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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

Practical
NEWS

July 24, 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



PFI welcomes RAGBRAI riders with roadside signs

The Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa, known as RAGBRAI, got underway on Saturday. Cyclists participating in the eight-day event will ride by the farm of PFI members **Mary and Steve Holmes** near Polk City, Iowa, on Wednesday, July 26 – and when they do, they'll be greeted by a series of signs from PFI.

Read sequentially, the Burma-Shave-style signs share a message about the positive impact livestock can have on our landscape. We hope the signs add a bit of fun for riders while inviting thought. For those who won't be on the ride, the signs say:

*"Cows and sheep out munching grass –
Fix that carbon, trap that gas!
Help our climate, boost our soils
While beginning farmers share the spoils.
Grass-fed beef in high demand –
Get more Livestock on the Land."*

NEWS

Read the Summer 2023 magazine, now available online



You can now [read the full Summer 2023 magazine on our website.](#)

Read stories about members who are restoring oak savanna, cost-sharing cover crops, making space for wildlife habitat, serving rural communities, creating food distribution channels and more.

Contact us at (515) 232-5661 if you'd like a print copy – or become a member to automatically receive all our publications in the mail. [Visit our website to join or renew.](#)

Research report: "Can We Reduce N Rates and Improve ROI?"



In 2022, a group of corn farmers with a five-year history of conservation practices trialed severely reduced nitrogen rates – about 50 pounds per acre – as part of a PFI research project.

Seven of the 17 trials saw potential financial savings despite a dry year. **Many farmers said they expected the yield reductions to be larger than they were** and are excited to continue with this multiyear trial.

"My search for optimum N rates isn't over yet," says **Bill Frederick**. [Read the first-year results.](#)

Bring pollinators to your urban farm with the beneficial insects cost-share



With this new cost-share, you'll get funding as well as **Xerces Society's** technical assistance to install insect habitat on your urban or suburban farm.

"Taking care of them is really taking care of ourselves," says **Monika Owczarski**, who farms in Des Moines and received cost-share funding earlier this year. [Read her story.](#)

Special consideration will be given to historically underserved farmers, as defined by the USDA. [Apply now.](#)

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for helping us reach our goal!

With your help, we met our \$55,000 fundraising goal! Gifts like these have helped launch and maintain programming that addresses specific producer needs, such as our:

- [Cover crop cost-share program](#), which has helped over 1,300 farmers plant 350,000-plus acres of cover crops.
- [Savings Incentive Program](#), which gave 183 beginning farmers mentorship and funds for a capital investment.
- [Farm Business Coaching Program](#) which enrolled 12 new farms last year.
- [Labor4Learning program](#), which placed 18 aspiring farmers on trainer farms in 2023.



Thank you for your ongoing support!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Field days



Aug. 6: Field Day – Diversity, Resilience and Beauty at Miss Effie's Country Flowers

Hosted by: Cathy Linker Lafrenz

2-4 p.m. | Donahue, IA

Cathy raises no-till cut flowers on her 1.8-acre farm. To grow her business, she has created a diverse income stream that includes classes, serving as a Hipcamp host, holding garden events and offering photography rentals.



Aug. 7: Field Day – Improving Water Quality and Soil Health With Cover Crops

Hosted by: Mark & Jodi Peterson and Lane Peterson

10 a.m.-Noon | Craig, NE

Mark and his son, Lane, raise corn and soybeans on 2,000 acres and use cover crops on about half of their acres. They advocate for clean water and healthy soils by promoting buffer strips and testing the soil and water on their farm.

[View the full field day schedule](#)

More upcoming events

July 24: Field Day – Playing the GAP Game: On-Farm Food Safety

Hosted by: Donna Warhover

10 a.m.-Noon | Mt. Vernon, IA

July 28: Field Day – Converting Row Crops to Perennial Pasture

Hosted by: Zach Knutson & Brooke Calaway

3-5 p.m. | Zumbrota, MN

Aug. 10: Field Day – Grazing a Perennial Forage Chain

Hosted by: Beth Hoffman & John Hogeland

10 a.m.-Noon | Lovilia, IA

Aug. 10: Field Day – Creating a Legacy of Conservation in Traditional Row Cropping

Hosted by: Joe Merten

Aug. 18: Virtual Workshop – When Pesticide Drift Happens to You

1-4:30 p.m. | Online

Aug. 19: Field Day – Community Farm Tour at Matthew 25

Hosted by: Matthew Arndt

1-3 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA

Aug. 20: Field Day – Hands-On: Trying Out Tools

Hosted by: Carmen Black, Maja Black, Helaina Thompson & Carlos Williams
9 a.m.-Noon | Solon, IA

Aug. 20: Field Day – Collaborating to Scale Up Local Food Production

Carmen Black, Maja Black, Helaina Thompson & Carlos Williams

1-3 p.m. | Solon, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

James Hepp of Rockwell City, IA, **Patrick Murken** of Story City, IA, and **Scott Neff** of Beaman, IA, were mentioned in [Morning Ag Clips: Soybean Farmers Encouraged to Vote in ISA Director Elections](#)

Caleb Akin and Noah Wendt of Cambridge, IA, were featured in [No-Till Farmer: Using Cover Crops & Organic No-Till in Dry Climate](#)

James Hepp of Rockwell City, IA, was featured in a video on [No-Till Farmer: Walk-Through: Highly Modified Case IH 1200 Pivot-Fold No-Till Planter](#)

Bev Rutter of Spencer, IA, was mentioned in [AgUpdate: Sometimes we need a day to catch up](#)

Hannah Scates Kettler and Kurtis Kettler of State Center, IA, were featured in [Times-Republican: Farmers learn about native prairie flowers during field day at Minerva's Meadow](#)

Margaret Chamas of Smithville, MO, who also serves as PFI's livestock viability manager, was featured on [KSHB 41: Port KC turns to goats, sheep to clear brush along Missouri River in Kansas City](#)

Emily and Nathan Paulsen of Exira, IA, were featured on the [Center for Rural Affairs Webpage: Southwest Iowa Farmers Grow Sustainable Food, Give Back to Community](#)

Heath and Katie Hoppes of Council Bluffs, IA, were featured in [DELICIOUSFOOD: The Local Farm Uses Ancient Regenerative Farming Methods](#)

PFI in the News

PFI was mentioned in a press release by [ADM: ADM Grows North American Regenerative Agriculture Program, Launches Significant Expansion Initiative](#)

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

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focused on a different farming specialty.



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