY

Having more species of plants on the landscape benefits both soils and ecosystems. Varied plant rooting structures improves soil structure, soil stability and water infiltration, traits that help reduce soil erosion and nutrient loss. A diverse plant community can also harbor beneficial insects and other predators that can help mitigate crop pests, potentially lessening reliance on chemical inputs and lowering input costs.



NITROGEN

Incorporating nitrogen-fixing legumes into cropping systems boosts a soil's capacity to supply nitrogen to cash crops. Legumes form a special relationship with bacteria in the soil known as rhizobia. These bacteria fix nitrogen from the air and make it available to the legume in exchange for carbon from the host plant. As legume plant material decomposes, soil microbes make the atmospherically derived nitrogen in the plant material available to succeeding crops in the rotation. This can lessen a farmer's reliance on chemical fertilizers and reduce input costs.



Bob Recker

Curiosity contagion

Cooperator Jack Boyer of Reinbeck says, “Of all the many on-farm research trials I’ve done, this is the one that has by far generated the most interest from other farmers. I get calls every few days about this trial.” Jack regularly presents about this trial to interested audiences.

Online forums, including the Facebook group Everything Cover Crops and the web forum New Ag Talk, have had lively discussions that show how far the interest in 60-inch rows has spread.

At the 2020 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, for instance, Sebastien Angers, a farmer from Quebec, Canada, approached PFI staff to share his excitement

for Cooperators’ Program research. After finding the research report on 60-inch row-widths, Sebastien was inspired to conduct his own “solar corridor” experiment in 2019 and recruited surrounding farmers to participate. The group used the research protocol in PFI’s research report and got to work.

In addition to writing their own research report, the group participated in a storyboarding activity to explore how cover crops and soil health influence their farms at a deeper level. When the group thought about farming in the past, present and future, they determined interseeding cover crops was the future. The story was picked up by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.



Jack Boyer (center)

“Of all the many on-farm research trials I’ve done, this is the one that has by far generated the most interest from other farmers.” – Jack Boyer

2019 PFI awards: a microcosm of our member-leaders

Two Master Researchers Honored

Who better to answer questions than the farmers posing those questions? PFI’s Cooperators’ Program is made up of farmers who put in the extra effort to ask and scientifically address their questions (which are often the questions of other farmers, too!). To recognize the efforts of these farmers – and their contributions to farmer-led learning – Practical Farmers of Iowa established the Master Researcher Award in 2013. The award honors those who have conducted at least 20 on-farm trials and hosted at least five field days with PFI to share the knowledge they have gained. Sharing research results, and sometimes showing research plots, at field days has been fundamental to PFI and the Cooperators’ Program over the years.

In 2019, PFI honored two farmers – Mark Quee of West Branch and Bruce Carney of Maxwell – with the Master Researcher Award for their extensive contributions to on-farm research and knowledge-sharing over the years. Bruce says, of his participation in PFI research: “I want to leave a legacy rooted in perennial agriculture for my children and grandchildren. I found Practical Farmers of Iowa and learned they were a diverse group of people, farmer-led. It didn’t matter what you wanted to research. PFI would help set it up and connect you with other interested farmers.”

Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award

Margaret Smith and Doug Alert of Hampton, were recipients of PFI’s 2019 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award, granted each year by Practical Farmers of Iowa to an individual or couple that has shown exemplary commitment to sustainable agriculture, generously shared their knowledge with others and been influential in efforts to foster vibrant communities, diverse farms and healthy food. Doug and Margaret were part of PFI’s inaugural Master Researcher honorees in 2013. Their research projects have examined everything from ridge-tilling and nitrogen fertilizer rates to strip-intercropping and ways to add cover crops into cropping systems that include small-grains crops.

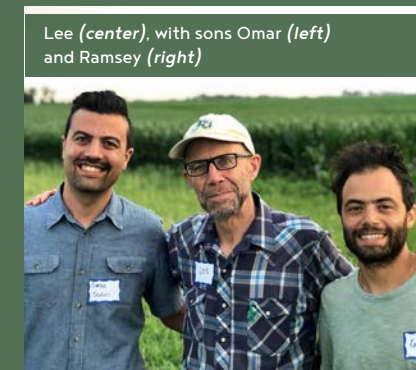
Margaret says, “I think curiosity is really important to farm well, as is humility. Acknowledging that how we’re farming has flaws pushes us to ask how we are going to do it better.”



Farmland Owner Achievement Award

In 2019, Lee Tesdell was selected by Practical Farmers’ board of directors as the 2019 recipient of PFI’s Farmland Owner Legacy Award. We grant this award annually to landowners who use their land to help the next generation get started, advance land stewardship and promote long-term sustainability of farm businesses, environmental quality and rural communities. The award highlights the important role non-operator farmland owners can play in the future success of sustainable agriculture.

Speaking at Lee’s award ceremony, farm tenant Nick Helland said: “We call it the Tesdell research farm. We’ve had a chance to use this as a playground to see what works.” The Hellands have been able to show the results of using no-till and cover crops on Lee’s farm to other landowners they rent from – which Nick says has helped convince those landowners to do conservation practices on their farms.



