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The Practical HORTI- CULTURIST

April 2022

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet a Co-Hort: LaShell Staley

LaShell Staley owns and operates Valley View Flower Farm in Boone County, Iowa, where she grows primarily old-fashioned and hard-to-ship flowers.



Favorite crop and why: Peonies. There is almost always the same reaction if the person is from the midwest - "Oh my grandmother grew peonies" or "my mother grew peonies" or "we had peonies when we were on the farm." People laugh, smile and cry when they see them.

One thing you would change about your industry: Encourage people to buy local flowers! There is really no reason to fly in flowers from around the world as we have enough American growers to supply our market. Part of this movement is education - talking about our locally grown flowers and dispelling the perception that local flowers don't last as long. There really could be nothing further from the truth!

Favorite PFI memory: A few years ago during horrid weather and driving up to Ames for the conference. I was thinking no one would be there due to the weather... only to walk into the venue to see many farmers, especially young people who are interested in farming! It was pretty magical.



"Flowers are my life's passion." - LaShell Staley

PROGRAM UPDATES

Subscribe to the DonnaLonna Kitchen podcast



In a new podcast produced in partnership with PFI, chef **Donna Prizgintas** and farmer **Lonna Nachtigal**, both in Ames, Iowa, explore their rural Midwestern food community with lively discussion and good humor.



Recent guests on the [DonnaLonna Kitchen Podcast](#) include PFI members **Jill Beebout** of Chariton, **Paul Rasch** of Solon, **John Wesselius** of Sioux Center, and **Ben Hokscho** of Ames.

Subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts! New episodes are released on Thursdays.

Labor4Learning positions are still open! Find a trainer to help get your farm journey started



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.

Practical Farmers of Iowa "trainer" farmers will be hiring during the next couple of months for the upcoming growing season. [Browse the list for training opportunities near you!](#)

Welcome Martha McFarland to PFI staff!



Martha McFarland has been hired as PFI's new farmland viability coordinator.

In this position, Martha will support land seekers and landowners with land access and farm transition assistance and resources.

Martha also runs [Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch](#) near Fredericksburg, IA.

Check out the recording of her virtual field day on [raising and selling bison](#).

Spring magazine: "Are Small Direct-Market Farms in Financial Trouble?"



What is the financial picture for direct-market vegetable farmers?

This is the fundamental question of a 2021 report by [Pasa Sustainable Agriculture \(Pasa\)](#), entitled ["Financial Benchmarks for Direct-Market Vegetable Farms."](#)

[Former farmer Rick Hartmann](#) [responds](#) to the stark findings of a Pasa Sustainable Agriculture report.

Research report: "Annual Wildflower and Herb Mix for Pollinators"

Four diversified vegetable farms planted strips of an annual flower mix.

Farmers **Jill Beebout, Rob Faux, Alice McGary** and **Sarah Foltz Jordan** assessed flower establishment



and attractiveness to insects in [this 2017 trial](#).

Virtual field day: "Integrating Cover Crops on a Vegetable and Poultry Farm"



Learn about the different ways **Rob Faux** [integrates cover crops throughout his vegetable and poultry farm](#).

From spring-seeded and fall-seeded cover crops to interseeded, quick-turnaround covers in the summer and fallow beds for running poultry, Rob has tried almost everything and will show a good mix (and single-species stand!) during this virtual field day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Iowa Food System Coalition meetings

The Iowa Food System Coalition, a collaboration of groups around Iowa working toward a collective, inclusive vision of our state's food system, invites you to join the continued development of their vision, mission, values and core priorities through upcoming Coalition meetings. The Coalition is interested in your ideas and insight into the words to use as to represent the food system we all care about.

Compensation is available to support underestimated voices. Please [complete this survey](#) if you are requesting compensation to



participate in either of these meetings.

All events listed in CDT

April 30: Meeting - The Gathering: Coming Together Around Local Food

Hosted by: Healthy Harvest of North Iowa

9 a.m.-2 p.m. | Mason City, IA

May 5: Field Day - Agroforestry Field Day – Red Fern Farm

Hosted by: SILT

2-4 p.m. | Wapello, IA

May 11: Virtual Meeting - Iowa Food System Coalition Meeting

Hosted by: Iowa Food System Coalition
8:00 a.m. - noon | Online

May 12: Webinar - What Bee is That? An Introduction to Commonly Encountered Bees of the US

Hosted by: the Xerxes Society
Noon – 1 p.m. | Online

Stay tuned for the May release of the 2022 PFI Field Day schedule!

View more upcoming events

POLL

How do you start your transplants?

Soil blocks

Select

Winstrip trays

Select

Plug trays

Select

Combination of a couple of the above

Select

Buying in plugs works best for me

Select

Something else

Select

Previous poll results:

How far would you travel for a PFI field day this summer?

- **Love to see what's happening in other areas (2-3 hr drive) - 50%**
- Interested in what's happening in my part of the state (<1 hr drive) - 37.5%
- Who has the time? I'm staying home - 12.5%
- Only going if it's in my backyard (<30 min drive) - 0%
- Let's roadtrip! (3 hr drive) - 0%

Send us your poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

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CONTACT US

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