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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

Practical
NEWS

August 14, 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Helpful connections between farmers, land and markets

Last Monday, **Tika Bhandari** showed PFI viability program staff around her quarter-acre plot in West Des Moines, Iowa. Tika and her family moved to Iowa from Bhutan in 2008.

In addition to familiar market garden crops like cabbage and cherry tomatoes, Tika grows African and Asian crops like bitter melon, bottle gourd, white eggplant, water spinach, sweet potato greens and long beans.

Tika is one of the 13 farmers participating in the [Global Greens Farm incubator program](#), which connects farmers who came to Iowa as refugees with land. She sells through farmers markets and through Global Greens' collaborative CSA.

Tika and Global Greens are also participating in the [Iowa Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program \(ILFPA\)](#), which supports partnerships with local producers and underserved communities.

ON THE BLOG

Creating aquatic habitat through oxbow restoration



On July 12, **Kathy and David Law** led a field day showcasing conservation projects on their 300-acre corn, soybean and cattle farm in Lohrville, Iowa.

The Laws recently partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore four oxbows on the farm to create vital aquatic habitat.

[Read the field day recap on the blog.](#)

Did you know? PFI has a new conservation cost-share that can help fund oxbow restoration and other edge-of-field practices. [Learn more and apply.](#)

NEWS

Practical Cover Croppers: "Cover Crops Spur Knowledge Exchange and Extend Farmer Networks"

Cover Crops Spur Kno...



"When I learn something, I feel like I need to share it and hopefully someone else will learn from my mistakes," says **Alec Amundson**.

Hear how members got their advice when they first implemented cover crops and how they are now paying it forward in [the latest new video from our "Practical Cover Croppers" series.](#)

Research report: "Tarping for No-Till Cover Crop Termination"



Hannah Breckbill and Emily Fagan in Decorah, Iowa, have experience using black silage tarps to terminate cover crops and control weeds on their vegetable farm but wanted to learn more about the optimum time to leave them in place.

"If we have a clear understanding of how long it takes to kill cover crops and set back Canada thistles, we'll be able to do **less hand weeding and hoeing and save a lot of time and effort** over the course of the season," Emily says. [Read their results.](#)

Welcome Heather Brown to PFI staff



Heather Brown joins PFI staff as the grants finance manager. Heather attended Morningside University in Sioux City, Iowa, where she received a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in finance and accounting.

She resides in rural Ames, Iowa, with her two girls and three dogs. In her free time, you can find her in the garden picking vegetables to can or at the lake with family fishing, boating and hiking. [Learn more about Heather.](#)

Join the PFI team



Are you an event planner who enjoys organizing education opportunities, or a marketer with experience coordinating marketing campaigns and projects?

Work with us! PFI is hiring for the following positions:

- **Conference and Events Coordinator**
- **Marketing Project Coordinator**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Online workshop: "When Pesticide Drift Happens to You"



Aug. 18 | 1-4:30 p.m. | Online

Learn what you need to do after a pesticide drift incident in this free online workshop with speakers from the Pesticide Action Network at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as well as an environmental lawyer.

You'll discuss the process of **pesticide drift investigation, litigation and compensation**. Health and safety procedures related to exposure will also be highlighted in this comprehensive free virtual workshop. **RSVP today.**

Field days



Aug. 21: Field Day – Growing, Processing and Marketing Popcorn in Iowa

Hosts: Jim & Debbie Fitkin daughters Lora Fitkin & Jennifer Fitkin; and Jim's father, Wayne Fitkin
10 a.m.-Noon | Cedar Falls, IA

Learn about the similarities between growing popcorn and field corn. Jim will also discuss popcorn variety selection, how to process popcorn for retail sales and marketing.



Aug. 23: Field Day – Pollinators, Prairie Strips and Oxbows: Creating Varied Habitat on a Central Iowa Farm

Hosts: Larry & Margaret Stone
10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Traer, IA

Join the Stone family and Iowa State University's Tim Youngquist as they lead attendees on a tour of the farm's prairie strips. Attendees also will see an oxbow restored by **The Nature Conservancy**, as well as a variety of native grasses and forbs.

[View the full field day schedule](#)

More upcoming events

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

Hosted by: Matthew Arndt
1-3 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA

Aug. 19: Beginning Farmer Social – Groundswell Café

Hosted by: Matthew 25
3:30-5 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

Hosted by: Carmen Black, Maja Black, Helaina Thompson & Carlos Williams
1-3 p.m. | Solon, IA

Aug. 20: Spanish Workshop – Pasture & Housing Set-up, Pasture Management

Hosted by: Carlos Williams
1-3 p.m. | Solon, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Neil Peterson of Fonda, IA, was featured in [Storm Lake Times Pilot: **The land is a canvas**](#)

Marcus and Emma Johnson of Central City, IA, were featured in [The Gazette: **Here's how Iowa City schools serve farm-fresh food to kids**](#)

Chuck White of Spencer, IA, was featured in [Successful Farming: **Drought covers 100% of Iowa after three weeks without rain**](#)

Mike and Janine Robertson of Webster City, IA, **Kevin and Ranae Dietzel** of Jewell, IA, **Bridget Chambers** of Webster City, IA, and **Lin Sorenson** of Webster

City, IA, were featured in [The Messenger](#): [Farm fresh, chemical free](#)

PFI in the News

Sarah Carlson, PFI's senior programs and member engagement director, was mentioned in [Nebraska Farmer](#): [Cover crops, beef cattle, research on display at field days](#)

PFI was featured in [Morning Ag Clips](#): [Applications open for Practical Farmers' Cover Crop Cost Share](#)

PFI was featured on [Raccoon Valley Radio](#): [Practical Farmers of Iowa Open Applications for Cover Crop Cost-Share Program](#)

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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