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Beginning  
Farmer  
**NEWS**  
March 2020

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*

Greetings,

As the impacts of COVID-19 continue to mount with dizzying speed, we want you to know that the staff and board of directors of Practical Farmers of Iowa are thinking about you and your safety – and we are committed to being here to support you in whatever way we can during this challenging time.

Protecting the health of everyone in our PFI family is of paramount importance to us. While our work may look a little different in the coming days, we want to assure you that we are continuing to work on behalf of our members and our mission while safeguarding the health of our members, friends, families and communities.

What you can expect from us:

- Our Ames office is closed and staff will work remotely until further notice.
- We will continue to be available by phone and email. When you call the PFI office at (515) 232-5661, you will be directed to leave a voicemail for the staff member you wish to speak with. Once you have done so, the phone system will automatically send your voicemail as an email message to that specific staff member. Rest assured, we are monitoring our email and will respond to you!
- We are canceling in-person meetings and events, and will move them online or postpone them until it is deemed safe to reconvene in person again. Please watch for updates [on our website](#); in [Practical News, our weekly email newsletter](#); on [our Facebook page](#); and if you are a member, on [our email discussion lists](#).

# *Virtual Field Day*

## **Cover Crops & Virtual Farm Tour with Mike Jackson**

**Thursday, March 26 | 1 - 2 p.m.**

We can all keep learning from each other while we practice social distancing. Take a virtual farm tour via Facebook Live with southeast Iowa cover cropper Mike Jackson. Learn how and why he uses cover crops, see some of the machinery he uses to get it done, and ask him questions!

**[Join us on our Facebook page just prior to start time!](#)**

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# *Virtual Farmer Meet-Up*

## **COVID-19: Changes & Challenges**

**Friday, March 27 | 1 - 2 p.m.**

Please join us during this one hour virtual meet-up to talk about the ongoing changes and challenges specific to your farms and markets due to COVID-19.

Our intention is to provide a place for producers to share their insights, struggles, ideas and strategies to manage current and anticipated changes related to consumer demand, market access, labor, and enhanced measures for food safety.

**Meghan Filbert** (Livestock Program Manager) and **Liz Kolbe** (Horticulture Program Manager) will facilitate the discussion.

**[Register for this virtual farmer meet-up.](#)**

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**On-farm jobs now available through Labor4Learning**

## Are you looking to get paid, on-the-job training with experienced farmers in Iowa?

The Labor4Learning program is designed for beginning farmers seeking employment and additional training in farm management and production skills.

Trainer farms are now hiring! [Take a look at the list of farms looking for employees.](#)



## Check out these resources for beginning farmers

We have recently updated our collection of business, financial, production and technical assistance resources to help aspiring and beginning farmers further their business goals. **You can access them by clicking on the icons below.**

We will continue to build this list and add new resources as they are available. If you see any resources missing that you find helpful, please share them with us. You can send them to Greg Padgett at [greg@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:greg@practicalfarmers.org).



BUSINESS PLANNING



FINANCIAL



LAND ACCESS

### Young Farmer Grants

The National Young Farmers Coalition is launching a new grant program to help young and beginning farmers and ranchers start up and grow their businesses. In 2020, Young Farmers will provide 50 farmers and ranchers with \$5,000 grants. Grant recipients will also receive a one-year membership to the National Young Farmers Coalition. This fund can be used for anything that will further applicants' goals as farmers, even if that means just getting started. The goal of this fund is to provide financial assistance for any cost that currently limits farmers' ability to start, run, or grow their operation in the way they'd like. **Applications are due March 29, 2020.**

### Free Access to Technical Resources

The National Center for Appropriate Technology, home of the ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture program, is now providing all the technical resources on the ATTRA website at no cost. This means that you no longer need to pay an annual subscription fee or individual publication fee to access any of our digital publications, videos, podcasts, and other resources and materials.

### Organic Seed Producers Directory Connects Seed Growers and Buyers

Organic Seed Alliance has unveiled a searchable online Organic Seed Producers Directory that connects organic seed producers with seed companies and wholesale seed buyers. Seed producers are invited to create a profile so

wholesale seed purchasers can easily find them. Companies looking for wholesale seed can use the directory to find farmers growing organic seed for wholesale or interested doing so.

## Upcoming PFI Events

### **March 26: Virtual Field Day - Cover Crops**

1 - 2 p.m. | Online

### **April 1: Workshop - Farm Retirement**

10 a.m. | Online

### **March 27: Virtual Meet-Up - COVID-19**

1 - 2 p.m. | Online

### **April 9: Workshop - Farm Retirement**

10 a.m. | Online

### **March 27: Visioning Session - Strategic Planning**

3:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Online

## Labor4Learning

Labor4Learning helps beginning farmers get paid on-the-job training with experienced farmers, and pays experienced farmers for their time and effort.

[View open positions on our website](#)



## Savings Incentive Program

Savings Incentive Program is a 2-year program that pairs beginning and aspiring farmers with experienced farmer mentors; provides targeted learning and peer networking opportunities; offers business planning support and guidance. All this while you save money that we match dollar for dollar, up to \$2,400, to use toward the purchase of a farm asset.



[Check out more information](#)

## Find A Farmer

Find A Farmer allows for a comfortable place to start anonymous conversations with land-seekers or landowners. Search for users in a particular area that fit your specifications and begin the discussion.

Find A Farmer is FREE and available for anyone with internet access! No membership is required.



[Check out more and see land available](#)



## Looking for more?

**Greg Padget**

*Next Generation Director*

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(515) 232-5661