

# the PRACTICAL FARMER

AUTUMN 2021



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Sharing Land to Support  
Farmers & Land Access

Many Hands  
Planting Habitat

We Are Each  
Other's Harvest







Mike Malik has nearly completed the planting of his high-density apple orchard near Solon, Iowa, which will include 14,000 trees on 14 acres once complete. With a focus on growing apples for processing into juice, and eventually hard cider, Mike toured attendees through his sloping orchard and newly constructed juicing facility during his “Catching Up” event on July 29.

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Michi López grabs a tray of Golden Alexander transplants during a planting day with Grow: Johnson County. The Iowa City-based organization planted four permanent beetle banks to create a haven for beneficial insects on their horticulture operation. Read more about the planting day on pages 16-21.  
*Photo courtesy of Iowa Valley RC&D*



## WHAT WE DO

Practical Farmers of Iowa was founded in 1985 as an organization for farmers. We use farmer-led investigation and information sharing to help farmers practice an agriculture that benefits both the land and people.

## OUR MISSION

Practical Farmers of Iowa's mission is 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

## THE PRACTICAL FARMER

the Practical Farmer is published quarterly as a benefit of membership to help keep farmers and friends of farmers in touch with one another through informative articles on relevant farming topics, current on-farm research, upcoming events and other news of interest.

**Magazine Editor:** Tamsyn Jones

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## Connecting Islands of Resilience

Over the summer, the PFI board and staff gathered to participate in a training led by long-time supporters and members Ricardo Salvador and Andrea Basche. Ricardo is a senior scientist with the Union of Concerned Scientists and directs its Food & Environment Program, and Andrea is an assistant professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The training session, titled “Exploring PFI’s Role in Shaping the Culture of Agriculture,” was adapted from a short course Andrea has been teaching, and she and Ricardo taught us some of the stark history of agriculture that has brought us to the system we find ourselves in today – one that is not diverse in crops, or in the people that comprise Iowa’s farmers.

As we discussed this complex topic and PFI’s role in shaping agriculture in Iowa, we had a candid conversation about our progress to date. PFI members are creating islands of diverse and resilient agriculture among a very homogenous ag landscape. As we look forward, how do we grow or connect these islands to provide solid architecture for the expansion of resilient farms and communities across Iowa?

During the training, Ricardo refreshed us on the root of economics: land, labor and capital. These elements comprise the foundation of all economics, a social discipline established in the 18th century, and their presence in farming is glaringly obvious. Afterward, my colleague Sarah Carlson continued the conversation over email. She wrote: “Land access is, and should be, our next hairy thing to work on. Without land we can’t break down the concentration of wealth and help redistribute it away from consolidation to the systems we want to see. We won’t ever have all the money to do this, but we don’t need it if we have the people. We need the eaters, the PFI board, staffers, the farmers and the businesses who want to actually make a new food system.”

By the time you’ve read this, we’ll have created a land access needs assessment and action plan that will hopefully make a dent in the continued consolidation of farmland. In our work with beginning and aspiring farmers, we consistently hear that access to



Several PFI staff members gather at Backcountry Winery & Brewery in Stratford, Iowa, on July 14 for the first in-person staff party since 2019. The event was capped off by a tornado that touched ground close to Stratford and sent staff briefly into the winery’s tornado shelter.

land is the top barrier. Simultaneously, farm transfer is imminent: According to Iowa State University, 60% of Iowa farmland is owned by people over the age of 65, and 35% 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. But beginning farmers have the potential to revitalize communities, improve access to healthy food and bring diversity to Iowa’s landscape. Creating more land access is integral to PFI’s mission to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities. Here are a few notable facts about why land access is so hard:

- More than half of Iowa’s farmland is owned by non-operators
- Two-thirds of Iowa’s farmers have not identified a successor
- 75% of new farmers aren’t related to preceding farmers and farmland owners
- Land ownership is often transferred after death to avoid capital gains
- Most farmland is being sold above production value; market value is greatly

inflated due to competition from other farmers and from development.

- Only about 2% of farmland changing ownership between 2015 and 2019 was listed on the open market

Yet, there’s hope ahead. People across the country realize the potential that creating land access has for our food and farm systems and are finding creative ways to help farmers access land. Groups in Iowa like Sustainable Iowa Land Trust are already making land more affordable through easements and long-term ground leases. We are working with partners to come up with some bold actions to create more land access in Iowa.

Check back to learn more, and please help us create a future that includes diversity of farming enterprises and the people that farm it. Together, we can both grow and connect our islands of resilience to put robust culture back into Iowa’s agriculture.

Working together,

*Sally Worley*

# Grazing Covers

By Meghan Filbert

## YIELDS GREEN

### Six years of research by PFI farmers shows grazing cover crops pays off

We continue to crunch the numbers and it's safe to say that grazing cover crops pencils out. Practical Farmers has conducted on-farm economic research on this topic since 2015. We have collected data from different scenarios: grazing with gestating cows and cow-calf pairs, finishing steers grazing cover crops adjacent to their feedlot, experimenting with different cover crop mixes and contract grazing of cover crops involving both a cattle and row crop producer. Each unique situation resulted in positive net returns for the farmers.

#### Cows and Calves

Four farmers shared their cover crop and grazing records so PFI's Cooperators' Program team could calculate the economic impact of grazing gestating cows and cow-calf pairs. Wesley Degner of Lytton, Iowa; Bill Frederick of Jefferson, Iowa; Zak Kennedy of Atlantic, Iowa; and Seth Smith of Nemaha, Iowa, submitted data from 2019 to 2021.

Each farmer grazed cereal rye between their corn and soybean rotations, and the bulk of grazing took place from November to December and again from April to May. When cows are out grazing during these months, farmers have to feed less hay (or other stored feeds) – and saving money on hay translates to profits.

Across the four farms, profits ranged from \$37 to \$124 per acre. On average, farmers saved \$2.68 per animal unit (1,000 pounds of animal) per day in hay expenses when grazing cover crops. Over the entire cover crop grazing season, farmers saved a total dollar amount ranging from \$3,000 to \$31,000 in feed expenses.

Wesley Degner, who was new to cover crops at the start of this project, now has six years of experience. "We're planning to continue grazing cows on cereal rye that we aerial-seed around the Labor Day timeframe each year," he says. "It makes our life easier in the winter. We have less feed costs and grazing gives the cows exercise before spring calving."



Cows and calves grazing at Dry Creek Red Angus.



Ben Albright



Nick Smith's cows graze on a rye, oat and radish cover crop mix in Tim Daly's cornfield. Nick Smith

### Feedlot Steers

While grazing cover crops is becoming standard practice for cow-calf producers, it has been implemented to a lesser degree in feedlots. In new research, Ben Albright of Lytton showed how a cover crop field adjacent to his feedlot could provide supplemental forage simply by opening a gate and letting finishing cattle graze the field.

The fresh forage allowed Ben to back off the amount of total mixed ration he fed to his steers, saving an estimated \$0.05 per animal per day. This added up to an average savings of \$46 per acre – or \$16 per animal. In total, Ben saved an average of \$3,850 in feed each year by giving his cattle access to cover crops, and without sacrificing animal gain or carcass quality. “The numbers show that grazing covers is a no-brainer for cattle producers,” Ben says.

### Different Cover Crop Mixes

Mark Glawe, who farms near Garber in northeast Iowa, has experimented with planting and grazing different cover crop mixes. In one field following an oat and pea crop, he planted a nine-species mix that included mung beans, crimson clover, winter peas, pearl millet, cereal rye, sorghum-sudan grass, turnip, rapeseed and sunflowers. In other fields he planted cereal rye and oats.

The cost to establish a cover crop totaled \$62 per acre for the nine-species mix, and \$38 per acre for the rye and oats. “Only four or five species did really good in the nine-species mix,” Mark says, “because they seemed to drown out the less vigorous ones.” He has determined that his preferred mix would include cereal rye for spring grazing, oats for fall grazing, turnips (“because cows love them”), sorghum-sudan grass and pearl millet.

Overall, Mark ended up reaping more profit from his less expensive cover crops due to vigorous growth and large windows of opportunity for spring grazing. Mark's profits ranged from \$41 to \$403 per acre. “Out of the last 10 years, 2020-2021 was my best year yet,” he says. “On average, I profit about \$50 per acre each year. Usually I don't get that much

spring grazing, but spring 2021 was dry, so we weren't having to take the cows off because of rain.”

Another perk is that Mark's profits help subsidize the cost of cover crops in fields he is unable to graze for one reason or another. Cover crops are important on Mark's farm, which is located on D and E slopes in Iowa's Driftless region. In the standard hillslope classification system, a slope's steepness – which influences how quickly water will run off, as well as potential for soil to erode, among other things – is described using the letters A to F, where D slopes are “strongly sloping” (at an angle of 13-18%) and E slopes are “moderately steep” (at an angle of 19-25%). In Clayton County, Mark says his neighbors are catching on. “Last year [the county] had 2,000 acres of cover crops seeded, and two-thirds of those acres were used for grazing,” he says.

### Contract Grazing

Farmers Nick Smith of Epworth, Iowa, and Tim Daly of Farley, Iowa, have been partnering for at least 10 years. Nick grazes a cover crop medley – which consists of cereal rye, oats and radish – on Tim's row crop fields. Nick and Tim split the cost of cover crop seed and application, which equates to about \$19 per acre for each farmer. The situation works out to be profitable for both parties. Tim receives the cover crop cost-share payments and also benefits from reduced herbicide passes, which saves him money. Nick benefits from the feed value.

Over the last two years, Nick has profited an average of \$133 per acre, Tim an average of \$27 per acre. Nick and his brother Ted are more than willing to put up temporary fences, move cattle from field to field and haul water through the winter because these things are drastically cheaper than feeding hay. ■

### *Learn More:*

Each of these scenarios is summarized from on-farm research trials. Detailed economic data can be found in the accompanying research reports on our website, [practicalfarmers.org/research](https://practicalfarmers.org/research).

# Grazing Rates

By Brynne Gardner

## WHAT IS A FAIR PAYMENT?



Cows winter grazing on stockpiled pasture and sorghum sudangrass.

Father and son team, Jon and Jared Luhman, contract graze their cattle through the winter on cover crops and crop residue. Their goal in each arrangement is to establish grazing rates that benefit both the landowner and themselves. The Luhmans operate Dry Creek Red Angus near Goodhue, Minnesota, raising Red Angus and Hereford cattle for grass-finished beef, and the contract grazing arrangement they follow is one of four common types of grazing agreements used when land and livestock are owned by different people.

Contract grazing, when carried out thoughtfully, has many benefits for people and the land. Well-managed cropland and pastures have less nutrient runoff and erosion, contributing to cleaner water and healthier wildlife habitats. These grazing arrangements can also benefit people. Contract grazing can foster a more deeply rooted, diverse agriculture community. It also opens the door for young and beginning farmers to own a livestock enterprise without owning land, and can provide established livestock operations with more forage options and flexibility during weather events – like drought.

With the advent of the Midwest Grazing Exchange and the “Livestock on the Land” campaign, PFI has been promoting contract grazing (also known as custom grazing) as a way to enrich the Midwestern landscape through more integrated systems. The practice can help graziers increase their forage availability and keep animals in ideal body condition longer into the year. And landowners can use grazing to keep or import fertility to their land, benefit soil health and generate added revenue.

### Types of Arrangements

This extra promotion has led to questions about the rates to charge for grazing arrangements. Rates depend on the grazing arrangement. Depending on the operation type and available resources, the agreement you choose may vary and could affect the rates charged. The most common types of agreements are:

- **Pasture rent:** Pasture is rented at a per-acre, monthly or daily rate. Pasture cash rental rates can be found in Iowa State University’s “Cash Rental Rates for Iowa 2021 Survey.” 2021 rental rates for improved permanent pasture range from \$69-\$98 per acre per year, depending on your district.
- **Contract grazing:** A flat rate is paid per animal per month or per day by the livestock owner to the landowner. This can be applied to all classes of livestock.

- **Per pound of gain:** These incentive-based agreements pay based on average daily gain or milk production per day or per grazing season.
- **Resource sharing:** Resources the livestock owner and landowner contribute are itemized. Every change in contribution (resource) changes how the profit is split.

### Determine Your Rate

To decide on a fair grazing rate, all parties need to understand the costs they’ll incur for entering into the grazing arrangement. For landowners, costs could relate to the value of the land or crop that will be grazed, or to infrastructure that will be needed, such as fencing or watering. For the livestock owner, costs could include the amount of labor that will be required or whether extra services will be provided, like herd management or supplemental feeding.

### Consider these questions when determining your rates:

- What is the value of the land or crop being grazed?
- What is the amount of labor and additional services being provided?
- What type of livestock are being grazed?

To inform their grazing agreements, the Luhmans use the “cow day” unit, a figure expressing what it takes to feed one average cow in the herd per day. They also compare the costs of different feedstuffs available to them – crop residue, sorghum sudangrass and hay – to ensure they are taking the most economical feeding route from late fall through early spring.