Lee (center), with sons Omar (left) and Ramsey (right)

Get Along But Don't Go Along – Bring Them Along With You

Because we welcome everyone at PFI and we offer such wide-ranging programs, it can be hard for newcomers to fully understand the breadth of what we do. It's easy for newbies to see a few pieces of the organization and assume they have the whole picture – that we're just about serving one sector of agriculture, for instance, or that most of our members look or farm a certain way. Those who really get to know us, however, realize that our strength and our focus derive from our beautiful patchwork of people and farming systems, which represent the vision for what a vibrant, diverse agricultural system can be.

🌱 We know that farmer-to-farmer networks are highly effective at transforming information into action – we can see this in the full **73% of PFI field crop farmers who use cover crops** and **30% who practice extended crop rotations**.

Expanding our farmer network

Our members believe they can forge a new, more sustainable path for agriculture. They also believe their neighbors can learn from their successes and mistakes to tread their own path – and that our communities will be better for it. PFI co-founder Dick Thompson once said “get along but don't go along.” PFI members have epitomized this mantra since the beginning, courageously forging their own paths despite prevailing trends. But that's not the full story. By serving as leaders and exemplars in their communities, PFI members have exerted a subtle but powerful influence. The mantra really should be: “Get along but don't go along – bring them along with you.”

PFI's strategic initiatives team works on this frontier of expansion – working with more mainstream farmers in Iowa and the wider Corn Belt and helping them adopt practices like cover crops and extended crop rotations. These small interventions unlock the vision PFI has for the entire landscape. PFI cooperators have already taken the risk and done the hard work of researching how to successfully incorporate these practices into their operations, making those seemingly daunting changes more manageable – and farmer-tested – for farmers taking the plunge for the first time.



Dick Thompson

Partnering with supply chain companies

As consumers continue to seek food choices that reflect their social and environmental values, food and beverage companies are looking for ways they can influence larger-scale agricultural systems to move towards greater long-term sustainability. Because of our experience facilitating farmer-to-farmer networks, and our members' wealth of knowledge about how to successfully adopt practices like cover crops and extended rotations, PFI is the perfect partner to collaborate with these companies.

Practical Farmers' strategic initiatives team launched its first collaborative project with a supply chain partner in 2015 – at that time to add cover crops to farms growing soybeans for Hellman's mayonnaise. Today, PFI is a partner on seven different supply chain projects that reach 353 farmers and span 66,761 acres. Each project has its own primary goal: one aims to add cover crops into corn and soybean production; another

seeks to create new markets for crops like oats, wheat and rye; a third aims to encourage farmers to reduce fertilizer following a legume green-manure cover crop. Of the seven projects, some are similar in focus but are based in different supply chain regions, with different networks of farmers eligible to participate.

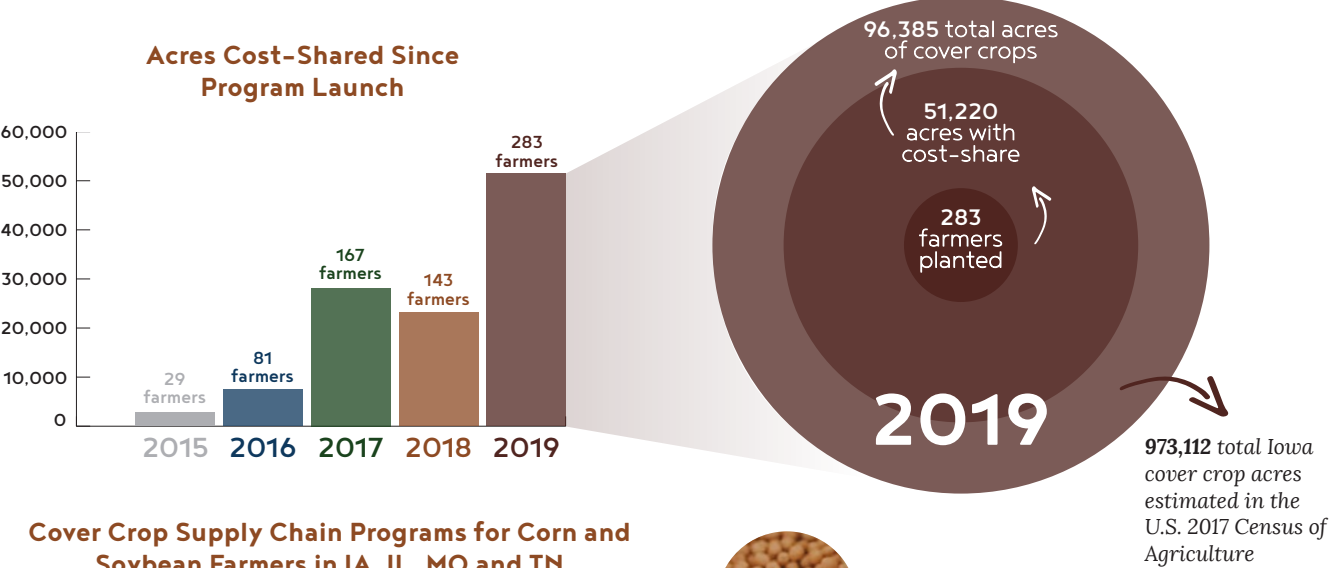
Though the practices vary, the overarching mission of all these endeavors is the same: to empower and support farmers to try something new, and to welcome them into PFI's supportive community as they take steps to add diversity into their farms and enterprises. Farmers who participate in these projects become PFI members and are exposed to the rich PFI tapestry. Seeing these new connections unfold inspires the strategic initiatives staff members who work every day to “bring them along with us,” and offers hope about our ability to expand this vision across Iowa.



