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Practical  
**NEWS**

May 29, 2023

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



*Natasha Hegmann, of Elkport, Iowa, partnered with Paul Young to grow squash on his property for the local food shelf through the Iowa Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program.*

**USDA funding boost extends a vital local-food purchasing program in Iowa**

Earlier this month, [Iowa's Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program](#) received a \$2.9 million funding boost from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to extend the program through May 2025, bringing the total program funds to over \$5.6 million.

The program was established in June 2022 with an initial USDA grant of \$2.7 million to help Iowa strengthen its local and regional food systems, support local and socially disadvantaged farmers and build partnerships with local food distributors.

So far, the program has distributed \$684,456 of local produce to underserved communities – and made a big impact on member farms across Iowa.

**Pete Kerns** and **Natasha Hegmann** of Turkey River Farm in Elkport, Iowa, grew lettuce and squash bound for a local food shelf through the Iowa LFPA last fall. "It's great to have a dedicated market that brings fresh, high-quality food to our community," Natasha says.

Your farm may be eligible if you produce food products such as vegetables, grains, dairy, meat, honey and more in Iowa or a county that directly borders it. [Sign up today.](#)

(And stay tuned for an article in the forthcoming Summer 2023 issue of the Practical Farmer that explains how PFI and other partners rallied to bring this transformational program to Iowa).

## NEWS

### Honoring Dave Brandt's soil conservation legacy



Farmer and former PFI member **Dave Brandt** of Carroll, Ohio, died on Sunday, May 21 from injuries sustained in a car accident.

Dave was well known for using soil health techniques like **cover crops**, **extended rotations** and **no-till** while inspiring others to adapt these practices on their own farms.

[Read about PFI's visit to Dave's farm in this article from PFI's Autumn 2017 magazine](#) to learn how he applied PFI values to a landscape with different soil, climate and markets.

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### Building community and soil around U-pick fruits



When Dean and Judy Henry, owners of the Berry Patch Farm near Nevada, Iowa, planted their first strawberries over 50 years ago, they were students with no land, experience or mentors to help guide them.

Today, the Henrys are recognized experts in fruit production.

[Read more about their mission to steward their land in this article from PFI's 2023 spring magazine.](#)



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## Help pay for your fall cover crops with PFI cost-share funds



PFI's cover crop cost-share is for farmers seeding cover crops in non-organic corn and soybean fields. Payment is **\$10 per acre on unlimited acres.**

This program can be combined with any publicly funded cost-share program.

Our application form only takes 10 minutes to fill out and is non-binding. [Click here to read our program eligibility requirements and apply.](#)

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## Planting small grains? Cut the cost with PFI's small grains cost-share

Are you raising a small-grain with a cover crop containing a legume? If so, you could receive \$20 an acre through PFI.

Farmers in **Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota or Wisconsin** may be eligible. [View program requirements and apply](#) by July 1.

Sign up for [Small Grains News](#) to receive more information about programs like these.



## Welcome Rachel and Megan to PFI staff



**Rachel Deutmeyer** joins PFI as the senior video coordinator sharing the meaningful work and stories of PFI members.

Raised in eastern Iowa, Rachel graduated with a bachelor's degree in graphic design from Ashford University and a master's degree in integrated arts from Iowa State University.

Rachel has exhibited photographs of the Midwest at galleries across the nation. [Learn more about Rachel.](#)

**Megan Bark** joins PFI as the senior cost-share administrative coordinator. Her work focuses on managing back-end processes and gathering information for PFI's field crop cost-share programs.

Megan grew up on a small hobby farm in central Iowa. She double-majored in business management and horticulture, and minored in entrepreneurial studies at ISU. She dreams of buying an acreage in the near future. [Learn more about Megan.](#)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**PFI invites you to register for our 2023 field days**





Get ready for our first field days of the year! **This is your chance to visit more than 40 farms** across Iowa, as well as Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Our events are led by our farmer members – we know they are the experts on their specific farming systems.

Please RSVP to let us know if you'll be joining us at a field day. We look forward to seeing you this season!

- [Find field days near you with our interactive map](#)
- [Learn what to bring \(or not to bring\) to field days](#)
- [View event details and RSVP](#)



### **June 9: Field Day – [Profitability With Cover Crops](#)**

*Hosted by: James Hepp*

4-6 p.m. | Rockwell City, IA

### **June 13: Field Day – [No-Till Organic Relay-Cropping](#)**

*Hosted by: Caleb Akin & Noah Wendt*

10 a.m.-Noon | Cambridge, IA

### **June 13: Field Day – [Creating a Soil Health System With No-Till, Cover Crops and Livestock](#)**

*Hosted by: Ross, Cassie, Henry & Ruthie Kurash*

[View our complete list of 2023 field days](#)

## More upcoming events

**June 2: Shared Learning Call – [Harvest and Handling of Cover Crop Seed](#)**  
Noon-1 p.m. | Online

**June 5: "Livestock on the Land" Screening & Panel Discussion – [Bear Creek Friends Meeting House](#)**  
6-9 p.m. | Earlham, IA

**June 3: A Year in the Life of a Poultry Producer – [Sundog Farm](#)**  
10 a.m.-Noon | Solon, IA

**June 22: PFI Spanish Social – [La Luz Centro Cultural](#)**  
1-3 p.m. | Hampton, IA

## IN THE NEWS

### Members in the News

**Anna Geyer** of Oxford, IA, was featured in the "Warmly, Iowa Podcast:" [The Mundane and the Beautiful](#)

**Maren** and **Tom Beard** of Decorah, IA, were featured in the June 2023 issue of [Better Homes and Gardens: Pizza Farm](#)

**Maren Beard** of Decorah, IA, and **Brian Rumsey** of Cedar Falls, IA, were featured in the "Warmly, Iowa Podcast:" [Pizza Farms and Community in Iowa](#)

**Martin Larsen** of Byron, MN, was featured in [Agri-View: Small grains boost opportunities](#)

Giselle Bruskewitz of **Iowa Valley RC&D** was featured on [Radio Iowa: Effort to bring local food to those in need gets boost in federal funding](#)

### PFI in the News

**Jacqueline Venner Senke**, PFI's senior horticulture education coordinator, was featured on the "Donna Lonna Kitchen Podcast:" [057: Out in the Field with Practical Farmers of Iowa](#)

**Have you been featured in the media?** If you're a PFI member, tell us when and where to find a link to the article, and we'll feature you in a future issue of Practical News.

**Contact:** [elizabeth.wilhelm@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:elizabeth.wilhelm@practicalfarmers.org)

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