“The rates we worked out we felt would generate an added profit for [the landowner] and for us,” Jared says. The Luhmans’s strategy is to graze crop residue until it’s buried or gone, then move to grazing sorghum-sudangrass pasture and supplementing with hay bale grazing as needed. They priced out their grazing costs as follows: grazing corn residue cost



\$0.50 per cow day, grazing sorghum-sudangrass cost \$1.60 per cow day and hay bale grazing cost \$2 per cow day.

To determine the rates, they estimate expenses (input costs per acre) for the farmer. The 2020-2021 input costs included \$208 for haying (seeding, planting and harvesting), \$69 for sorghum-sudangrass (seed and planting) and \$200 for land rent, totaling \$477 per acre owed to the landowner. Jon and Jared then incorporated their desired income and decided to charge \$1.60 per day for grazing sorghum and \$2 per day for bale grazing, totaling \$536 per acre owed to the Luhmans.

Taking the grazing revenue of \$536 per acre and subtracting the input costs of \$477 per acre resulted in a \$59 profit per acre for the landowner. The Luhmans were not paid in this transaction. But through careful planning and weighing the price of different forage options, they saved over \$1 per day compared to only grazing their own pasture and supplementing with hay through the rest of the grazing season.

### Revenue

- Sorghum Grazing: \$1.60 x 170 cow days per acre = \$272
- Hay Bale Grazing: \$2 x 132 cow days per acre = \$264
- Grazing + Hay Feeding = \$272 + \$264 = \$536 per acre

Grazing Revenue of \$536 – Input Costs of \$477 = \$59 profit per acre for the landowner.

“Our hope was that this would be advantageous for both of us and that [our landowner] would get to keep all of that fertility on his land, build soil, get animal impact on his land and break up his crop rotation and generate a \$59 rate of return to those expenses,” Jared says.

When all contracted parties know their input expenses, everyone will know what rates need to be charged for mutual profitability.

### Additional Rate Formulas

Because livestock and land enterprises vary, so can these calculation rates. Another example, listed in ATTRA’s “Grazing Contracts for Livestock” publication, comes from Kevin Fulton, a custom grazer in Litchfield, Nebraska. He uses a formula that includes all costs associated with grazing: (weight of the animal) x (forage intake) x (forage price) + daily management fee = daily grazing fee. This fee structure can easily be adjusted based on animal gain and billed on a monthly basis. If setting the price based on animal gain, it’s important to know the livestock you’re receiving are built for gaining on pasture.

Other contracts may be primarily based on husbandry fees and reimbursements. A sample grazing custom grazing contract from Meg Grzeskiewicz of Rhinestone Cattle Consulting, based in Colden, New York, chooses rates based on this method. In her contract, the livestock owner pays the experienced grazer a husbandry fee of \$1.25 per animals per day when no hay is fed, and \$1 per animal per day when hay is fed. The livestock owner is also responsible for reimbursing direct expenses like hay, transport, minerals, vet bills and breeding expenses.

Some landowners may choose to determine grazing rates based on land value or rate of return. The Iowa Beef Center published land value-based pricing and rental rate survey-based pricing in 2017 (see Tables 1a-2b). These rates assume a grazing season of 180 days.

**TABLE 1a.** Land value based pricing with 2.5% rate of return

Land value \$	Rent per acre \$	2 acres/pair \$/day	2.5 acres/pair \$/day	3 acres/pair \$/day
2500	62.50	0.70	0.87	1.04
4000	100.00	1.11	1.39	1.66
6500	162.50	1.81	2.25	2.71

**TABLE 1b.** Land value based pricing with 3.5% rate of return

Land value \$	Rent per acre \$	2 acres/pair \$/day	2.5 acres/pair \$/day	3 acres/pair \$/day
2500	87.50	0.97	1.22	1.45
4000	140.00	1.56	1.94	2.33
6500	227.50	2.52	3.16	3.79

**TABLE 2a.** Rental rate survey-based pricing for unimproved pasture

Rent per acre \$	2 acres/pair \$/day	2.5 acres/pair \$/day	3 acres/pair \$/day
45.00	0.50	0.63	0.75
60.00	0.67	0.83	1.00
75.00	0.83	1.04	1.25

**TABLE 2b.** Rental rate survey-based pricing for improved pasture

Rent per acre \$	2 acres/pair \$/day	2.5 acres/pair \$/day	3 acres/pair \$/day
65.00	0.70	0.72	0.90
80.00	0.89	1.11	1.33
95.00	1.06	1.32	1.58

### When Grazing Small Ruminants

Rates for contract grazing small ruminants like goats or sheep can differ greatly from cattle. When charging for targeted grazing – the practice of using livestock for specific vegetation management – it’s important to consider the size of the area to be grazed, how much vegetation needs to be grazed, location and distance of the grazing site and the amount of labor needed for herd oversight and temporary fence movement.

“It’s important to remember that contract grazing sheep and goats for vegetation management is different than rotationally grazing cattle,” says Margaret Chamas, a lifetime PFI member who raises goats, sheep, cattle and poultry at Storm Dancer Farm near Smithfield, Missouri, and is a Goats on the Go affiliate. “With vegetation management, I want to damage the vegetation.”

Margaret grazes her goats on a per-acre rate determined on a case-by-case basis depending on vegetation thickness, time, water sourcing, fence and labor required. She also charges a minimum fee to all her clients for transporting her goats to the grazing sites. With each job, Margaret’s aim with the grazing agreement is to ensure all parties understand the expectation for the site and the grazing rate based on the site’s unique characteristics, as well as what investments will be made.

“My goal,” she says, “is for the customer to know how much the job will cost before it begins.” ■

## Growing Community

Brick-and-mortar shops are helping farmers make new connections

Jenny Quiner, of Dogpatch Urban Gardens in Des Moines, Iowa, started a farm to grow her community. Danelle Myer, of One Farm near Logan, Iowa, discovered her community because she started a farm.

Brick-and-mortar shops helped them build connections between land and people. Today, their storefronts are sources of personal fulfillment, valuable market streams and platforms to not only grow their businesses – but to let creativity and community blossom.

### Urban Oasis

When Jenny Quiner started her farm, Dogpatch Urban Gardens, in 2015, her dream was to bring community pride and food security to the Des Moines neighborhood where she lives. In addition to fulfilling their needs, she wanted to give her urban neighbors a space to get to know their farmer and their food. Opening a shop along with the farm just made sense. Today, Jenny uses organic principles and sustainable methods to grow produce on a few acres. Her production is sufficient to fulfill a range of market streams. Customers can buy from Dogpatch Urban Gardens at an on-site farm store she calls the FarmStand, at Des Moines' Downtown Farmers Market, seasonally from the farm's sweet corn stand around the corner from the FarmStand or online.

Of all these direct-market sales streams, the FarmStand is the one Jenny talks about most passionately. "Building relationships with the community is one of the reasons we started our business," Jenny says. "At this point, I can tell you who will be in my shop, when and for what – and I can also tell you about their lives and their families. And everyone feels

like they're a part of my family and my life, and they want to support me."

Situated in a 900-square-foot pole barn she built for the purpose, the space contains the on-farm store in one half and her washing, packing and crop storage area in the other. Operating the FarmStand has not been without challenges, however, as the business falls under two different regulatory frameworks: a food establishment license and retail food license. To accommodate all of her aims for the retail space, Jenny had to bring Dogpatch Urban Gardens up to code for public restrooms, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and commercial kitchen management. This added more delays – and cost – such as installing concrete with a correct slope. Once she met those requirements, however, she says her business opportunities greatly expanded.

"The raw kitchen allows us to have a chef on site eight to 10 hours a week, so we can offer things made from our produce, like hummus, chia pudding, pickled beets, fresh salad, grab-and-go options and salad dressings," Jenny says. "We even do four farm-to-table dinners per year at the farm."



"Food is a uniting thing for so many, and we are able to facilitate that and get to know each other more deeply."

- JENNY QUINER

With so many options now available to her, Jenny has found that having clear goals has become especially important. As the FarmStand – and the rest of her business – keeps expanding, Jenny hopes to maintain that small-scale, local vibe. Over time, she has adjusted hours to find a balance between customer needs and maintaining a quality, well-stocked store.

Despite these changes, the FarmStand remains core to Jenny's vision for Dogpatch Urban Gardens. With a range of offerings aggregated from local producers across central Iowa, as well as educated, knowledgeable staff, the FarmStand is doing its job of bringing food to the people, building community pride and helping people know their farmer and their food. "Food is a uniting thing for so many," Jenny says, "and we are able to facilitate that and get to know each other more deeply."



(Left): A view inside Jenny Quiner's FarmStand, located at Dogpatch Urban Gardens in Des Moines, Iowa. (Above): Jenny Quiner and her husband, Eric, stand inside their farm's high tunnel during a November 2019 PFI field day. (Opposite) Left: Danelle Myer raises chemical-free produce at One Farm near Logan, Iowa. Right: In December 2020, Danelle launched her new brick-and-mortar store, One Farm Market in downtown Logan.

## Small-Town Convenience

Danelle Myer started One Farm in 2011 on her family's land just outside her hometown of Logan, Iowa, in western Iowa, where she grows chemical-free produce in a system that uses "the three Cs" – compost, crop rotation and cover crops. The farm name reflects Danelle's intention to make a difference. As she states on the farm's website: "Every little thing matters. And when we want change, little things become big things through repetition. One step, one new venture, one person, one small brave act can transform your life, your health and your general attitude and well-being."

In late 2020, she launched a new venture: a seasonal pop-up market in a vacant space on Main Street in Logan. Strong community support led her to extend the agreement into a one-year lease in the brick-and-mortar shop – One Farm Market. On its opening day for the 2021 season, Danelle says customers completed one transaction every three minutes for the entire four hours the store was open. In fact, some would-be customers left because the shop, which occupies a previously vacant storefront on Main Street in Logan – population 1,600 – was overflowing, with the line out the door.

In March, she took off on a trek across the state in search of local food and Iowa-made products. She met producers and retailers, built relationships and brought back a diverse range of shelf-stable, useful and unique items for her shop. She has found that the diverse product mix – and convenience of getting things in one place – is important to her customers. The shop's clientele are largely from the town of Logan, as well as from the broader Harrison County area in southwest Iowa. A few come from nearby Omaha, or chance to see the shop as they're driving on U.S. 30 as it winds through town. "People who never come to the farmers market, where we've sold for years, are coming to the store," Danelle says.

Starting the market scratched an itch Danelle didn't know she had. After almost 10 years of farming, she finds herself flexing some muscles she hasn't used since her previous career in marketing and public relations. Launching a brick-and-mortar shop for Iowa farm products has continued to draw on these skills and opened new doors for her. "Every day is different, and every day I'm learning something new," Danelle says. "I enjoy the store in ways I never enjoyed the farm."

However, like Jenny, she found one of the biggest learning curves was navigating the



**"I know my town better now than I did when I was growing up here."**

– DANELLE MYER

regulations that applied – or didn't apply – to her business. Danelle was intimidated by the process, but found the staff at the regulatory agencies wanted her to succeed, which made a world of difference. "Once I made the phone calls to the appropriate people," she says, "establishing the relationships was easy."

Growing One Farm Market has changed Danelle's vision for her farm. For instance, she now wants to grow 20 things instead of 100, with more intentional thought about which crops she can grow most successfully and which are more cost-effective to source from other farms. Looking back at the last year, Danelle feels the store has made what she was already doing at the farm more visible to people in her hometown. It has also brought her closer to the community she serves while helping her build valuable and meaningful relationships.

"I know my town better now than I did when I was growing up here," she says. "I love to interact with people. I love building relationships with other makers, I love spotlighting people who may not otherwise get attention with my customer base, I love telling other people's stories and I love building value in those stories."

While the store can be demanding, Danelle also finds it to be the perfect confluence of her professional experiences, from marketing and promotion to farming and management. "I'm doing this as long as it makes sense. It's not perfect – I don't want anyone to think it is



– but the hope is for this to be the next big step with my business."

## Indicators of Growth

So is operating a storefront a viable venture for an entrepreneur who also runs a vegetable farm and sells at farmers markets, wholesale outlets and online?

Danelle shared that her 2021 year-to-date numbers are up overall because of the store. She keeps a close eye on her profit margin, with a goal of between 27% and 30%. In June 2021, the store's profit margin was over 50%. At that point, Danelle says produce sales weren't booming but people were buying much more than just the One Farm produce. The convenience of the store and diversity of the other products had huge impact.

At Dogpatch Urban Gardens, those numbers are important indicators for Jenny as well. "As our ventures expand and our business grows," she says, "it's critical to make sure we're always bringing in more than we're spending." Building out her space meant added capabilities to turn her produce into value-added products, and to host dinners and rent space to other businesses with commercial kitchen needs.

For both Jenny and Danelle, the pull of community, the joy of connection and the exhilaration of adaptation are common threads behind their inspiration to embark on a brick-and-mortar presence for their farm businesses. The shops reach to the core of why, how and for whom they each farm. Whether from an urban or rural perspective, growing food grows community. ■



# Sharing Land to Support Farmers & Land Access

Rose and Mike Roelf are creating land access for community-conscious beginning farmers

By Tamsyn Jones

**W**hen Rose and Mike Roelf purchased 45 acres of farmland from Rose's mother in 2014, they had a vision: to repair the land, rebuild the soil, address food insecurity and create land access for a new generation of community-conscious farmers.