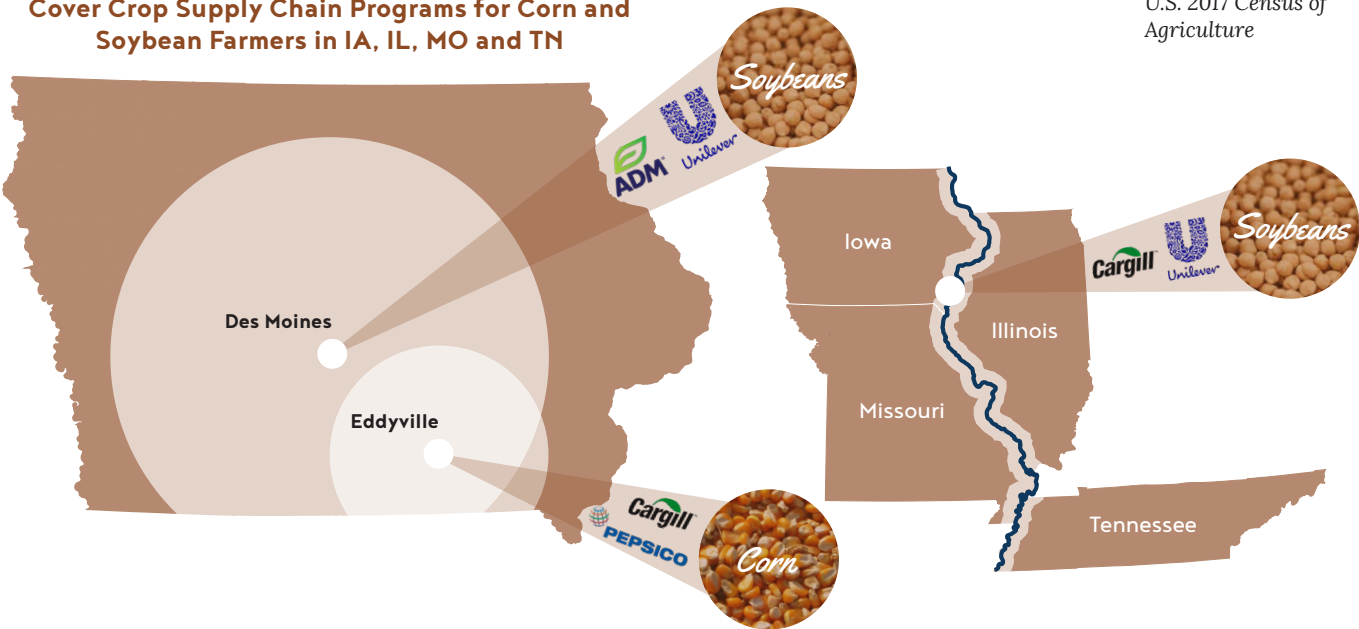
Unilever visit, October 2018

Cover Crop Cost-Share Programs

 In 2019, PFI provided cover crop cost-share to **283 farmers** on **51,220 acres** who sell corn or soybeans into three supply chain projects.



Cover Crop Supply Chain Programs for Corn and Soybean Farmers in IA, IL, MO and TN



Encouraging First-Time Cover Crop Use

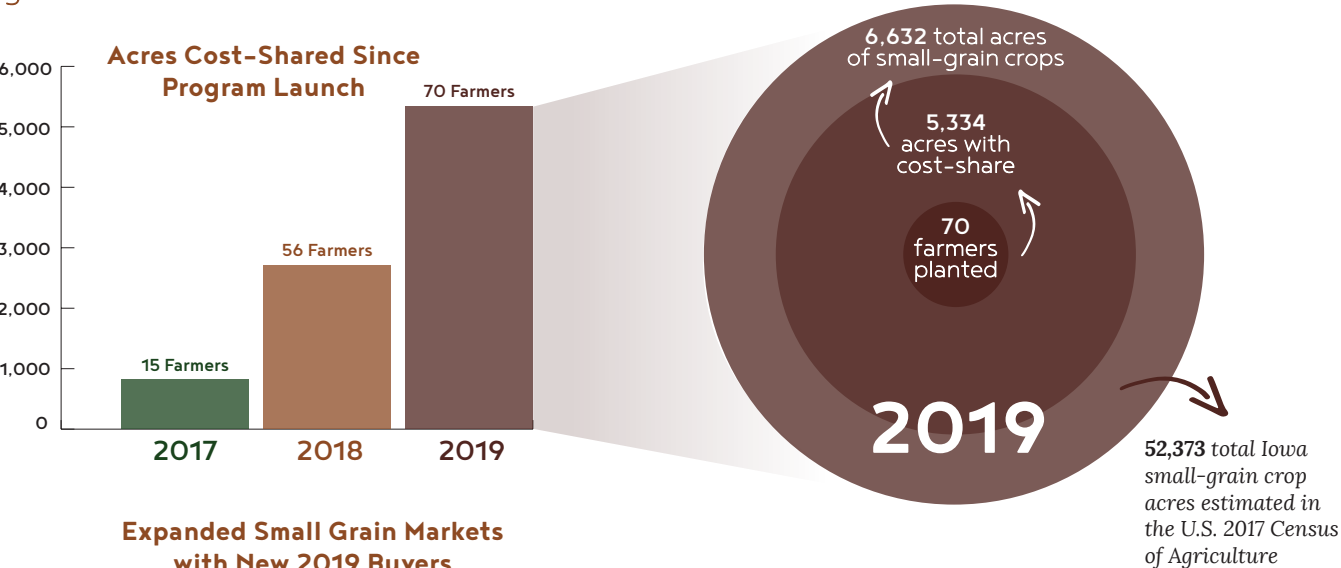
In 2019, farmers in the Eddyville and Des Moines supply chain programs who were brand new to cover crops qualified for a higher payment rate of \$40 per acre on up to 40 acres. **As a result 13% of 2019 participants were first-time cover croppers.** Farmers with at least one year of cover crop experience (87%) received \$10 per acre on 160 acres, or 10% of their total farmed acres, whichever was larger.

