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Small
Grains
NEWS
March 2020

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:

- Starting on Wednesday, March 18, our Ames office will close 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](#).

Happily, because our small-grains program covers so many states, many of our learning opportunities on these topics are already conducted on distance platforms like conference calls and webinars. We hope that you can join us on an upcoming call -- **like our call on feeding hybrid rye to pigs on April 3** -- and take advantage of PFI's many resources to stay in touch and continue learning from one another as you start the spring planting season.

Good Health,

Alisha

April 3 Call will be on On-Farm Research Results from Hog Hybrid Rye Feeding Trials

Hybrid rye presents rich economic potential, its hybrid vigor results in yields of 100-150 bushels per acre and at a test weight of about 56 pounds per bushel it's a good substitute pound for pound for corn in feed rations. But, will pigs find rye as palatable? Will rate of gain suffer? What about ergot? Tom Frantzen (pictured), who farms near New Hampton, set out to answer these questions with a PFI on-farm cooperator trial. **On our April call, Tom and Celize Christy, PFI's Swine and Poultry Coordinator, will discuss the trial results and his take aways on the pros and cons of hybrid rye in rations and his farm operation.**



The call will be held from noon to 1 p.m. on Friday, April 3. **To join dial 605-313-5784 and enter passcode 239000# when prompted.**

Notes Available from Call on The Role of Small Grains in Transition to Organic

6 for 6-Pack | Michelob UL..



On our shared learning call on March 6, we reviewed some **nuts and bolts of organic transition from weed management to crop rotation to finances.** Veteran organic farmer and long-time PFI member Vic Madsen, who farms near Audubon, IA discussed his experience using small grain crops in the transition years to navigate this tricky time.

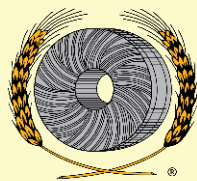
Mallory Krieger of the Organic Agronomy Training Series (OATS) also joined the call to discuss **Anheuser Busch's new programs that support transitioning farmers to organic, including grants for farms in transition.**

[Read the Notes](#)

Limited Space to Secure 2020 Contracts for Oatly Program

Oatly is seeking a final 3-4 farmers who will plant a minimum of 80 acres of oats a piece in 2020 and contract those oats with Grain Millers in St. Angsar. **Participating farmers would receive forward contracts on their oats and cost share through PFI at \$25/acre.** Farmers are required to frost seed a clover or other legume cover crop into their oats or apply for a livestock exception to plant a diverse summer mix if livestock will graze the field. Program participation also includes guaranteed contract offers for three years (2020-2022) and assistance from Grain Millers in marketing oats that don't make grade.

If you're interested in participating contact Alisha Bower at alisha@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661 to talk through program requirements and eligibility.



GRAIN MILLERS



Smithfield Bids for Wheat and Oats in Southern Iowa

Farmers in southern Iowa will now have a new market option for wheat and oats. In partnership with Practical Farmers, **Smithfield grain elevators in Allerton and Davis City, Iowa will be offering contracting options for wheat and oats.** These contracts can be paired with PFI's 2020 cost share program as long as the small grain crop is followed by a cover crop that contains at least one legume species. [Learn more about the program here.](#)

Questions? Contact Alisha Bower at (515) 232-5661 or alisha@practicalfarmers.org



Join PFI for a virtual visioning session

We are hosting three virtual visioning sessions next week. These valuable discussions will inform our strategic plan for the next three years.

Attendance is free. [Join the conversation to help guide our work.](#)

Mar. 23: Visioning Session - [Strategic Planning](#)

10 - 11:30 a.m. | Online

Mar. 23: Visioning Session - [Strategic Planning](#)

3:30 - 5 p.m. | Online

Mar. 27: Visioning Session - [Strategic Planning](#)

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

EVENTS

April

[Shared Learning Call on Hybrid Rye Feeding Trial](#)

April 3, 2020 Noon - 1 p.m. | Call 605-313-5784; passcode 239000#

***** No Shared Learning Calls in May & June - Good luck planting! *****

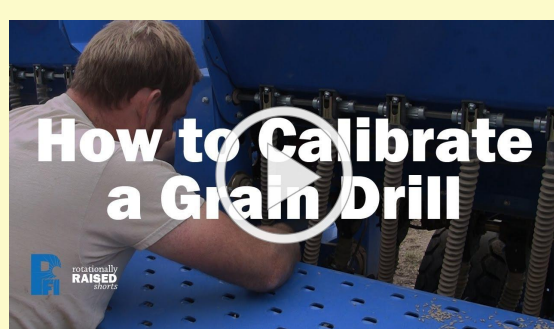
IN THE FIELD

Achieving Desired Plant Populations

Start the year out right by treating your small grains like a cash crop! Target plant population is ~1.1 million seeds/acre for

most small grains. Here are some resources about how to calibrate your grain drill for small grains:

1. The [drill calibration and plant population episode](#) of our rotationally raised video series.
2. The [planting rates short](#) from our rotationally raised video series.



Seed to Soil Contact

Small grains are big babies when it comes to coping with uneven planting depths. Make sure you're set up for success through seed bed prep or appropriate no-till equipment.

1. [Episode 5 of our rotationally raised video series](#) focuses on seed bed preparation and achieving target population and stand for small grains.



Be Ready to Fertilize

The optimal time to apply fertilizer to small grains to avoid lodging is before planting or shortly after. Make sure you're ready to apply fertilizer at the right time.

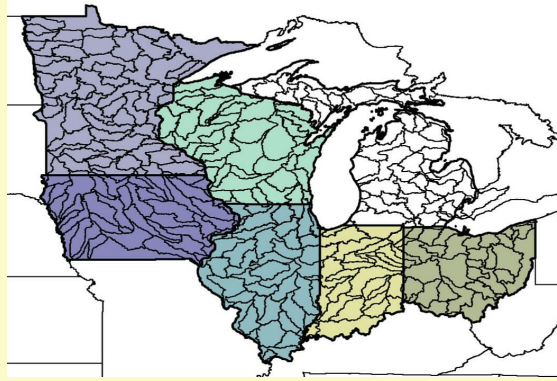
1. The [fertilizing small grains](#) short from our rotationally raised video series.
2. The blog from [March 2017's shared learning call](#) with agronomists on optimal fertilizer strategies.
3. The blog from [June 2017's shared learning call](#) on Mark Ditlevson's fertilizer timing and rates.
4. University of Minnesota's [oat fertilizer recommendations](#).
5. The [blog on Small Grain Fertility](#) from Dr. Dave Franzen's February 2020 call



Apply for Cost Share Assistance

Time is running out to look into programs that support growing small grains in extended rotations. Here are some resources:

- [This blog on applying for EQIP](#) to mimic PFI's small grains cost share
- PFI's small grain cost share [information](#)
- PFI's small grain cost share [sign up](#)



Small Grains Cost Share Sign-Up

STAY CONNECTED



Looking for more? Contact us today!

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