Today, their land represents the budding of that vision. Located near Iowa City, Iowa, the farmland currently hosts two beginning farm businesses – Rainbow Roots Farm, a certified organic farm operated by Corbin Scholtz, and Radical Patch Farm, a cooperative operated by Joe Klingelhutz, Ilsa Dewald, and Will Kresse – that are raising food for the local community. The farm also has an extensive conservation plan, boasts an abundance of wildlife – and is serving as a model for how farmland owners can use their land to build a more diverse, sustainable and inclusive farm landscape in Iowa.

The couple's commitment to land access, conservation and long-term sustainability – as well as the thoughtful planning Rose and Mike have engaged in to guide their decision-making – led to their selection by PFI's board of directors as the 2021 recipients of the Farmland Owner Legacy Award.

"I've always been interested in food quality, growing food for people and preserving family farms," Rose says. "The health of people and animals is really important."

"We're also really concerned about food insecurity," Mike says. "It is shocking how many people can't afford the school lunch bill for their children. How can

we live here in Iowa and people have those struggles?"

## Early Influences

The seeds of the Roelfs' interest in land and community stewardship are rooted in a mix of personal farm and local food experiences, a concern for the environment and a growing awareness in adulthood about food access and the importance of supporting local food farmers.

Rose's parents both grew up near Sibley, Iowa, about 10 miles from the Minnesota border in the northwest part of the state. Her dad, Marty, a plastics engineer, grew up on a farm. His career took him out of Iowa and Rose was born in Delaware, but she and her family moved back to Iowa when she was four years old. In the late 1960s, Rose's parents purchased a farm outside Iowa City, and in 1971, when Rose was 6, the family moved onto the farm – the same land where Rose and Mike now live.

"There were a few parcels involved throughout the years," Rose says. "They purchased it from an estate. My family didn't actually farm the land, just rented it out. I lived out here until I graduated high school."

Growing up, Rose often helped with livestock-related chores on the neighbors' farms. Her mom, Shirley, also kept a big garden. "I always liked the 'food for humans' side of production," she says. "I was always out with my mom in the garden, and helped with canning, making jam, things like that."

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**(Above):** Rose and Mike Roelf stand by a patch of blooming sunflowers on their farmland near Iowa City, Iowa.

**(Opposite):** Will Kresse (left) and Joe Klingelhutz (center) work at their farm, Radical Patch Farm, located on Rose and Mike Roelfs' farmland near Iowa City, Iowa.

Mike's family also had farm connections. His mother grew up on a farm near Clarence, Iowa, where his grandfather raised corn, soybeans and hogs, and where Mike spent weekends as a kid. His paternal grandfather was a farmer and cattle broker who ran a stockyard in Clarence. "My parents moved to Iowa City for education purposes and never left," Mike says. "I lived in town, but my mom had a giant garden and canned, and did all those things."

### Transitioning the Land Fairly

The couple met while in high school in Iowa City and later moved to Tempe, Arizona to attend Arizona State University, where Mike studied computer science and Rose studied real estate and finance. In 1991, the Roelfs returned to Iowa to pursue their careers and raise their family. Today, Rose is a program manager at the Iowa City office of Pearson, a global company that specializes in educational learning experiences and assessment, and Mike does consulting work as an information technology specialist.

They knew they wanted to move out of the city at some point, and in 2014, Rose says the timing was right to explore the possibility of purchasing part of her family farmland. "Mom was in Houston at the time," she says, "and we wondered if she would be interested in selling to us." Rose's mom traveled to Iowa in the summer of 2014 to work on the transition process, and stayed for a few weeks to ensure it went smoothly. Rose and Mike purchased the land at market value and, Rose says, "made sure it was a fair transaction so my mom was fairly compensated."

Months before starting the formal transition process, however, as they were imagining how they might use the land, Rose and Mike spent significant time researching their options, connecting with local farms – and even gaining first-hand farming experience.

### Clarifying Goals, Gaining Insights

It was during this exploratory phase that Rose and Mike first formally connected with Practical Farmers of Iowa. The couple attended their first PFI annual conference in January 2014, where they signed up for the Holistic Management short course. "That was really impactful because it made us think about what our goals are, and the driving principles we're going to measure those goals against," Rose says. "Thinking about all those things before purchasing the land was important."

"We went to PFI to help us look at whether what we're now doing with our farmland was a good idea," Mike adds. "We wanted to repair the land, which is pretty sloping and had been row-cropped for 30 years. The soil needed rebuilding. The other goals were what can we do to help young farmers and address food insecurity?"

As part of their research, the couple also got first-hand insights into the realities of running a vegetable farm today and the challenges beginning farmers face. They visited other farms in the area, and in 2014 Rose participated in PFI's Labor4Learning program, working with Susan Jutz, who hadn't yet retired from

"Our model of helping young farmers could work elsewhere. It doesn't have to be within a mile of a city. What we're doing is giving them access. We're taking people who have been relatively successful at growing things and giving them a leg up and a chance to make it a lifetime career."

– MIKE ROELF

*(Continued on page 14 →)*





“We wanted to start right away with cover cropping and rebuilding the soil. Those are some really early lessons we picked up from participating in PFI.”

– ROSE ROELF

(Above): Rose’s mother, Shirley Smalley, celebrates a bountiful kale crop during a visit to the farm.

her long career operating ZJ Farm near Solon, Iowa. “I was the world’s oldest intern,” Rose quips.

Rose and Mike also knew PFI member Dick Schwab, a fellow co-worker at Pearson, where all three had worked. At the time, Dick was leasing some of his land near Solon to Kate Edwards, who had started Wild Woods Farm on the property. Rose and Mike arranged to volunteer with Kate several times.

### Putting Farmland Vision Into Practice

Once the farmland transition was complete, the Roelfs didn’t waste any time putting their vision for the land into action. “We closed on the farm in August, and before the beans were harvested, we had oats flown on,” Rose says. “We wanted to start right away with cover cropping and rebuilding the soil. Those are some really early lessons we picked up from participating in PFI – both from the conference, and we went to a lot of field days before we bought the farm.”

In the summer of 2015, Rose and Mike took the next big steps towards fulfilling their farmland goals. Kate was losing her lease and, aware of the Roelfs’ interest in land access issues, approached them about moving Wild Woods Farm to their land. A key challenge, though, was the lack of infrastructure on the Roelfs’ land – the Roelfs hadn’t even built their house yet.

The trio addressed the situation with a thoughtful lease agreement that took into account land access and financial considerations, as well as the Roelfs’ conservation goals. Because short-term leases are a common land access barrier, they set up a five-year

lease, with a provision that Kate could exit early if she found another farm opportunity.

The Roelfs also designed the lease so Kate would own and build equity in the barn, which included an apartment for her to live in – and it stated that Rose and Mike would purchase the barn from Kate when she left. Finally, the lease contained a conservation plan and agreements for using cover crops, eliminating non-organic pesticides and practicing crop rotation.

Thinking through the best way to handle infrastructure costs and ownership was also part of the process. Kate helped Rose and Mike determine the best placement for the irrigation and buildings, and the infrastructure eventually came to include, in addition to the barn, a walk-in cooler, germination house, packing shed, equipment storage area and irrigation.

“Mike and I put in and owned all of the irrigation. Kate built the barn and added the cooler,” Rose says. “She also put up the germination house and sold it to Corbin when she moved. So we all own a bit of the infrastructure.”

### Connecting With Tenants

Kate stayed for four years, until an opportunity came up to purchase her own farm in 2019. But she helped Rose and Mike connect with another young farmer – Corbin Scholz, who moved her year-old operation, Rainbow Roots Farm, to the Roelfs’ land in 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

Because she was farming at a smaller scale than Kate and the Roelfs’ land was bigger than she could manage her first year, Rose and Mike offered some of that space to a second beginning farm business – Radical Patch Farm, the cooperative run by farm partners Joe Klingelhut, Ilsa Dewald and Will Kresse.

“They rent about 1 acre from us and have access to the irrigation and a little area in the barn,” Rose says. “Part of their lease includes a section of the barn to use for packing or storing materials, and they’ve put up a pack station on their area of the farm.”

With all the farmers they’ve worked with so far, the Roelfs have invested considerable time crafting custom leases that work for all parties. Part of that process has involved engaging in meaningful dialogue with the farmers, listening to their concerns and ideas and being open about everyone’s expectations.

“All those farmers came from previous leases and arrangements, so they brought a lot of what did and didn’t work for them and could express those things to us,” Mike says. “And we had experience with what we thought works and doesn’t work. Land access is a big deal – all of those farmers had to leave where they had been farming.”

“We found this process fostered really good conversations,” Rose adds. “There were differences in our leases with Kate and Corbin because they had different needs.”



## Small Plots, Big Impact

Leasing land to these beginning farmers also directly links with the Roelfs' goal of addressing food insecurity. Both Kate and Corbin donate food to the local food pantries, Rose says, which goes to people with food insecurity. "Corbin also donates to some organizations in Cedar Rapids to stock the community refrigerators with fresh food. That's really important to us."

For her part, Corbin – who nominated Rose and Mike for the Farmland Owner Legacy Award – says she has not only managed to survive as a beginning farmer thanks to the Roelfs, she has been able to grow her business.

"I'm in my second year farming Rose's land and have already doubled my production," Corbin says. "Without this opportunity, I would have stopped farming at the end of 2019. This feels like a private incubator setting, and I am so lucky to be involved."

The Roelfs see their role similarly – as non-operator landowners who are providing access to land, infrastructure, markets and a chance for beginning farms to grow and thrive. They advise other landowners to recognize the next generation's immense work ethic, trust their knowledge and abilities, and realize how even a small piece of land can have an outsize impact on land and food access.

"Rad Patch Farm sells 10 CSA shares, plus their own – that's 13 families they're providing vegetables for on 1 acre of land," Rose says. "And farmers who have 1 acre can help younger farmers get started with that small of a plot."

"Our model of helping young farmers could work elsewhere," Mike adds. "It doesn't have to be within a mile of a city. What we're doing is giving them access. We're taking people who have been relatively successful at growing things and giving them a leg up and a chance to make it a lifetime career." ■

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**(Above):** CLOCKWISE LEFT TO RIGHT: Joe Klingelhutz of Radical Patch Farm, Corbin Scholtz of Rainbow Roots Farm and Kate Edwards of Wild Woods Farm pose together at PFI's annual conference in 2019.

Rose and her mom, Shirley, ride the gator on the Roelfs' farmland.

Corbin Scholtz packs food to donate to a local food pantry.

Rainbow Roots Farm at an Iowa City farmers market.

# Many Hands

# PLANTING HABITAT

## Establishing Prairie on a Vegetable Farm

By Emma Liddle | Photos courtesy of Iowa Valley RC&D

Mark Quee, the farm manager at Scattergood Farm, stared out over his pollinator habitat on a warm day in late June. The golden Alexanders are in full bloom and the long strips of prairie are a vibrant pastiche of dark green, yellow and purple against the rows of vegetables.

“Every day I walk out to the farm, and along our main path is our pollinator palooza mix,” Mark says. “Every week it’s different and beautiful, and it’s really fun to watch it change year to year, as well as week to week.”



*The entire team at Grow: Johnson County.*





Jake Kundert, the former food systems director at Grow: Johnson County, also has robust pollinator habitat that hums with bumblebees and other pollinators. Sitting in front of the beetle banks at the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm, where Grow: Johnson County is based, he reflects on the benefits this habitat has provided. “The farm is much better because of having this environment where insects are able to thrive,” Jake says.

Jake and Mark both have multiple, expansive prairie areas that attract beneficial insects, help with pest prevention in crop fields, keep soil on their land, significantly improve their operations and make the places they farm beautiful.

They could not have created these spaces, however, without the help of many volunteers and partners, including Xerces Society volunteers, Scattergood students, Grow: Johnson County staff and others. The planting process took days, and the growing and managing took years, but the prairie has benefitted Jake’s and Mark’s communities and their farms in many ways.

To establish their habitat areas, both farmers used Prairie Moon Nursery’s Pollinator Palooza mix, taking underperforming acres and field edges out of production. Doing this decreased the costs of planting future cash crops. Average yield also improved, since lower-producing acres drag down calculations of a field’s average output. Plus, as horticulture farmers, they gained more pollinators to help their vegetable crops and balance out the pest insects.

## Prairie as Pest Control

For Jake, the decision to plant beetle banks stemmed from a problem with Colorado potato beetles. Many potato farmers in Iowa and beyond deal with these small yet voracious beetles, which pose a significant threat to potato crops. The beetles can produce three generations per year, and one unchecked adult beetle can lead to droves of hungry beetle offspring eating the leaves of potato plants.

“They go out and can demolish a field really quickly, to the point you walk out there and it looks like some green stems sticking out of the ground,” Jake says. Without leaf material for the plant to photosynthesize, the potato underground fails to thrive, reducing yield.