Cover Crop Cost-Share

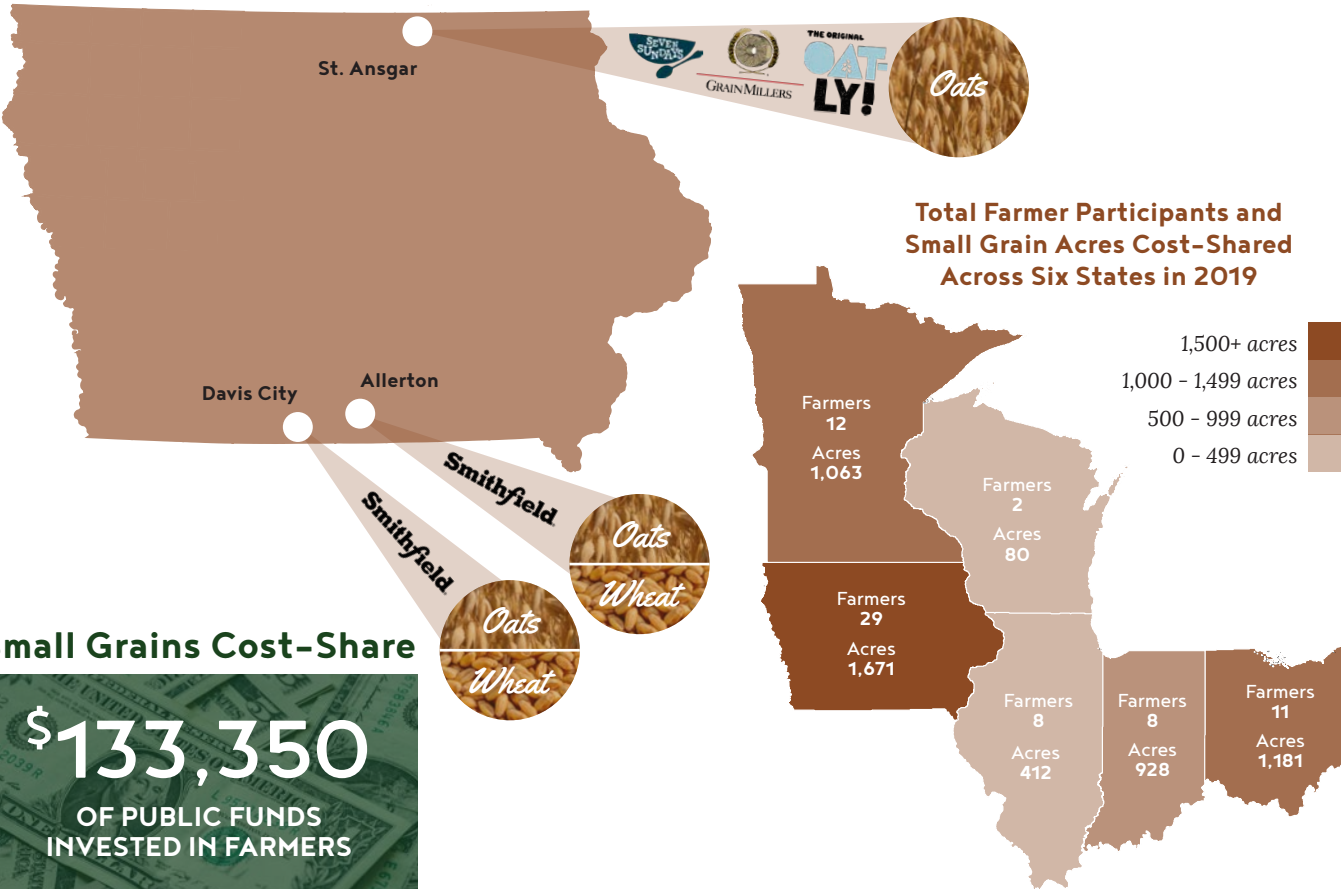


Small Grains Cost-Share Programs

 In 2019, PFI provided cost-share to **70 farmers** on **5,334 acres** who added a small-grain crop and legume cover crop to their crop rotation and secured three new buyers for lowa-grown oats and wheat.



Expanded Small Grain Markets with New 2019 Buyers



Small Grains Cost-Share



One farmer's journey to PFI through cost-share



Dan Taylor raises crops and livestock with his family near Minburn. His introduction to Practical Farmers of Iowa came from his neighbor Craig Fleishman. “Craig’s been in PFI forever,” Dan says, “and we work together on some stuff, so I knew of PFI from him.” Dan even attended a field day or two at Dick Thompson’s farm, but didn’t take the leap to become a member or get more involved. “I didn’t have a good excuse to get involved,” Dan says. “Your days are full anyway and if you want to add something it means you have to not do something else. You have to have a good excuse to change your ways.”

