

The Practical Horticulturist - Mobile high tunnels video featured in Practical Cover Croppers series

Jacqueline Venner Senske <jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org>

Fri 1/12/2024 4:05 PM

To:Carly Zierke <carly.zierke@practicalfarmers.org>



December 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Photo by Stacie Kinney

Meet a Co-Hort: Danelle Meyer

Danelle Myer is the fifth generation to farm her family's land near Logan, Iowa. At One Farm, Danelle raises vegetables for her own local food store as well as farmers markets, online ordering, restaurants and wholesalers in Des Moines and Omaha. In November 2020, she opened One Farm Market in downtown Logan.

Why do you grow hort crops, in 5 or fewer words?: Because what we eat matters!

What is something you're excited about this year?: I'm excited about finding my plateau between running the farm and running my local food store. This will be year four for the store, and I've been right-sizing the farm for the store. Now I have enough experience behind me that I feel like I want to stop trying so hard to survive, but I want to move from surviving to thriving. I want to find the right balance.

What is one thing you would change about your industry?: I wish people cared about what they ate! I wish a healthy diet was more the norm and that people valued the fresh fruits and vegetables we're growing.

Favorite PFI memory: In November 2012 at the Beginning Farmer Summit, **Luke Gran** led a session on mapping out a 5-year plan for my farm. Everyone else made graphs or something linear, but mine was a circle. It still resonates with me – it's a fun reminder of what my early aspirations were, especially because I've actually accomplished some of them!

What's your favorite crop and why?: Beets! love eating them, and they're easy to plant, weed and harvest. And I just think they're beautiful. When we eat a beet, you feel like you're taking care of yourself.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Last call to apply for PFI's produce safety cost-share



Fund produce safety improvements on your farm with our **produce safety cost-share**. Spend \$2,200 or more to receive a reimbursement of \$2,000 toward your project.

Priority will be given to those who did not receive the cost-share in 2023.

The application will close when all slots are full or on Dec. 31. **Submit yours today!**

Farmer researchers gather to share insights and plan future research



Last Thursday and Friday, about 90 current and would-be Cooperators' Program participants gathered in Ames, Iowa, to learn about farmer-led trials from 2023 and make plans for future research projects.

In this photo, **Emily Fagan** of Humble Hands Harvest presents her farm's research on rye cover crop termination using silage tarps. Next season, she's hoping to explore the profitability of growing tomatoes for seed contracts.

[Learn more about the Cooperators' Program, read past research and get involved.](#)

IN THE FIELD

USDA support for food safety certification



Did you incur on-farm food safety expenses related to a food safety certification in 2023?

You may be eligible for financial assistance through [USDA's Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program.](#)

Learn more and apply by January 31, 2024.

Video: "Moveable hoop house integrated with hairy vetch maintains soil health"



In the latest video from our "Practical Cover Croppers" series, **Carmen Black and Maja Black** explain how they use mobile high tunnels, also known as hoop houses, on their vegetable farm in Solon, Iowa.

They also share how these structures benefit their operation by letting them grow fresh salad greens from April through November, and by helping them restore soil fertility with a cover crop that includes a legume.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Commercial Apple Growers Workshop



Tues., Feb. 6 | 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Ames, IA

Focused on commercial-scale apple production, this workshop will explore keys to successful and sustainable apple production in the Midwest. Join us at the ISU Horticulture Research Station to hear from regional experts on apple production, connect with other growers and take part in a pruning workshop.

Lunch featuring local foods will be provided, with time for networking.

[Learn more and register.](#)

Register for the annual conference and soil health short course



Jan. 19-20, 2024 | Des Moines, IA

PFI's 2024 Annual Conference is just one month away! **Register today** to join us in Des Moines for 60+ plus farmer-led sessions on a wide variety of agricultural topics.

Looking for even more? **Sign up for our pre-conference short course**. This year's topic is soil health and fertility for horticulture production. You'll get an overview of measuring, understanding and enhancing soil health to maximize sustainability and productivity.

Friends of PFI events

Jan. 8-9: Conference – Iowa Specialty Producers Conference

Hosted by: Iowa Specialty Crop Growers Association and Iowa Wine Growers Association
All day | Ankeny, IA

Jan. 11-13: Conference – Great Plains Growers Conference

All day | St. Joseph, MO

Jan. 25-26: Virtual Conference – Organic Vegetable Production Conference

Hosted by: FairShare CSA Coalition and ISU Extension and Outreach
7-8:30 p.m. | **Online**

Feb. 2-3: Conference – Organic Vegetable Production Conference

Hosted by: FairShare CSA Coalition and ISU Extension and Outreach
All Day | Madison, WI

View our events calendar

Contact our team

Jacqueline Venner Senske
*Senior Horticulture Education
Coordinator*

jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org

Natasha Hegmann
*Senior Horticulture and Local Foods
Coordinator*

natasha.hegmann@practicalfarmers.org

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1615 Golden Aspen Dr Suite 101

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