Jake Kundert

To avoid this fate, Jake had tried walking the rows of potatoes to find the beetles and kill them individually. This job was both labor-intensive and unpleasant, and the method meant he invariably missed some beetles. Seeking a better approach, Jake decided to try planting beetle banks – something he was inspired to do after attending a 2018 PFI field day at Andy and Melissa Dunham’s Grinnell Heritage Farm.

“Andy came up on this one spot on the farm and said, ‘These are beetle banks, and since we’ve installed them, we haven’t had to spray for potato beetles anymore.’ That set the lightbulb off in my mind,” Jake says. After some more research, he discovered why the Dunhams no longer needed to spray: predatory ground beetles, which feed on potato beetles and keep the population in check.

## Prairie as Soil Protection

The impetus for adding prairie at Scattergood began with a half-acre patch on a steep, erosion-prone slope. After big rains, Mark found it “soul-crushing” to see the amount of soil washed into the nearby path. After years of trying to grow vegetables on the patch, Mark conducted two PFI



Mark Quee

field crop trials, which stabilized the soil through reduced tillage. But he hesitated to keep farming that land.

Scattergood's former biology teacher, Mike Severino, was actually the first to plant prairie at Scattergood. For that half-acre piece of steep slope, Mike had applied for and received a Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grant to seed it with Minnesota Native Landscape's Pollinator Mix. The first seeds of that prairie patch were planted in 2014.

"It's just been the very best thing we've ever done," Mark says. "The prairie plants have really stabilized that hillside, encourage lots of diverse insect life and it's just beautiful." The success of that first prairie planting inspired Mark to plant more prairie and pollinator habitat whenever he discovered more unproductive parts of the school's land.

## Community Catalyst

Once Jake Kundert decided to plant the beetle banks at Grow: Johnson County, he began to involve his community. He ordered more than 2,000 native prairie plugs, or

container-grown prairie plants, from Minnesota Native Landscapes to plant in the banks. These plugs contained three main grass species: little bluestem, prairie dropseed and junegrass, and were meant to establish the prairie faster than starting from seed.

On the day the plugs arrived, Grow: Johnson County staff and 10 volunteers from across the region planted every last plug in four sections of beetle bank. The volunteers included those who regularly volunteered at the Grow farm; a few from the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm where Grow is based; Sarah Nizzi from the Xerces Society; and some members from a local naturalist group.

While three of Grow: Johnson County's staff planted the main plugs using the tractor and water wheel transplanter, the other volunteers followed and added the remaining plants. Although the planting was tough work, the volunteers and Jake rallied around the beetle banks as a haven for beneficial insects and beauty on the farm.

Mark Quee's prairie strips also came together with the help of the community and Practical Farmers of Iowa. At the 2019 PFI conference, after Sarah Foltz Jordan's conference session "Installing Prairie Habitat: Starting With Seedlings," Mark approached Sarah, introduced himself and Scattergood and offered to work with her on pollinator projects. Sarah leapt at the opportunity and brought Sarah Nizzi on board. Together, they came up with specific seed and transplant mixes for the Scattergood strips.

Mark's first prairie strip installation was funded by Xerces Society and planted by staff members Sarah Foltz-Jordan and Sarah Nizzi. His prairie strips were also planted with transplants for quicker establishment. "It was really fun because [the two Sarahs] were trying to get the plants separated by heights and bloom times, so we could have a really nice cascading effect as you go down the row," Mark says. "It's more expensive and labor-intensive, but after one year it's pretty amazing."

Mark slowly turned more of the unproductive parts of Scattergood's land into pollinator habitat. When Mark



Minnesota Native Landscapes



**HELIOPSIS HELIANTHOIDES**  
Common Ox-eye Sunflower

FULL SUN

Ht. 48-60"  
(120-150cm)

Minnesota Native Landscapes



**BROWN FOX SEDGE**  
*Carex vulpinoidea*

FULL SUN, PARTIAL SUN

Ht. 1-3'  
(.3-1m)

Minnesota Native Landscapes



**INDIAN GRASS**  
*Sorghastrum nutans*

FULL SUN, PARTIAL SUN

Ht. 5-7'  
(1.5-2m)

Minnesota Native Landscapes



**SHOWY GOLDENROD**  
*Solidago speciosa*

FULL SUN

Ht. 24-36"  
(60-90cm)





decided to break up one of his bigger fields with a row of big bluestem, Xerces Society brought in volunteers to help him install three extra rows of prairie with added diversity. Xerces and Mark organized a planting day, with volunteers from Xerces Society and PFI, who planted bluestem transplants by hand.

## The Healing Nature of Habitat

At Grow: Johnson County, Jake says the beetle banks present an opportunity to showcase how food and nature coexist on a farm. “The beetle banks are an opportunity to share the value of these native plants – plants that have been in Iowa for thousands of years – in modern, agricultural landscapes,” Jake says. At Scattergood, the prairie is integral to student engagement: Mark frequently involves his students in farm management and efforts to establish prairie through class curricula. Right now, he and his students are working on a SARE grant to plant understory in their orchard.

On-farm prairie has not only brought Jake and Mark closer to their communities, but it has brought healing to their operations. For Jake, installing beetle banks brought ecological balance between predatory ground beetles and potato bugs. The predatory beetles also eat weed seeds. “Just think,” Jake says. “You create this little space for a bug and it takes care of a problem you might have on the farm, like dealing with a pest as important and detrimental as the potato beetle.” He looks forward to seeing how restoring this ecological balance over time will decrease the need for harsher methods of pest control, like chemical application.

### Opposite page, clockwise from upper left:

*Jake Kundert plants plugs into the holes created by the water-wheel transplanter.*

*A tray containing plugs of long-beaked sedge.*

*Sarah Nizzi smiles while grabbing plugs to plant.*

*Jake Kundert drives transplants to the different sections of beetle bank.*

*Volunteer Michi Lopez keeps track of the plugs being planted.*

*Volunteers plant along the rows.*

*Theresa Carbrey smiles while handling a prairie plant.*

Mark’s problems also diminished with the planting of his prairie. His erosive patch of land finally stabilized, and by taking pressure off of underperforming areas, his operation is more efficient. The prairie is also helping to unite and educate his students – and pollinators and ground beetles are using the prairie strips for shelter and food, in return benefitting the surrounding area.

## Considering Your Own Habitat

For those considering adding habitat, Jake suggests looking at what is reasonable with the given setup, preparing to manage it for the next three to five years and using what you already know to your advantage. “Having not a lot of experience, we went back to doing what we know – and we know how to plant transplants,” Jake says. “So we plant it like we would plant our cabbage field.”

Mark recommends starting with buckwheat as a precursor to prairie, as buckwheat is easy to manage, makes an immediate difference and can be eradicated at will. Otherwise, he suggests finding the less productive areas, reaching out for assistance and thinking about the long-term in your decision-making. “Even if you’re discouraged, try not to judge for five years,” he says. “I suspect you’ll be happy with what you did.”

When well-established prairie is in full bloom, Jake and Mark both say they love to watch the colors change from season to season, especially as the prairie matures. Tallgrass prairie is reminiscent of Iowa’s past, and can build community in the present.

“Just to know that there’s room for beauty in a farm that’s also focused on productivity, that’s important spiritually, to make room for the things that we don’t eat,” Mark says. “It feels like we’ve planted hope.” ■

## Resources:

[practicalfarmers.org/2019/08/on-farm-habitat-101-what-is-habitat](https://practicalfarmers.org/2019/08/on-farm-habitat-101-what-is-habitat)

[prairiemoon.com/pollinator-palooza-prairie-seed-mix-prairie-moon-nursery.html](https://prairiemoon.com/pollinator-palooza-prairie-seed-mix-prairie-moon-nursery.html)

# SUMMER

## ON THE

# FARM



by Liz Kolbe  
photographs by PFI Staff

**Field days have been a cornerstone** of PFI's farmer-led programming since our earliest days – even before we had a name. Over the years, we've made changes to how we organize, manage and publicize field days. Some of the changes have been subtle: Few of you would have noticed when we began bringing clipboards or PFI-branded pens. We've added microphones, full-color field day guides, event webpages, an evaluation drop-box (and an online evaluation option) – and we even bought a van. Many of you likely noticed those changes!

But like many things that happened in 2020 and 2021, the changes we made to our field day season the past two years were unprecedented. Field days went completely virtual in 2020. And in 2021 we crafted a summer events season that featured in-person and virtual events, and released two separate summer event guides to accommodate a rolling event schedule adaptive to changing public health guidance.

Despite all these changes – good, bad or necessary – the spirit of PFI field days has remained steadfast, rooted in curiosity, creativity and connection. We tend to overanalyze how it happens, but somehow, being on a farm with other people who are gathered in that spirit is impactful. Attendees are inspired to ask new questions and try out new ideas on their own farms. They connect with one another – over shared interests, a shared meal, shared conversation, a summer storm experienced together – and grow those connections into networks and friendships.

The next eight pages share a snapshot of some of our 2021 summer events, including field days, “Catching Up” events and scenes from the sets of “Live From the Farm” episodes. We hope to see even more of you in 2022.



# LIVE *from the* FARM







5

**Opposite page, clockwise from left:** (1) A bumblebee visits the hairy vetch flowers among the cover crops at Grow: Johnson County in Iowa City, Iowa. (2) Jill Beebout of Blue Gate Farm enjoys a popsicle after delivering her “Live From the Farm” episode near Chariton, Iowa on Aug. 10. (3) A water wheel transplanter is ready to roll at the Grow: Johnson County farm. (4) Roger Wilcox of Wilcox Farm shares tips for harvesting small grains from his recently combined oat field near Pierson, Iowa, on July 27. PFI staffers Rebecca Clay (right) and Emma Liddle (with camera) were on site for Roger’s “Live From the Farm” event.

**This page:** (5) Josh Hiemstra, Zach Laughlin and Becky Wagner (left to right) sport emergency rain protection following the “Live From the Farm” episode at Hiemstra Dairy near Brandon, Wisconsin, on Aug. 24. The group took viewers to see their collection of annual and perennial forages for the dairy, including several co-seeding and interseeding trials. (6) PFI staff used “Live From the Farm” visits to capture additional footage for PFI’s upcoming video series about creating wildlife habitat on farms. Here, PFI staffers Maggie Norton and Nick Ohde interview Jake Kundert of Grow: Johnson County.



6

# Catching Up





8



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**Opposite page, clockwise from left:** (1) Michael Vittetoe and Ann Cromwell chat at his “Catching Up” event on July 19 near Washington, Iowa. Michael is combining cereal rye that is relay-cropped with soybeans. (2) A cat gingerly walks around the guests at Mark Queen’s “Catching Up” event on July 14 in West Branch. (3) Jon Bakehouse pulls up a corn plant to show attendees the root ball during his event on July 9 near Hastings, Iowa. Jon and his wife, Tina, raise corn and soybeans, a cow-calf herd and are getting started with goats at Maple Edge Farm. (4) Peg Bouska discusses on-farm conservation efforts during the June 25 event she hosted with her sisters Ann Novak, Carol Bouska and Sally McCoy on their jointly-owned farm near Fort Atkinson, Iowa. (5) Vaughn Borchardt (*with shovel*) evaluates a soil pit alongside his two sons and attendees. His event on June 17 near Fenton, Iowa, focused on strip-tilled corn following a cover crop. (6) Attendees walked through wheat and oats interseeded with clover at Doug Linker’s farm on June 30 near Chadwick, Illinois. (7) Amber Gable (*with Elliott*) discusses grape harvest during Backcountry Winery’s “Catching Up” event on July 28 near Stratford, Iowa.

**This page:** (8) Attendees got chummy with the goat herd during Cheryl Hopkins’ event at Frog Hollow Farm near Walker, Iowa, on June 17. (9) Shaffer and Madelyn Ridgeway, with their three boys and family pup, Sugar, pose in front of a field of purple peas after their “Catching Up” event near Waterloo, Iowa, on Aug. 5. Their farm, Southern Goods, specializes in traditional Southern crops. (10) Attendees discuss pepper production at Michi Lopez’s vegetable plots during her “Catching Up” event on June 26 near Iowa City, Iowa. This event was hosted in Spanish and English.



10



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**This page:** (1) Curt Miller and Randy Reidinger catch up with Diane and Ivan Arenson (left to right) during the Arensons' event near Hinton, Iowa, on July 2. The day focused on prairie restoration and managed grazing. (2) Jordan Scheibel (center in gray T-shirt) demonstrates how he mists flats on his outdoor germination table (and keeps the critters off). Jordan's event on July 30 focused on low-tillage production techniques at his farm, Middle Way Farm, near Grinnell, Iowa.