Dan learned about PFI’s cover crop cost-share program through his soybean supply chain buyers – Archer Daniels Midland and Unilever. In 2016, he planted cover crops for the first time and took advantage of that cost-share. “I don’t know that anybody is going to take on a new practice just out of the goodness of their heart,” Dan says. “It’s going to be tough for an operator to commit to doing too much without some incentive. I also liked that the buyer was willing to step up and do something like this.”

In 2017, PFI’s small-grain cost-share program debuted. For Dan, participating was an easy sell: He had been growing oats the whole time he’d been farming to feed the oat grain to his hogs, and the program gave him a chance to experiment with a clover cover crop after the oats. Accessing that program was the push he needed to become a PFI member. Since then, he’s experimented with his oat crop. “Last year was our first year of experience with oatlage and we just loved it,” Dan says. He’s also thinking about growing Jerry oats for cover crop seed for the first time in 2020.

Dan now has four years of cover crop experience in both corn and soybean years, as well as after his oats, and he’s been a PFI member for three years. “It’s nice to know you’re not the only one doing this stuff,” Dan says of being a member. “It’s just nice to know that there are other people trying to make this work.”

Broadening our borders

PFI’s cover crops and small grains work has broadened our physical borders. In 2019, our small grains conference was in Wisconsin, and PFI also held six events in neighboring states. We’ve heard farmers in nearby states tell us they wished their state had an organization like PFI, and these events help us spread our farmer-to-farmer model beyond Iowa.

Practical Farmers prides itself on welcoming everyone. Members, staff and our board of directors have increasingly realized this means taking a more active stance in expanding our borders within Iowa as well. We’ve been working in partnership with LSI to help farmers who came to Iowa as refugees. Cubwa Rajabu is one such farmer who was accepted into our Savings Incentive Program in 2019.

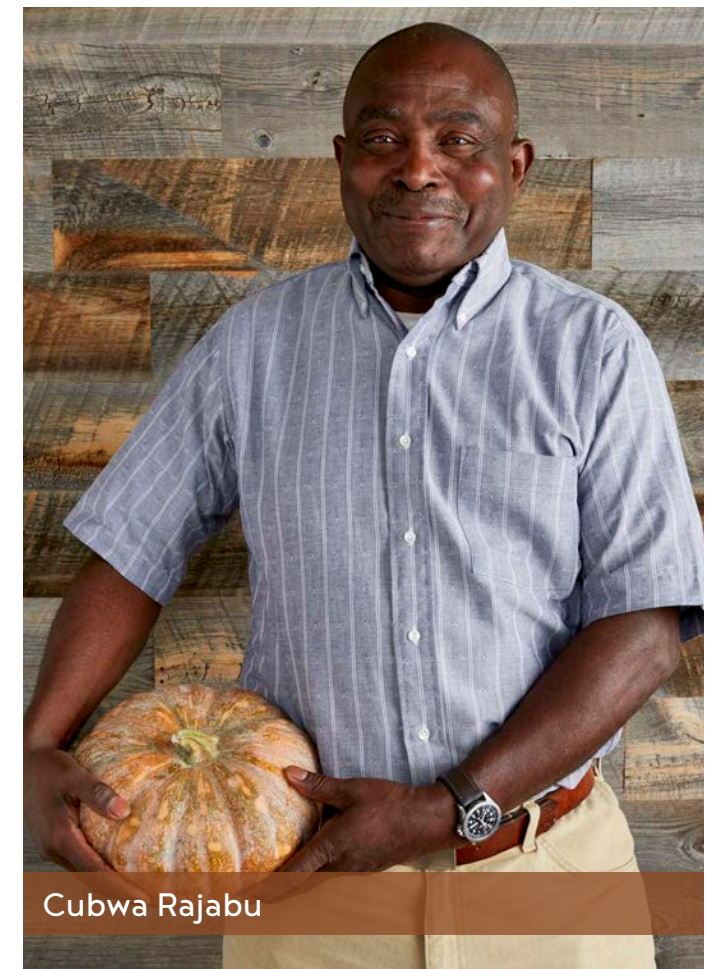
Cubwa grew up farming in Burundi, Africa, and brings a wealth of farming knowledge to PFI’s network. Through the Global Greens program offered by LSI, he has been able to farm in Iowa for the last seven years. His wife, Marceline, and their three children help to grow vegetables on their quarter-acre plot in West Des Moines. Cubwa raises African varieties that can’t be found in most grocery stores here, such as lenga lenga (amaranth leaves). He has also expanded the range of common Iowa vegetables he grows to increase sales to more local customers. Cubwa and his wife want to expand to a farm where they can feed and support

their family and add livestock. By participating in the Savings Incentive Program, Cubwa hopes to save money to purchase equipment with this goal in mind.

In 2019, the board approved the use of unrestricted PFI funds to start working to recruit more Latinx farmers into Practical Farmers of Iowa. The first phase of this work included creating connections with service providers, aspiring farmers and farmers within the Latinx community. We then started building relationships with members of the Latinx community to learn about farming interests and barriers this group is facing. Through a partnership with Center for Rural Affairs, which is helping mentor PFI as we expand our network, we will offer programs to help welcome Latinx Iowans into PFI’s farming community as both learners and teachers.