**Opposite page, clockwise from left:** (3) Mike Malik of Long Lane Orchard near Solon, Iowa, answers questions about his high-density trellis system for apples on July 29. (4) Attendees discuss relay cropping and organic small grains with Scott Wedemeier (red tee) on his farm near Maynard, Iowa, on July 15. (5) Landon Brown poses near his roller-crimper, which was the feature of his event on June 24 near New Providence, Iowa. (6) A fritillary butterfly rests on Bill Ohde's cap during the "Catching Up" event at Amund Bartz's land, which focused on habitat restoration and management, on June 24 near New Albin, Iowa. (7) Nancy Brannaman braved the wind for a photo by her wheat field following her June 24 event near Streator, Illinois. (8) Joe stays close to his mom, Natasha Hegmann, at their greenhouse in Elkader, Iowa, on June 23. Natasha and husband Peter Kerns raise vegetables, pork, mushrooms and maple syrup at Turkey River Farm. (9) Dan and Lorna Wilson look at the vegetable fields at John and Janna Wesselius' farm, The Cornucopia, near Sioux Center, Iowa, on Aug. 11. (10) Dick Sloan looks down at the clover cover crop established as part of a PFI on-farm research project prior to his corn planting. Dick discussed this research during his June 29 "Catching Up" event on his farm near Rowley, Iowa.



2



# Field Days





**Opposite page, clockwise from left:** (1) The Bennett family poses following their field day near Galva, Iowa, which focused on cover crops and organic field crops on their 2,000-acre farm. From left: Danielle, Harry and Sam Bennett; LuAnn and Alan Bennett; and Cory Bennett. (2) Attendees at Alec and Rachel Amundson's field day take a ride in a deluxe people mover to a soon-to-be-harvested rye field on July 13, near Osage, Iowa. (3) Dayna Burtness of Nettle Valley Farm wrangles her farm dog, Buddy, into a photo following her field day on Aug. 7 near Spring Grove, Minnesota. Joining Dayna as hosts were Bailey Lutz, of Listenmore Farm, and Heidi Eiger of Radicle Heart Farm, whose farms are located at Nettle Valley Farm. (4) Attendees walk across the pastures at Nettle Valley Farm (soon to be chased back by a thunderstorm). Hosted in partnership with the Xerces Society, the field day focused on silvopasture and the role of livestock in forestry management. (5) The PFI logo comes to life in a cheese and fruit tray at the Bennett field day. (6) Nick Baker looks at a rotary hoe for interseeding cover crops that Mick Zoske brought to the field day at Plagge Farms. (7) Attendees stop in the poultry pen during The Walker Homestead's field day near Iowa City, Iowa, on Aug. 1. (8) Emily and Nathan Paulsen of Brun Ko Farm near Exira, Iowa, offered a Danish-inspired feast following their July 23 field day.

**This page:** (9) Rachel and Alec Amundson discuss harvesting rye. They raise corn, soybeans and rye at Green Country Farms, and have been relay-cropping since 2018. (10) An attendee to Don Eyerly's field day near Winterset, Iowa, walks into a restored prairie. The field day on July 22 focused on habitat restoration and conservation programs. (11) Attendees waded into the soybean field at Plagge Farms (Landon and Ann Plagge) near Latimer, Iowa, on Aug. 6. The Plagges discussed how they plant soybeans "green" (into a standing cover crop), as well as their seed cleaner and cover crop business.

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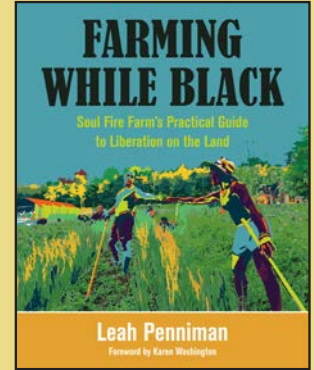
# We Are Each Other's Harvest

*Representation matters to  
bring along the next  
generation of Black Iowan  
farmers and growers*

*By Celize Christy*

*"Owning our own land,  
growing our own food,  
educating our own youth,  
participating in our own health  
care and justice systems -  
these are the sources of real  
power and dignity."*

**- Leah Penniman,  
from "Farming While Black"**



**In 2018**, a report from 24/7 Wall St., an independent financial news and commentary website, ranked the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metro as the No. 1 worst metropolitan area in the country for Black Americans. The report bases its analysis on racial gaps in several socioeconomic indicators, such as income, unemployment, homeownership and more. In the latest report from 2020, the metro was no longer first, but still ranked as the fifth worst metro area for Black Americans.

With 16% of Waterloo's population identifying as Black, the city has the highest percentage of Black residents of any community in Iowa. This demographic traces back to the Illinois Central Railroad's efforts in 1910 to break a strike of local white union members by recruiting Black strikebreakers from the Deep South, specifically Mississippi. As Waterloo's industry expanded through the 20th century from railroads to companies like Rath and John Deere, the Black population grew along with the city.

## **Beckoned by the Promise of Opportunity**

The railroad is what brought DaQuan Campbell's grandmother, Lenora Newman, from Durant, Mississippi, to Waterloo. Her parents were sharecroppers, an unfair system that emerged in the South at the end of the Civil War. In exchange for a share of the crop, Black sharecroppers were able to farm small plots of land. But with few resources or little to no capital, their debt to landowners compounded year after year with no way to repay it. To survive, growing their own food was essential. When Lenora moved North, she brought a belief in self-reliance with her.

"I really became exposed to growing food from my grandmother," says DaQuan, a Waterloo native. He is also a beginning farmer, manager of the Waterloo Urban Farmers market and founder of We Arose Co-op, which is dedicated to getting fresh produce to members of the community who lack access.

"My grandparents instilled in me the importance of growing your own food and how food brings families together. From that upbringing, my grandmother took those teachings with her when she migrated to



Waterloo with her brother and sisters to work on the railroads. For as long as I can remember, she always had a garden and appreciated the fact we could have a meal from the food in our backyard.”

Shaffer Ridgeway likewise moved to Iowa from the South – in his case, from Alabama in 2000 to work as a soil conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Having interned for the agency during high school and college, he began to work for NRCS full-time after graduating from his alma mater, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, a historically Black land-grant university in Normal, Alabama. He has been in Iowa ever since.

### **Practicing What You Preach**

As a district conservationist for Black Hawk County, Shaffer supports farmers in his county by educating them on the various NRCS programs and funding opportunities. After many years advising farmers how to implement conservation practices on their farms, he began to think about putting some of those same practices to work outside his job. His initial idea was to install a test plot that would let him try soil health practices – but he quickly realized he needed a way to pay for the idea.

“So, then I thought, I’ll grow vegetables to pay for it,” Shaffer says. “It’s one thing to see something on paper, or see the change on the landscape, and a whole other to put it into practice yourself. I wanted to practice what I have been preaching to farmers.”

In 2019, Shaffer and his wife, Madelyn, established their farm, with an emphasis on growing Southern vegetables for Midwesterners. Acknowledging that aim, Shaffer and Madelyn named their farm Southern Goods. “My wife came up with that name,” Shaffer says. “There were already a few folks in the community growing these types of crops – for example, purple hulled peas. Others were growing peas on a garden scale of



DaQuan Campbell staffing We Arose Co-Op's Greens to Go mobile produce stand in Waterloo, Iowa.

about 5 or 6 bushels, whereas I wanted to be able to grow and market about 50 to 100 bushels of peas.”

Shaffer’s original idea of testing soil health practices quickly transitioned into a vision that was greater than himself. As he experimented with vegetable varieties, he felt increasingly pulled to make an impact in his community – the Black community, which comprises 75% of his customer base. “In the Black community, 40% of folks live with at least two chronic diseases, which I believe ties back to our food,” Shaffer says.

Soon, Shaffer’s path would intersect with that of DaQuan’s. Having learned about each other through mutual friends, both DaQuan and Shaffer connected as growers with a strong desire to serve the community.

“I began to take interest in hearing Shaffer talk about the ideas he had for his farm and learning how they aligned with my growing practices,” DaQuan says. “To hear how passionate and focused he is not just growing vegetables, but growing quality food based on developing healthy soil. We just hit it off.”

### **Healthy Soil, Healthy Food, Healthy People**

In 2020, as Shaffer was developing and expanding Southern Goods, DaQuan worked to recruit him to be a vendor at the Waterloo Urban Farmers Market, where he serves as market manager. In that role, DaQuan observed that many growers were relying solely on the farmers market as their main distribution channel – a situation that stokes competition and makes it hard for producers to collaborate. He saw there was demand to create an additional market opportunity, and in

*(Continued on page 34)*

*“My vision for We Arose Co-op started with me wanting to help both market and non-market producers diversify their distribution channels while providing an outlet to bring fresh produce to underserved areas. I also wanted to make produce affordable for the community, building a bridge between the two.”*

**– DaQuan Campbell**



DaQuan Campbell walking through the We Arose garden in Waterloo, Iowa.

*“There are so many small things that go into trying to develop a successful farm. Having someone who looks like you, and can relate to you, allows you to feel like you are in a safe place to communicate.”*

**– DaQuan Campbell**

2021 launched We Arose Co-op to bring growers together while navigating ways to bring fresh food to the community.

“My vision for We Arose Co-op started with me wanting to help both market and non-market producers diversify their distribution channels while providing an outlet to bring fresh produce to underserved areas,” DaQuan says. “I also wanted to make produce affordable for the community, building a bridge between the two.”

DaQuan wanted to situate the co-op in the neighborhood he was raised in, Waterloo’s 4th Ward, which he says has “way more convenience and liquor stores around than grocery stores.” According to 2019 data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Research Atlas, the most recent data available, several Waterloo neighborhoods are considered food deserts, based on criteria that includes a poverty rate higher than 20% and one-third of the population living more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store.

Farmers DaQuan recruited to market through the co-op supported his goal of directly addressing this gap in access to local food. Shaffer became one of the co-op’s local producers.

“Our vision of trying to grow something bigger than ourselves is what gets me excited to work with DaQuan,” Shaffer says. “My relationship with the co-op helps me fulfill my business goals by providing fresh food to historically underserved communities, and by getting young people out on the farm and showing them how we grow food.”

Crew members, comprising students from University of Northern Iowa and youth in the Waterloo community, can work with the co-op through its Greens to Go food delivery program.

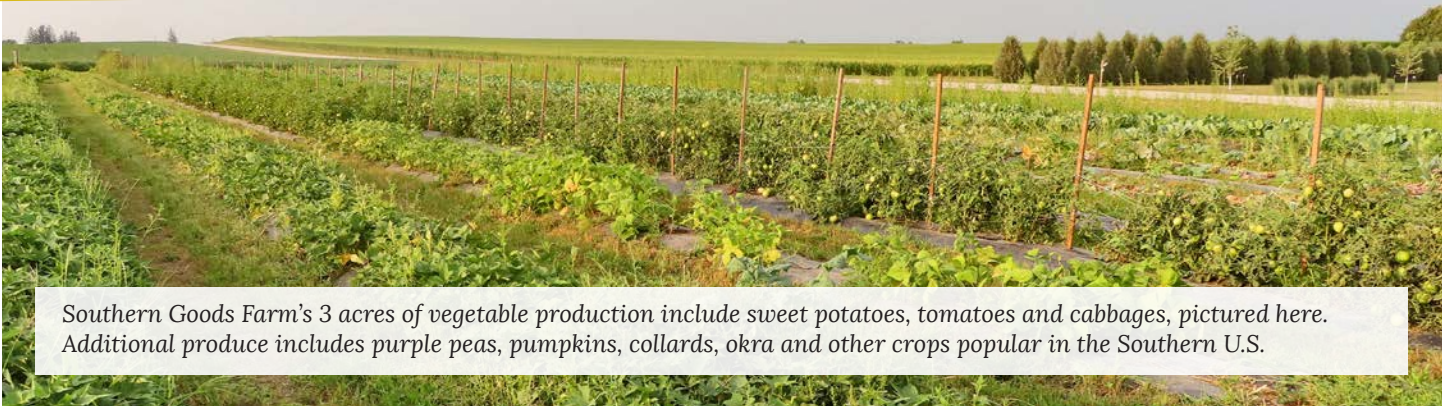
### **Each One, Teach One**

In “Farming While Black,” Leah Penniman shares how Black people coming together and sharing knowledge within the Black community exhibits powerful resilience. “‘Each one, teach one,’ is one of our people’s proverbs,” she writes in the book. “During slavery, Black people were denied education, so when someone learned how to read, it became their duty to teach someone else. That duty persists.”

Shaffer acknowledges this principle. “We’ve all come up on the shoulders of people who’ve gone before us, people who figured

Youth farm crew members harvesting produce for We Arose Co-op with Shaffer Ridgeway (center) and DaQuan Campbell (right) at Southern Goods Farm in Waterloo, Iowa.





Southern Goods Farm's 3 acres of vegetable production include sweet potatoes, tomatoes and cabbages, pictured here. Additional produce includes purple peas, pumpkins, collards, okra and other crops popular in the Southern U.S.

out how to navigate the system. Not beat the system, just navigate the system.”

Representation matters. Shaffer has a saying that he shares with his sons: “You can never be what you have never seen.” As a Black man who has worked within the agricultural system for over 20 years, he tries to help people navigate the system whenever possible.

“There are so many small things that go into trying to develop a successful farm,” DaQuan says. “Having someone who looks like you, and can relate to you, allows you to feel like you are in a safe place to communicate. Shaffer’s experience working with other farmers – and his perspective as a farmer himself, passing on that knowledge to me and others – is something I cherish. Having someone like Shaffer to call and discuss the small things makes all the difference in the world.”

### Cloud of Witnesses

Together, Shaffer and DaQuan are fulfilling each other’s goals of providing local food to Waterloo’s historically underserved communities, while also exposing Black youth to agriculture through their farms. “What I am most proud of is the opportunity to shift the perception of the youth on the importance of growing food and maintaining a healthy lifestyle,” DaQuan says. “Our mission for We Arose Co-op is to

inspire future generations to nourish themselves, their families and communities.”

DaQuan’s family carries excitement and pride at being able to witness his grandparents’ teachings unfolding about the power of growing your own food. “My 87-year-old grandmother will wake me up asking, am I ‘ready to go to the field?’ It is amazing how motivated she is to help me see the farm through. I’m just happy that I made them proud and continue to make them proud.”

For Shaffer, while both of his parents died before he started Southern Goods, he says his vision for the farm stems from them.

“My dad was an entrepreneur who had a small farm, while my mom was very community-driven, always thinking about how to help other people,” Shaffer says. “I personally feel that they are part of what is guiding me. There is a scripture that talks about the great cloud of witnesses, and I feel like they are part of that great cloud of witnesses cheering me on.” ■

*“Our vision of trying to grow something bigger than ourselves is what gets me excited to work with DaQuan. My relationship with the co-op helps me fulfill my business goals by providing fresh food to historically underserved communities, and by getting young people out on the farm and showing them how we grow food.”*

**– Shaffer Ridgeway**



Shaffer Ridgeway

## Multiple Generations of Pumpkins in Kossuth County

Passing on a labor of love to keep pumpkins local while helping a neighboring farm grow

In 1984, Helen Scuffham, of rural Algona, Iowa, couldn't find pumpkins locally to buy for her two young sons. So the next year, the family – John and Helen, and sons Matt and Mark – planted some pumpkins in a cattle lot.

**T**hey ended up with a couple hundred pumpkins, put an ad in the paper and sold the pumpkins within 10 days. Throughout high school, Matt and Mark led the pumpkin-growing endeavor.

Once the boys went off to Iowa State University, the pumpkin business became part of Scuffham Gardens, run by John and Helen. Pumpkins are heavy and labor-intensive, so the business eventually moved to Scuffham Brothers, LLC, and John's brother, Rod, joined the effort. "You handle pumpkins more than once," John says. "We got to the point of handling more than 500,000 pounds of pumpkins each season. We got to the age where pumpkins no longer made sense for us."

Ready to pass on the business to another family, the Scuffhams asked Beany Bode and Joanne Roepke Bode – their neighbors, and operators of Bode's Moonlight Gardens – if they were interested in raising pumpkins. Helen says, "They were the only people that we trusted would work hard enough to take it over."

### Longtime Relationships Enable Business Transfer

The Bode and Scuffham families had been neighbors for a century, so the Scuffhams had known Beany his whole life. In addition, Joanne and Beany had a booth next to John and Helen at the local farmers market. When the Scuffhams offered the business, Beany was teaching high school biology, ecology and other science classes full-time, and coaching sports, at Bishop Garrigan High School while also raising food and three kids with Joanne on the farm.

Despite their busy schedules, Joanne and Beany realized that taking on the pumpkin



Beany Bode, left, stands with the Scuffham brothers, John and Rod, in 2014, the first year Beany and Joanne grew pumpkins after the the Scuffhams transitioned the wholesale part of their business.

**"If [customers] didn't get pumpkins from us, they still had to buy them from somewhere. Why not have them continue to purchase pumpkins from the good earth of Kossuth County..."** – HELEN SCUFFHAM

business could help the family transition more time to the farm – so they accepted the offer. John and Helen transitioned the wholesale part of the business and kept the retail side. "When we started in the '80s, we had to bring pumpkins up to the garage because nobody wanted to go to the patch," John says. "Now that has flipped. They all want to pick their own pumpkins now."

Transitioning a business without passing on tangible assets like land and machinery can be complicated, but John says the customer base they had built was the most critical aspect. "The part of the business that had value was the buyers we had created strong relationships with," John says. So in 2013, the last year the John and Helen grew for the wholesale market, they brought Joanne or

Beany along when they dropped off pumpkins and introduced them.

Perhaps Helen and John could have calculated a cost to create market connections for Joanne and Beany, but they just wanted to see the business continue. "If [customers] didn't get pumpkins from us, they still had to buy them somewhere," Helen says. "Why not have them continue to purchase pumpkins from the good earth of Kossuth County, when we had people willing to do it, who we knew would do it well?"

### Mentoring Through Transfer

John and Helen have been more than willing to serve as mentors, and they support Joanne and Beany's independence. "They don't do everything exactly as we did, as

they shouldn't," Helen says. "It's not our business now, it's theirs. But they're always welcome to visit with us for advice."

Joanne and Beany have found that advice priceless. "It has been so important to have a mentor," Beany says. "The first time we grew pumpkins, John and his brother Rod said they would come over and show me how to harvest pumpkins. I thought: What was there to learn? You cut the pumpkin, and it's harvested." The brothers told Beany to show up with a big knife. He did, but it was the wrong knife. Once that was remedied, they drove down the fence row together to harvest pumpkins. "They were kicking my butt with how fast they were picking pumpkins and throwing them on the rack." Beany learned from John and Rod how fast-paced and tiring harvesting pumpkins for wholesale was.

Joanne had a similar lesson in pace. She and her kids were prepping 1,500 mini pumpkins

**"It has been so important to have a mentor." - BEANY BODE**

for an order. They were washing each pumpkin thoroughly when John and Helen came over. Joanne says, "We had the wrong brushes, so they went to their place and got the right ones. When they came back, they were shocked with how little we had gotten done. They stayed and showed us how to do it, how fast we'd have to get it done. They stayed until all 1,500 pumpkins were washed."

She adds, "We learned by them showing us the way that entire first year. And it's still great to have someone to call and troubleshoot."

In 2019, John and Helen decided to hang up their hats in the retail business, so in 2020, Joanne and Beany added a U-pick operation

to their 15 acres of pumpkins. Beany and Joanne have succeeded in transitioning more time to the farm – Beany scaled down his teaching hours to part-time, and enjoys using the farm often as an outdoor classroom. Joanne continues to work part-time as the public relations manager for Kossuth Regional Health Center.

John and Helen can take satisfaction that the local pumpkin business they started and nurtured for two decades continues. Plus, they are no longer moving 500,000 pounds of pumpkins a season. John says, "My brother, Helen and I are happy as heck to see them hauling all of those pumpkins." ■

## Beginning Farmer Winter Series

Getting started farming isn't easy and many beginning farmers are entering farming at different stages. PFI's next generation team will be holding workshops this winter to help you make farming easier. Check out the following events to find the one that will help you at the stage of farming you are in now.

### Explore Farming Series

**October - November** | Aspiring farmers should look to the Explore Farming training to take their ideas and vision into reality. This series will help you determine your purpose in farming, what products you want to produce and who the people are to help you make your farm a reality.

### Establish Farming Series

**November - January** | Beginning farmers who have started to farm and are working to build their business plan should attend Establish Farming. This series will lead you through the process of using decision-making to build a farm plan. Between workshops, you will have activities to complete and opportunities to connect with mentors to further your understanding of your farm direction.

### Next Generation Summit

**February** | Are you a farmland owner thinking about the next steps for your land and the legacy you would like to leave? Or are you an aspiring farmer looking for land to begin your farming dream? Then we invite you to join the Next Generation Summit. This event will bring together aspiring farmers and farmland owners in a way that allows for education and networking to help overcome the challenge of farmland access.

### Explorando la Agricultura

**Octubre** | Agricultores aspirantes deben participar en el taller Explorando la Agricultura para hacer realidad sus ideas y su visión. Este taller lo ayudará a determinar su propósito en la agricultura, determinar qué productos desea producir y conectarse con personas que pueden ayudarlo a apoyar sus objetivos agrícolas.

### Beginning Farmer Retreat

**February** | If you are starting or thinking about starting a farm, you should plan to attend this annual retreat. Attendees will have the opportunity to network, plan and discuss ways to improve their farms while helping to build a sense of community. In addition, you will hear from other farmers about how they got started and what they have planned for the future. Beginning farmer service providers will be available to share more about the products or services they offer to support new farmers. Dedicated work time will be available for those who want to retreat to focus on planning their farming business. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Find out more details at [practicalfarmers.org](https://practicalfarmers.org).**

## Finding Our Voice

PFI members are making their voices heard to promote a longer-term ag vision

Eschewing political definitions and avoiding partisanship is vital for preserving Practical Farmers' big-tent membership and our value of welcoming everyone. But we also know that government policies and programs at various levels have an immense impact on the lives of our members and in shaping modern agriculture.

That's why our board of directors and policy committee have authorized PFI to engage with specific policy issues related to conservation, beginning farmers, on-farm research and Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Within these strategic areas, PFI and its members have had success engaging with decision-makers, both publicly and behind the scenes, to promote our vision for a better agriculture. The result has been more practical tools available to farmers and landowners and fewer barriers to pursuing innovative agriculture alternatives. Through this outreach, members are ensuring that the voices of farmers and landowners are part of larger conversations about the future of agriculture.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, PFI members found ways to connect with decision-makers and continue making their voices heard. Here are a few policy-related activities PFI members or staff have participated in this year.

### Ag Policy and Building Resilience

Early in spring 2021, several farmers from rural southwest Iowa – Ron Rosmann, Denise O'Brien and Seth Watkins – met virtually with staff from U.S. Rep. Cindy Axne's office to discuss the important role federal policies and programs can play in building resilient farms and communities in the face of a changing climate. The farmers asked the congresswoman's office to consider supporting increased funding for working-lands programs like the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program, the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.



Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst, center, poses with Bill Frederick (left) and James Holz (right) while holding a PFI "Don't Farm Naked" shirt.

"It's important for us farmers to go to town hall meetings and connect with legislators," Denise says. "We farmers are the ones that live the reality of agriculture and climate change, and if we want to have a voice, it's important for us to attend these meetings and make our voices heard no matter the party of the elected official."

### Showcasing Sustainable Farming Practices

Several PFI members hosted elected officials on their farms to share their experiences and help educate decision-makers on sustainable farming practices and systems. In April, Axne visited Tamara Deal's farm in Guthrie County, Iowa, to learn more about cover crops and hear how federal programs can support farmers' and landowners' transitions to more resilient systems.

In July, U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst met with Bill Frederick and James Holz, co-founders of Iowa Cover Crop, on Bill's farm in Greene County. Topics of discussion included cover crops, small grains and the opportunities for new business and enterprises associated with a transition to resilient, extended-rotation systems. "I think it's important that legislators and other influential people see what is happening in their districts and hear personal stories," says Megan Holz, co-owner of Iowa Cover Crop.

"They can see the data and hear the news bites, but when Senator Ernst visited us, she was able to hear firsthand the story of how we were able to build a new business and leave our corporate jobs to come back to the farm."

### Tackling Local Meat Processing

During the 2021 Iowa legislative session, PFI staff and members worked to educate decision-makers about the challenges and opportunities associated with local meat processing capacity in Iowa. Working with state Rep. Chad Ingels, a farmer and PFI member, PFI staff sought input from farmers, meat processors and industry experts on barriers to increasing small-scale processing capacity in Iowa.

As part of the effort, PFI members, including Aaron Lehman and Ryan Marquardt, spoke at a press conference supporting the need for more meat processing capacity, and many members attended legislative hearings or contacted their state representatives and senators to share their own experiences and challenges. The effort paid off. In June, Governor Reynolds signed House File 857, otherwise known as the Butchery Innovation and Revitalization Act, into law. The bill will provide grants to current and aspiring small-scale meat processors to build additional capacity and sets up a task force to examine and make recommendations about chronic labor shortages in the meat processing industry.

### What's Next?

These are just a few highlights of policy-related activities PFI members and staff have participated in over the last year, but we also do not work alone on these efforts. We enjoy support from many partner organizations, including that National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition; Iowa Farmers Union; Center for Rural Affairs; Women, Food and Agriculture Network; and more. As we look towards 2022 and the lead-up to a new farm bill, we'll be continuing our work with these partners and our members to make sure your voices – and our collective vision for a better agriculture – are heard loud and clear. ■

## Review of: “Iowa’s Remarkable Soils: The Story of Our Most Vital Resource and How We Can Save It”

Soil scientists have a tough row to hoe: making their reams of data accessible and meaningful to the average citizen. In her book, “Iowa’s Remarkable Soils: The Story of Our Most Vital Resource and How We Can Save It,” Kathleen Woida attempts to do just that.

**T**his title especially caught my attention because it is the only one of my many soil health books that uses the word “story.” What better way to relate reams of data than through stories? This book is in two parts: the first addresses the traditional five factors of soil formation; the second explores Woida’s assertion that human imprint is a sixth factor.

When discussing soil formation, Kathleen includes interesting stories relatable to a farmer’s experience. Soil scientists develop a “feel method” to identify a soil’s texture with great accuracy, and in the stories of how soil scientists mapped Iowa, she describes the work of Robin Wisner. He started mapping soils in 1968 and didn’t stop until 2014. During those years, he “... walked an average of 8 miles a day every weekday of the year when the ground wasn’t frozen. Mapping was accomplished ... by pushing a three-quarter-inch soil probe 60 inches, later 80 inches, into the ground at least forty-five to fifty times a day .... Now that he’s in his seventies, Robin’s lower back remembers those days well.”