Global Greens Farm



Cubwa Rajabu

Sharing Our Stories

PFI innovations garner extensive media interest. Journalists at the local, state and national level routinely tell stories about how PFI members are innovating. Not only do PFI members and their creative farming solutions attract media attention in their own right, reporters routinely contact PFI staff for context on broader agricultural issues and help tapping into our network of farmers.

In 2019, we were featured extensively in the media, from small newspapers, magazines and radio and TV stations across the state to major Iowa, regional and national outlets – and even internationally. Practical Farmers was also sought out by U.S.-based and international documentary filmmakers seeking background information and help connecting to farmers.

PFI has been featured extensively in local, regional and national media. Here’s a sampling of some of the outlets that covered PFI members and programs in 2019.

Local and Regional Outlets	National Farming Publications	National Media Outlets
The Des Moines Register	Wallaces Farmer	The New York Times
The Gazette (Cedar Rapids)	Successful Farming	CBS News
Omaha World-Herald	No-Till Farmer	NBC News
WOI-TV	The Furrow	PBS
Sioux City Journal	Corn+Soybean Digest	Yes! Magazine
Storm Lake Times	Civil Eats	CNN
Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier	New Food Economy	Fox News
Charles City Press	Strip-Till Farmer	Mother Jones
Post-Bulletin (Rochester, Minnesota)		
Iowa Farmer Today		
KWMT-Radio		
Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network		
Mitchell County Press-News (Iowa)		

At least 176 members were featured in 166 media stories in 2019.

Perhaps more important than where members are featured is what they’re saying – and the messages the stories convey. Ron Rosmann of Harlan, Mark Peterson of Stanton, Daniel Rosmann of Harlan, Fred Abels of Holland, Denise O’Brien of Atlantic and Amber Mohr of Avoca were all featured in an article in YES! Magazine, “The Way Climate Change Unites Us.” In the article, author Lynn Freehill-Maye captures the singular essence of what Practical Farmers of Iowa represents.

“While they may not agree on what has gotten them here,” Lynn writes, “growers like Rosmann and Peterson are thinking beyond politicized climate change arguments to figure out solutions.” She goes on to quote North Carolina-based resilient-agriculture researcher Laura Lengnick, who spoke at the Rosmann field day and said, “PFI, in my view, is the best example in this country right now of the blending of science and local wisdom.”



“PFI, in my view, is the best example in this country right now of the blending of science and local wisdom.”

– Laura Lengnick, quoted in YES! Magazine

A new visual identity for a new decade

In 2019, we undertook a major visual rebranding, updating our logos, fonts and color palette. After nearly eight years with our previous logo – and in the wake of monumental organizational growth, including significant increases in membership, budget, staff, impact and public visibility – we felt it was time to re-imagine Practical Farmers’ visual identity to reflect these changes and carry us into this new era of PFI’s history. Our new logo maintains the simplicity of our earlier logos, but has been modernized to better reflect our agricultural connection and the design aesthetic of our time.



Digital growth

At the start of 2018, we made a commitment to expand our online presence to reach and connect to more people. Since then, we have invested resources into understanding and establishing ourselves in the online world. In 2019, we really began to see those efforts pay off.

Video

In 2017, we released our first video series, “Rotationally Raised.” Since then, the online community of farmers and friends-of-farmers from across the world who tune into our videos has significantly expanded. In 2019 alone, three key indicators of our reach all doubled, including the amount of time people spent watching our videos, the number of times our videos were viewed and the number of new subscribers we had on YouTube. In 2019, we released 80 new videos on topics ranging from summer lettuce and planting into cover crops to small grains nuts and bolts. We also released another original PFI production series focused on organic weed control.



Stay connected with us!



practicalfarmers.org



facebook.com/practicalfarmers



instagram.com/practicalfarmer



twitter.com/practicalfarmer



youtube.com/pfivideos



linkedin.com/company/practical-farmers-of-iowa

Social Media

As with video, our social media presence on all our platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn – expanded in 2019, driven partly by our focus on engagement and by producing content relevant to our audiences. Perhaps more importantly than our own channels, our members are active contributors to the online communities that drive conversations in our field. For example, the key Facebook group for cover crops – Everything Cover Crops – features many PFI members, leading the way for people implementing cover crops across the world by sharing their experiences.

Email Newsletters

Our membership and reach continued to expand in 2019 – and with that growth, we made a commitment to provide content that’s even more relevant and targeted to our many diverse audiences. By the end of 2019, we offered five email newsletters: our flagship weekly newsletter, Practical News, along with specialized newsletters focused on beginning farmers, small grains production, cover crops and farm transfer. The Practical Cover Cropper, which we launched in February 2019, is clearly serving an important need: by the end of 2019, the publication had nearly 1,000 subscribers.