I could imagine walking those miles, feeling the texture of different soils and later feeling all that work in my back. This kind of illustration fades too quickly, and the story of Iowa’s soil turns into a textbook of the history of Iowa’s soil. A section titled “The ABCs of Soil” starts off with this sentence: “The vast majority of Iowa’s soils formed in unconsolidated geologic materials deposited by ice, water, wind, or gravity.” This is good information, but not the start of an engaging story.

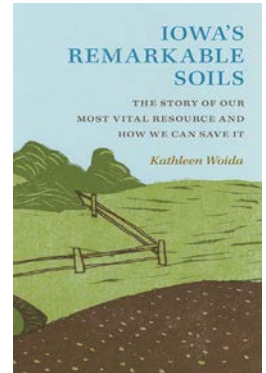
While the first section reads like a textbook, the second reads like a review of existing literature, perhaps aimed at readers just becoming familiar with the abuse Iowa’s soil has endured since plow broke sod. Kathleen touches on erosion, the soil food web, the importance of fungi, the dangers of relying on synthetic inputs and other aspects you will find familiar if your bookshelf bows under the weight of soil-oriented books. She includes modern-day success stories about farmers regenerating Iowa’s soils, like



Thom Miller, the Rosmann family of Rosmann Family Farms, Steve Berger and Levi Lyle, to name a few.

This book relies heavily on its holder being a student and less of a reader, which was a bit of a letdown for me. Perhaps I put too much stock in Kathleen’s use of “story” in her title. There are hints of her writer’s voice, but her inner storyteller can’t quite get the upper hand over her scientific voice. I am thankful, though, that Kathleen wrote a well-researched book. If this is one of the first titles someone picks up – and if they stick with it – they will be well on their way to understanding Iowa’s remarkable soils. ■

*Jon Bakehouse is a lifetime member of PFI who operates Maple Edge Farm with his wife Tina, son Anderson and parents near Hastings, Iowa. The family raises corn and soybeans, and is integrating goats for grazing with their small cow-calf herd. Jon has also participated in on-farm research with PFI for over six years.*



Author: Kathleen Woida

256 pages

Published: May 2021

Synopsis: Sometimes called “black gold,” Iowa’s deep, rich soils are a treasure that formed over thousands of years under the very best of the world’s grasslands—the tallgrass prairie. The soils are diverse and complex and hold within them a record not only of Iowa’s prehistoric past, but also of the changes that took place after settlers utterly transformed the land, as well as the ongoing adjustments taking place today due to climate change.

In language that is scientifically sound but accessible to the layperson, Kathleen Woida explains how soils formed and have changed over centuries and millennia in the land between two rivers.

... In the last hundred years, large-scale intensive agriculture and urban development have severely degraded most of our soils.

However, as Woida documents, some innovative Iowans are beginning to repair and regenerate their soils by treating them as the living ecosystem and vast carbon store that they are.

## Sign Up For Cover Crop or Small Grains Cost-Share!

Get support to raise cover crops or extend your crop rotation

Adding a new crop to your rotation or trying a new management practice can be daunting, especially when there's a financial investment. That's why PFI has worked with companies throughout the agricultural supply chain to create a range of cost-share programs to help offset the risks. Right now, we have open slots in our small-grains cost-share programs, and in our cover crop cost-share programs.

### Extended Rotations Cost-Share

We are offering two cost-share programs for extended rotations in 2022.

- Earn \$15 per acre on up to 200 acres by diversifying a corn and soybean rotation with a year of small grains and summer cover crop containing at least one legume species.

- Earn an additional \$15 per acre for reducing nitrogen on corn that follows your small-grain in rotation.

Growers in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin are eligible for one or both of these opportunities in 2022.

Learn more and sign up at [practicalfarmers.org/small-grains](https://practicalfarmers.org/small-grains).

### Cover Crop Cost-Share

If you're thinking of planting cover crops this fall, you can access cost-share funds from one of seven private cost-share programs in Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska. Cost-share programs are available for both corn and soybeans. Terms vary by program:

- In some, those new to cover crops can receive \$40 per acre on up to 40 acres while farmers who have used cover

crops before can receive \$10 per acre on 160 acres, or 10% of acres farmed, whichever is larger.

- In other programs, farmers will be reimbursed \$10 per acre for up to 200 acres.

There's no deadline to enroll, and you are eligible to sign up even if you are separately enrolled in a public cost-share program. We're looking to work with 1,000 farmers in 2021, and space is available in all programs.

Learn more, see an interactive map of locations and sign up at [practicalfarmers.org/all-cover-crop-cost-share-programs](https://practicalfarmers.org/all-cover-crop-cost-share-programs). ■

## Exercise Your Curiosity at the Cooperators' Meeting! Dec. 16-17 | Ames, IA

**Have you ever asked:** "What's better, the practice I've been using or this alternative I've heard about?" Do you have something you'd like to investigate on your farm? If so, consider the Cooperators' Program, PFI's vehicle for farmer-led, on-farm research.

**What is on-farm research?** On-farm research puts curiosity into action in the spirit of learning, knowledge-sharing and improvement. With simple experimental design and research protocols, you can test ideas and innovations on YOUR unique farm.

**What happens at the Cooperators' Meeting?** You'll join a community of curious and creative farmers who take a scientific approach to improving their farms – and who respect the perspectives and questions of others. When you participate, you can look forward to:

- Shared inspiration and mutual encouragement
- Brainstorming research ideas with others
- Good food – including at an event banquet featuring food from PFI farms
- Making meaningful connections
- Feeling empowered to answer questions about your farm



**What happens next?** PFI staff and farmer cooperators mutually agree on project plans and commitments. When the time comes to conduct the trials, farmers are at the helm, carrying out those plans and taking measurements throughout a trial.

**Impact of on-farm research:** Over the years, the work has resulted in more profitable, diverse and environmentally sound farms and long-term friendships among participants. In many cases, on-farm research has helped transform farmer decision-making.

**Questions?** We're always looking for new cooperators who wish to become curiosity-leaders that inspire improvements to our agricultural landscape. Contact us! ([stefan@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:stefan@practicalfarmers.org)).



## PFI Staff Continues to Grow

### Communications team gains two team members

#### Christine Zrostlik – Marketing & Communications Manager

Christine Zrostlik joined PFI in September 2021. She oversees day-to-day operations of the communications and marketing team, managing projects and supporting the team as they use a variety of tools to fulfill PFI's mission. Christine comes to PFI from UnityPoint Health, where she served as the main media relations contact for the three-state health system. She also used public relations to amplify key messages, led a team of regional media leads, supported systemwide internal and external communications and developed communications for crisis situations, including COVID-19.

Prior to her tenure at UnityPoint Health, Christine spent five years at an agency in Des Moines where she used public relations and public affairs tactics to help clients achieve their communications goals. From 2013-2014, Christine also guided a small engineering firm in Cedar Falls through a marketing rebrand.

A northeast Iowa native, Christine graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in 2013 with degrees in public relations and political

#### Marit Hovey – Communications Assistant

Marit Hovey joined Practical Farmers of Iowa in August 2021 as a part-time communications assistant. Her work focuses on social media, email newsletters and website updates. Marit grew up on a small farm outside of Norwalk, Iowa, which is where her love for farming began.

She is a senior at Iowa State University majoring in global resource systems and environmental studies with minors in French and women and gender studies. During her time at ISU, she has had the opportunity to travel to France, Uganda and St. John, an island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, to study agriculture and natural resources systems.

On campus, she has been involved in and president of the International Agriculture Club. In summer 2020, Marit served as an AmeriCorps VISTA summer associate with



communication. She currently serves on the board of Public Relations Society of America's Iowa chapter and volunteers for the Animal Rescue League of Iowa.

Christine lives in Des Moines with her partner, Evan, and their beloved dog, Bernie. She enjoys spending time outside hiking and gardening, traveling and going to concerts. ■



Lutheran Services in Iowa's Global Greens program in Des Moines. In her free time, Marit loves to cook, hammock and spend time outdoors. ■

**Agricultores  
Practicos  
SEMBRANDO  
RESILIENCIA**

## Receive PFI News in Spanish

In June, we launched our Spanish email newsletter, "Sembrando Resiliencia" – which in English translates to "sowing resilience" – as part of our effort to build relationships and trust with Spanish-speaking beginning and aspiring farmers. The publication is sent out once every other month – una vez cada dos meses – and aims to share PFI news, plus other farming related information, in Spanish.

To sign up, visit [bit.ly/SembrandoResiliencia](https://bit.ly/SembrandoResiliencia). Or if you know someone who would appreciate receiving this, please pass it along!

¿Quieres estar conectado con Agricultores Practicos de Iowa (PFI) y otros recursos agrícolas?

Sembrando Resiliencia, es nuestro nuevo boletín electrónico en español. Suscribirse a [bit.ly/SembrandoResiliencia](https://bit.ly/SembrandoResiliencia). ■

## Download Our Cover Crops App!

This summer, we released our new Find Cover Crops app, designed to help farmers easily locate cover crop seed, services and suppliers. The app is free to download and use, and is available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Use it to find cover crop seed dealers, seed cleaning and custom spraying services in Iowa and surrounding states; request services from your phones or computer; access advice; and more. Learn more, or download the app, at the companion website: [findcovercrops.com](https://findcovercrops.com). ■

# Welcome, New Members!

## DISTRICT 1 – NORTHWEST

- Reese Johnson – Odebolt
- Ashlyn Maronn – Hornick
- Paul Salton – Spencer
- Nolan Schultes – Dedham
- Craig Wallace – Lake View

## DISTRICT 2 – NORTH-CENTRAL

- Anna Balvance – Buffalo Center
- Kevin Cooper – Ames
- Ashton Fehr – Mallard
- Jared Feldman – Greene
- Jose Gonzalez – Ames
- Gabriel Heun – Dayton
- Benjamin Hoksch – Ames
- Kyle Poppens – Parkersburg
- Rod Richardson – Tama
- Carrie Rink – Galt
- Amanda Severson – Clarion
- Matt Showalter – Hampton
- Dennis Staudt – Marble Rock
- Mary Lou Wheeler – Nevada

## DISTRICT 3 – NORTHEAST

- Brandy Beatty – Elkport
- John Berlage – Ridgeway
- Chad Gardner – Rowley
- Randy Kiel – Oelwein
- Jacob Sabers – Sherrill
- Ronald Zelle – Waverly

## DISTRICT 4 – SOUTHWEST

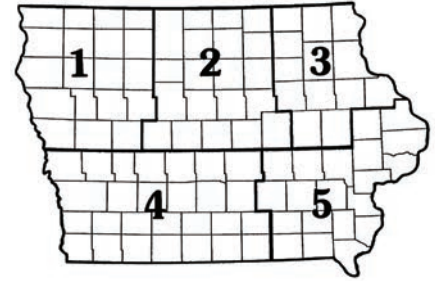
- Don and Marilyn Clark – Centerville
- April Clark – Des Moines
- Dean Davis – West Des Moines
- Conner Hultman – Red Oak
- Blane Martins – Urbandale
- Mary Jane Miller – Indianola
- Mark Oehlerking – Clive
- John Paule – Prole
- Carol Sagawa – Waukeg
- Jim Soppe – Newton
- Clayton Starckovich – Dallas
- Ryan Steffensen – Guthrie Center
- Aaron Van Wyk – Monroe
- Jesse White – Centerville

## DISTRICT 5 – SOUTHEAST

- Megan Booher – Homestead
- Pierce Fairbanks – Anamosa
- Wade Good – Bloomfield
- Sam Hammond – Malcom
- JD Hollingsworth – Packwood
- Susan and John McCloy – DeWitt
- Salome Phillmann – Iowa City
- Haileigh Steffen – Iowa City

## DISTRICT 6 – OUT OF STATE

- David Brandt – Carroll, OH
- Michael Bredeson – Grove City, MN
- Kevin Connelly – Byron, MN



- Logan Dwyer – Chetek, WI
- Art Feck – Carey, OH
- Jason Federer – Wolcott, IN
- Tom Fick – Luverne, MN
- Michael Gardebrecht – Suring, WI
- Terry Gerken – Sterling, IL
- Marvin Katzer – Brea, CA
- Bryce Kirian – New Riegel, OH
- Paul Kylo – Byron, MN
- Tom Lartz – Pearl City, IL
- Susan Lehnhardt – Juda, WI
- Ann Novak – Burlington, WA
- Rick Osen – Bellingham, WA
- Theresa Pedretti – LaCrescent, MN
- Nick Schumacher – Plevna, MT
- Philip Schwantz – Altura, MN
- Joseph Stuckel – Cissna Park, IL
- Dan Wittmer – Johnstown, OH

## DISTRICT 7 – INTERNATIONAL

- Maureen Balsillie – Guelph, Ontario, Canada

*Thank you*

to our newest lifetime members!

**Steve and Michelle Cassabaum**  
Nevada, IA

**Sarah Hargreaves and Drake Larsen**  
Ontario, Canada

**Doug Peterson**  
Ridgeway, MO

**Sophie Ryan**  
Lamoni, IA

*Lifetime membership is open to anyone, and confers the same benefits as regular membership – without any renewal notices!*

*Learn more about this option at [practicalfarmers.org/lifetime-membership](https://practicalfarmers.org/lifetime-membership).*

## A Calling to Teach

Lifetime member Doug Peterson has spent his career, and retirement, in service to soil health

Doug Peterson has always had a reputation as a dedicated speaker and teacher. For 32 years, until retiring in July 2020, he served as a soil health specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service based in northern Missouri, a career that took him across Iowa and the Midwest to give talks and demonstrations on soil health.

Still, I had expected Doug to be enjoying some downtime when I rang him this past July to thank him for becoming a lifetime member of PFI. So I was surprised when Doug answered and told me he was presently travelling across Colorado and Wyoming consulting with landowners on regenerative agriculture.

My surprise stemmed partly from the fact that Doug, who operates a 250-head cow-calf operation near Ridgeway, Missouri, was involved in a serious farm accident earlier this year that sent him to the hospital for several weeks. But neither the accident nor retirement has slowed him down.

Anyone who's had a chance to see Doug speak during his time with NRCS has felt his passion for soil health, and his eagerness to share it. "The teaching-calling came back to me," says Doug of his post-retirement motivation to resume outreach work. "Now I'm doing consulting through the group Understanding Ag."

The work brings him alongside farmers like Gabe Brown, Ray Archuleta and Allen Williams to coach landowners on regenerative agriculture practices. And, like his previous career, it has kept him on the move: In the year-plus since retiring, Doug has already consulted in California, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado.

In his final five years with the NRCS, he covered a lot of territory in Missouri and Iowa as the regional soil health specialist. In



that time, he spoke at roughly 70 meetings a year, reaching about 7,000 to 8,000 people each year with the principals of regenerative agriculture and how to improve the environment while being profitable.

He attributes his interest in soil health to a number of fortuitous happenings in his career and on his farm. In the 1980s, Doug participated in a farmer-led grazing group, Green Hills Farm Project, where he learned from well-known grazier Jim Gerrish and was introduced to Allan Savory, cofounder of the Savory Institute and an advocate of holistic grazing, and his teachings.

After buying his own farm in 2000, Doug set up a grazing system with 16 pastures on a 30- to 40-day rotation. Due to a water tank issue, he had to skip one pasture in the rotation, which inadvertently gave it a 90-day rest before the cows came back to it.

"I thought if I turned them out into waist-high grass, they'd waste a bunch of it," Doug says. "So I strip-grazed it doing daily moves in the tall grass. I thought it was a waste at the time. But the next year, that paddock grew twice as much forage as any other. I didn't know what was going on yet, but that

got me thinking again about higher stocking densities."

This led Doug to revisit Allan Savory's "Holistic Management" book and take some Holistic Management classes. Soon after, he learned about soil's aggregate stability from Ray Archuleta and started down a different path, questioning the amount of terraces being cost-shared in northern Missouri. "That's when I realized that virtually all of the practices NRCS was offering were treating symptoms, not the root causes," Doug says. "If we want to solve our environmental issues for good, we have to treat the root cause not the symptom."

On his own farm, he has started focusing more on genetics, after struggling to find cattle that could do what he wanted. He started with a Pharo genetic base, and now has a mainly Red Angus base with a little bit of Hereford and South Poll influence.

"I'm trying to get adapted animals, where everything is rotated intensively," he says. "We really focus on using the livestock as a tool to improve the land." Doug plans to add sheep soon, take over his family's farm, and continue consulting across the country.

As for his decision to become a lifetime member of PFI, Doug says: "After I spent four to five years working in Iowa, I knew PFI was my kind of group. I appreciated [your] work and efforts. I like people that fight the good fight, even when it's an uphill battle." ■

## Practical Farmers Events

Note: Times are in CST. Full details about all events are available at [practicalfarmers.org/events](https://practicalfarmers.org/events).

### OCTOBER

#### OCT. - NOV.: Explore Farming Series

Learn more at [practicalfarmers.org/beginning-farmers](https://practicalfarmers.org/beginning-farmers)

#### OCT. 7: Explorando la Agricultura: Sesión 1: Propósito

6-7:30 p.m. | En línea | Aprender más en [practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura](https://practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura)

#### OCT. 14: Explorando la Agricultura: Sesión 2: Personas

6-7:30 p.m. | En línea | Aprender más en [practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura](https://practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura)

#### OCT. 19: Discovering Resilience Legal Workshop - Session #1: Farm Law as Your Creative Power

5:30-7:30 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021](https://farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021)

#### OCT. 21: Explorando la Agricultura: Sesión 3: Planificación

6-7:30 p.m. | En línea | Aprender más en [practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura](https://practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura)

#### OCT. 22: Field Day: Meat Marketing Endeavors

Host: Nick Wallace | 4-6 p.m. | Keystone, IA | Learn more at [practicalfarmers.org/meat-marketing-endeavors](https://practicalfarmers.org/meat-marketing-endeavors)

#### OCT. 26: Discovering Resilience Legal Workshop - Session #2: Organize Your Farm Business for Legal Success

5:30-7:30 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021](https://farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021)

#### OCT. 28: Explorando la Agricultura: Sesión 4: Producto

6-7:30 p.m. | En línea | Aprender más en [practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura](https://practicalfarmers.org/explorando-la-agricultura)

### NOVEMBER

#### NOV. - JAN.: Establish Farming Series

Learn more at [practicalfarmers.org/beginning-farmers](https://practicalfarmers.org/beginning-farmers)

#### NOV. 2: Discovering Resilience Legal Workshop - Session #3: Growing a Legally Resilient Workforce

5:30-7:30 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021](https://farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021)

#### NOV. 9: Discovering Resilience Legal Workshop - Session #4: Access Farmland With Legal Confidence

5:30-7:30 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021](https://farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021)

#### NOV. 12: Catching Up - Winter Greens Production in Heated High Tunnels

Host: Lee Matteson | 1-3 p.m. | Nevada, IA | Learn more at [practicalfarmers.org/catching-up](https://practicalfarmers.org/catching-up)

#### NOV. 16: Discovering Resilience Legal Workshop - Session #5: Diversify Farm Enterprises Without Adding Legal Risk

5:30-7:30 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021](https://farmcommons.org/product/drfall2021)

### DECEMBER

#### DEC. 16-17: Cooperators' Meeting

Ames, IA | Learn more at [practicalfarmers.org/cooperators-meeting](https://practicalfarmers.org/cooperators-meeting)

## Other Events

Note: Times are in CDT. Find more events at [practicalfarmers.org/calendar](https://practicalfarmers.org/calendar).

### OCTOBER

#### OCT. 13-21: National Organic Standards Board Fall Meeting

Online | Learn more at [www.ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-sacramento-ca](https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting-sacramento-ca)

#### OCT. 16: Agroforestry Walk & Talk at Sun Dappled Farm

10 a.m.-12 p.m. | Peoria, IL | Learn more at [savannainstitute.org/agroforestry-walk-talk-at-sun-dappled-farm](https://savannainstitute.org/agroforestry-walk-talk-at-sun-dappled-farm)

#### OCT. 18-20: Borlaug Dialogue: The Next Generation

9 a.m. | Des Moines, IA | Learn more at [10times.com/hunger-challenges-tomorrow](https://10times.com/hunger-challenges-tomorrow)

#### OCT. 19: Xerces Society and Natural Areas Associate 2021 Natural Areas Conference

10 a.m.-4 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [naturalareas.org/2021\\_natural\\_areas\\_conference.php](https://naturalareas.org/2021_natural_areas_conference.php)

#### OCT. 22: Silvopasture & Oak Savanna Field Day

9 a.m.-2 p.m. | Zimmerman, MN | Learn more at [sfa-mn.org/silvopasture-agroforestry](https://sfa-mn.org/silvopasture-agroforestry)

#### OCT. 28: Iowa Honey Producers Association FBI Beekeeping Class

6:30-8:30 p.m. | Indianola, IA | Learn more at [lowahoneyproducers.org/calendar](https://lowahoneyproducers.org/calendar)

### NOVEMBER

#### NOV. 3-6: Women Food and Agriculture Network Conference

Online | Learn more at [wfan.org/2021-wfan-conference](https://wfan.org/2021-wfan-conference)

#### NOV. 5: Farm-Crafted Hard Cider Production

8 a.m. | Madelia, MN | Learn more at [organicfruitgrowers.org/events-1/farm-crafted-hard-cider-production](https://organicfruitgrowers.org/events-1/farm-crafted-hard-cider-production)

#### NOV. 20: Center for Rural Affairs Monthly Workshop for Veterans

2-4 p.m. | Online | Learn more at [cfra.org/year-life-diversified-farm-monthly-workshops-veterans-online](https://cfra.org/year-life-diversified-farm-monthly-workshops-veterans-online)

### DECEMBER

#### DEC. 1-2: Organic & Non-GMO Forum

Minneapolis, MN | Learn more at [10times.com/organic-non-gmo-forum](https://10times.com/organic-non-gmo-forum)

#### DEC. 6-9: ACRES USA 2021 Eco-Ag Conference & Trade Show

Cincinnati, OH | Learn more at [acresusa.com/event/eco-ag-conference-2021](https://acresusa.com/event/eco-ag-conference-2021)

#### DEC. 27: Cover Crop Specialist Call (Zoom Video Call)

Online | Learn more at [ilsustainableag.org/event/cover-crop-specialist-calls/2021-12-27](https://ilsustainableag.org/event/cover-crop-specialist-calls/2021-12-27)



“Catching Up” attendees stop to adore the kids at Frog Hollow Farm with host Cheryl Hopkins (*right*) and Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Helen Leavenworth (*front left*). During the event on June 17, Cheryl shared recent pasture improvements completed through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and Helen was available to discuss technical aspects of the project and program.



Labor4Learning trainees Saolmé Phillmann (left) and Emily Spangler (right) grab some conversation and local food while attending the Labor4Learning meet-up on Aug. 15 at Morning Glory Farm in Mount Vernon, Iowa.

Join PFI

# GROW YOUR FARM WITH PRACTICAL FARMERS. JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

Want to join or renew online? Visit [practicalfarmers.org/join-or-renew](http://practicalfarmers.org/join-or-renew).

## MEMBER INFORMATION

Contact Name(s)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm or Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Email 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\* For Farm or Household membership, please list names of all persons included. For Organization membership, you may list up to three contact persons.

## JOIN OR RENEW

### 1. I AM JOINING OR RENEWING AS:

- Aspiring Farmer
- Beginning Farmer
- Farmer
- Friend of Farmer  
*(non-farmer who does not plan to farm)*
- Farmland Owner  
*(non-operator)*

### 2. I AM JOINING AT THE LEVEL OF:

- Access - \$25
  - Individual - \$50
  - Farm or Household - \$60
  - Organization - \$110
  - Lifetime Member\* - \$1,000
- \* See details at [bit.ly/PFI-lifetime](http://bit.ly/PFI-lifetime)

### 3. PLEASE ADD MY FARM TO YOUR:

- Local Foods Directory

### PLEASE ADD MY ORGANIZATION TO YOUR:

- Business Directory *(Organization members only)*

### 4. HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT PFI?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EMAIL DISCUSSION GROUP SIGN-UP

When you join our email discussion groups, you can network, build community and exchange ideas from anywhere, at any time. Sign up for as many groups as you'd like (and be sure to include your email address above)!

- Announcements
- Field Crops
- Horticulture
- Livestock
- Perspectives

## SUSTAIN PRACTICAL FARMERS WITH AN ADDITIONAL DONATION

For the sake of the long-term health and vitality of Practical Farmers of Iowa, we ask you to consider making a donation above and beyond your membership fee. Practical Farmers of Iowa is a 501(c)3 organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

I would like to make a one-time, tax-deductible donation to PFI in the amount of:

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

Or, make a recurring monthly or quarterly donation. This will be automatically charged to your credit card on the first day of each month or quarter.

- Yes, I would like to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- per month
- OR
- per quarter

## PAYMENT

Membership Level .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year for \_\_\_\_ year(s) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation ..... = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT ..... = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Check or money order is enclosed (Please make payable to "Practical Farmers of Iowa.")
- Credit card (Visa, MasterCard or Discover only)

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVC# (3 digits) \_\_\_\_\_  Please automatically charge this credit card annually for membership

Office Use Only: Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Check date \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount \_\_\_\_\_ Notes \_\_\_\_\_

# PRACTICAL FARMERS *of Iowa*

1615 Golden Aspen Drive, Suite 101  
Ames, IA 50010

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Waterloo, IA  
Permit No. 901



## Amundson Field Day

Attendees of Rachel and Alec Amundson's field day near Osage, Iowa, on July 13 waded through relay-cropped cereal rye and soybeans. Planted in fall 2020, the rye was harvested in late July 2021. Soybeans were planted into the rye in spring 2021, allowing for the harvest of two crops – cereal rye and soybeans – in a single year.