Quarterly Magazine

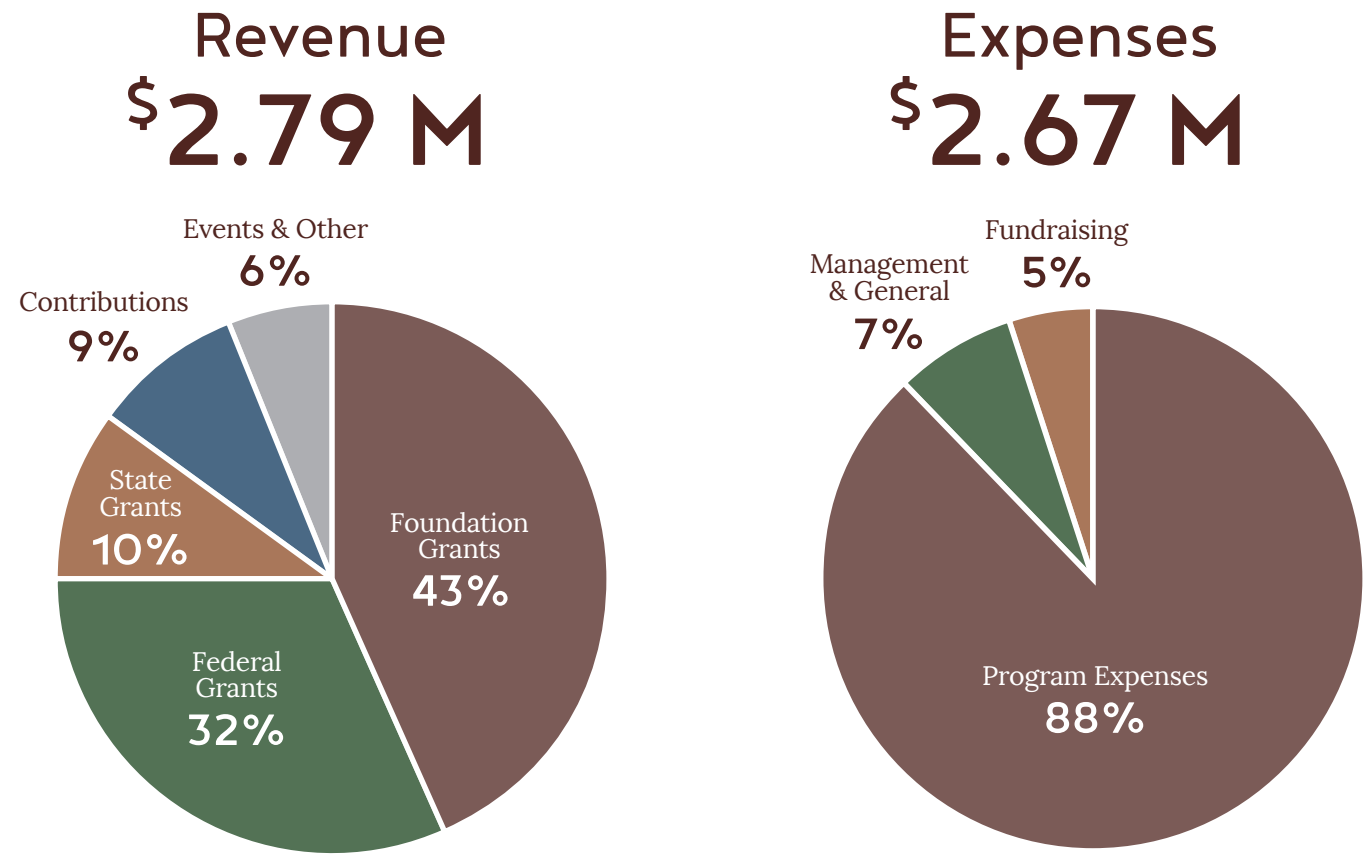
Our quarterly magazine, “the Practical Farmer,” continues to be the flagship publication of Practical Farmers, featuring informative stories on how farmers in our network are innovating, adapting to challenges, stewarding natural resources, starting farms, helping the next generation and creating viable farms and communities.

In 2018, we made a commitment to share these stories with a wider audience – and followed through in 2019 by revamping the publications portal on our website, posting an interactive digital version of the magazine and sharing articles with the nearly **5,700 subscribers of Practical News, our main e-newsletter.**



Financials

Thanks to our supporters and the hard work of our members, Practical Farmers' budget and membership continues to grow.



\$73,961

of this revenue came from donations above membership from 307 individual donors.

A full list of donors and grantors will be available in the summer issue of the Practical Farmer.

\$86,965

of this revenue came from annual membership income.

At the end of FY19, Practical Farmers had 4,143 members.

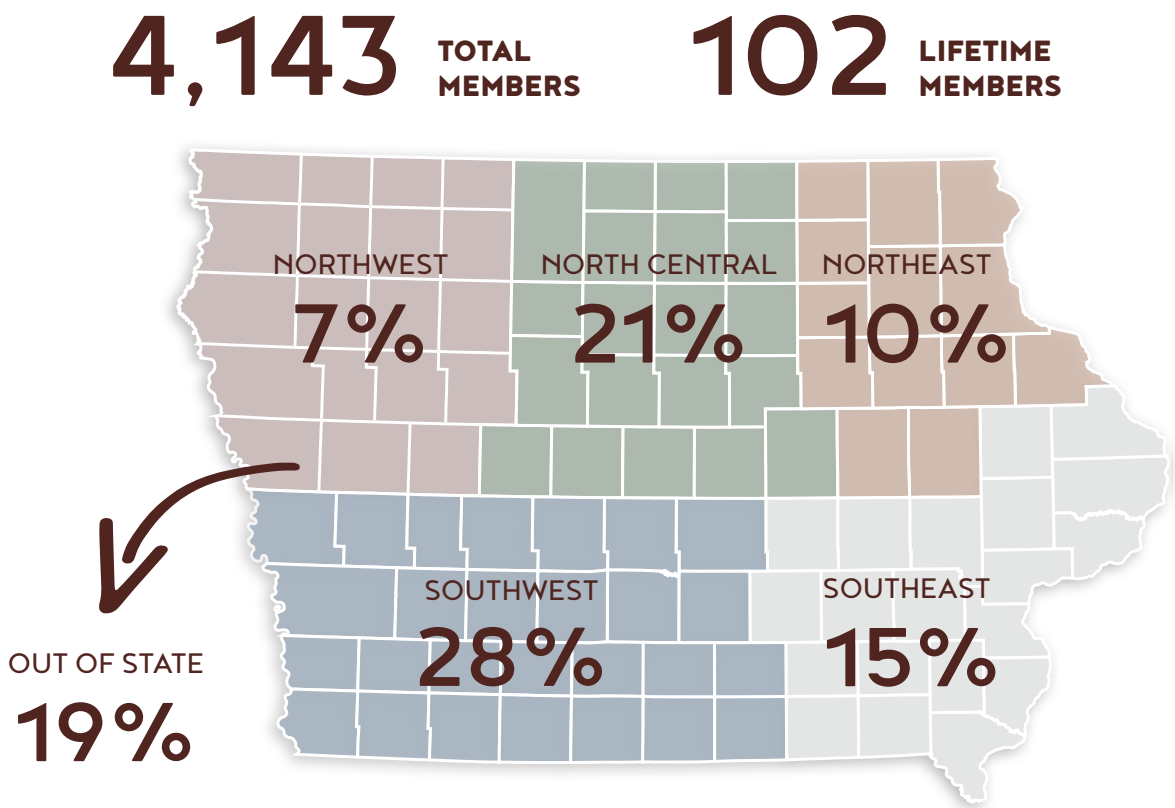
\$21,000

of this revenue came from lifetime membership income.

At the end of FY19, Practical Farmers had 102 lifetime members.



Membership and Distribution



Showing Commitment to Farmers



Get Involved

Join or renew your membership

Joining or renewing your membership is easy and immerses you in an incredible community that provides support and education on many agriculture issues, from production, to conservation, to profit and more.

Serve as a PFI leader

Thank you to all of you who served as leaders of our organization last year. We truly value what you bring to the table and hope you will continue to serve this organization. We would love to have more of you join us to provide governance and guidance, teach at and host events, share your stories with others and help mentor beginning farmers.

Attend our events

We organize events year-round to help you build resilient farms and communities. Please take time to attend, get to know others and learn from our member-leaders. Please bring your friends and neighbors along!

Engage with us online

While we think the best way to connect with people is through face-to-face interactions, we know that's not always possible. When you can't come to a field day, workshop or conference, cultivate connections digitally with PFI: Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn, and like, comment, share and retweet our posts – and let us know what you're up to.

Join the email conversation

Joining an email discussion group is one of the simplest ways to stay connected to the PFI community. Keep informed, share events, meet other farmers, landowners and non-farmers interested in diverse agriculture and get the support you need to make practical food and farm decisions. We often hear from members that these forums are one of the most valuable member benefits.



Donate

Please continue to support Practical Farmers of Iowa financially. Donations are a vital funding source, helping to keep us financially nimble and able to respond quickly and directly to our members' needs. Your donation to Practical Farmers of Iowa is tax-deductible. We graciously accept cash donations, gifts from donor-advised funds, gifts of grain and employer match gifts.

Please consider making a planned gift to Practical Farmers of Iowa. This will not only help you create a legacy benefitting diverse farms and vibrant communities, it may also simplify your estate plans and increase your income. There are many ways to leave a planned gift.

Visit practicalfarmers.org to learn more.

For example, Ruth and Tom Neuberger of Canistota, South Dakota, invested in a charitable gift annuity to celebrate their 60th anniversary. A gift annuity is an agreement between an individual and a charitable organization or institution. The donor transfers assets and receives fixed payments for the rest of his or her lifetime.

The Neubergeres sold GooseMobile, their direct-marketing farm-to-table business in 2017. PFI was the 12th annuity the Neubergeres have opened – all with organizations that advance their faith, their interest in education and their commitment to sustainable agriculture. Ruth died in 2019 at the age of 87. When she and Tom donated the annuity to PFI, Ruth said, “This is a wonderful way to distribute our assets. These organizations have been a big part of our lives.” Tom is still living on the farm and keeping busy custom grazing and with other farm chores.



Ruth and Tom Neuberger



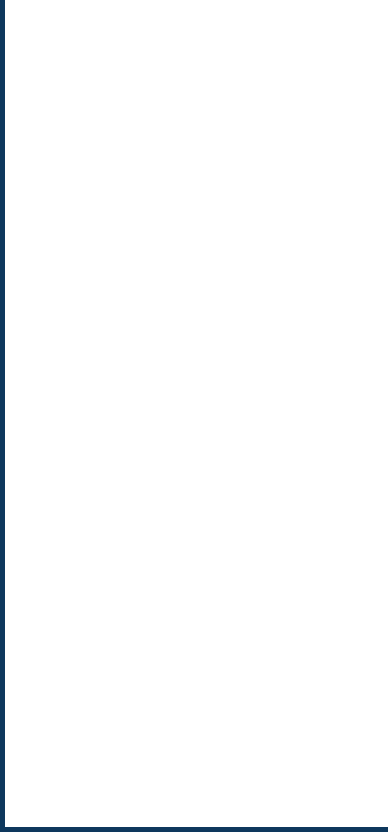
Ruth with their GooseMobile business

“This is a wonderful way to distribute our assets. These organizations have been a big part of our lives.”

– Ruth Neuberger

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