

Practical News - See annual conference photos in our new online gallery

Practical Farmers of Iowa <[info@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:info@practicalfarmers.org)>

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To:Carly Zierke <[carly.zierke@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:carly.zierke@practicalfarmers.org)>



**February 12, 2024**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



### **Sharing skills at the Commercial Apple Growers Workshop**

Last week, over 40 people attended the Commercial Apple Growers Workshop hosted at the Iowa State University Horticulture Research Station in Ames, Iowa.

The group enjoyed presentations and farmer panels in the morning and, in the afternoon, toured a newly established high-density orchard of Midwest Apple

Improvement Association varieties. They also viewed a piece of equipment the ISU horticulture farm staff created to facilitate the better use of Surround, a kaolin clay-based pest deterrent.

The day wrapped up with a pruning demonstration for attendees of all skill levels.

## NEWS

### View our annual conference photo recap



See highlights from our 2024 Annual Conference in the new photo gallery now on our website. The annual conference has been a keystone event for sharing knowledge since our founding in 1985.

**Thanks again to all those who attended. We can't wait to see you next year!**

[View the gallery](#)

### New grant opportunity for regional and wholesale food distributors



Food and farm businesses taking part in regional food distribution and wholesale markets are encouraged to apply for the new Iowa Resilient Food System Infrastructure program grants:

- **Infrastructure grants:** \$100,000 to \$1 million
- **Equipment-only grants:** \$10,000 to \$100,000 for new, used or refurbished equipment

Iowa RFSI is part of the USDA's American Rescue Plan, receiving over \$5 million to support infrastructure for

the middle of the food supply chain. [Apply by March 9.](#)

## Get personalized help from PFI with your land search



More often than not, finding land takes a personal touch. **Martha McFarland**, PFI's senior farmland viability coordinator, can help!

Martha specializes in fostering personal connections around land, linking aspiring farmers with landowners.

To get started, [email Martha](#) your farm location, acres of land, types of enterprises and the land arrangement you seek.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Pre-register for our upcoming conference in Minnesota



**Monday, March 4 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Mankato, MN**

[Register to join us for the Midwest Covers and Grains Conference](#), a one-day event.

You'll learn from other farmers and advance your understanding of how diversified rotations and cover crops can work for you.

[View the speaker line-up and pre-register by Feb. 26.](#)

## Winter webinars



**Feb. 20: Webinar – [Allies and Adversaries: Balancing Pollinator Habitat and Wild Spaces With a Diversified Small-Scale Farm](#)**

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)





Learn how **Jill Beebout and Rob Faux** encourage pollinators and natural predators of crop pests on their farms while also navigating adversarial relationships with deer, woodchuck, gnats and other critters.



**Feb. 27: Webinar – Revitalizing Soil for a Small-Scale Hemp Farm in Iowa**

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

**Megan and Scott Booher** own one of the few farms in Iowa licensed to grow and sell value-added hemp products. Learn how they made the decision to grow hemp in Iowa, what they've done to improve the soil on their farm and the hemp products they sell.

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## More upcoming events

*All events listed are in Central time.*

**Feb. 13: Webinar – Figuring Out Funding: Conventional and Unconventional Sources**

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

**Feb. 15: Meet-Up – Virtual Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up**

9-11 a.m. | [Online](#)

**Feb. 16: Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up**

*Hosted by: Joanne Roepke Bode,  
Mary Beyerhelm Huey and Healthy  
Harvest of North Iowa*  
9-11 a.m. | Algona, IA

**Feb. 21: Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up**

*Hosted by: Molly Schintler*  
9-11 a.m. | West Branch, IA

**Feb. 23: Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up**

*Hosted by: Emily Paulsen*  
9-11 a.m. | Harlan, IA

**March 1: Shared Learning Call – Frost-Seeding Clover Into Small Grains With Meadowlark Organics**

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

## IN THE NEWS

### Members in the News

*Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.*

**Joel Gruver** of Macomb, IL, and **Mark Quee** of West Branch, IA, were featured in [Progressive Farmer: Soil Professor Receives Sustainable Ag Award](#)

**David Turnis** of Bernard, IA, was featured in a YouTube video posted by [Dubuque County Watersheds: Farmer Spotlight: David Turnis](#)

**Larry Stone** of Elkader, IA, wrote a letter to the editor of [The Gazette: Will legislators ever require stream buffers?](#)

**Chad Bell** of Viola, IL, was featured on the [Farm4Profit](#) podcast: [Chad Bell - Super Bowl Commercial Star!](#)

**Seth Watkins** of Clarinda, IA, was featured in [Progressive Farmer: Regenerative Practices Restore Soil Health and Profits](#)

**Mitchell Hora** of Brighton, IA, was featured in [No-Till Farmer: No-Till Highlights: Feb. 1, 2024](#)

**Brian Corkill** of Galva, IL, was featured in [FarmWeekNow: Illinois farmers greet more details about carbon models](#)

## PFI in the News

**Liz Kolbe**, PFI's farmer-led education director, was featured on [KMAland: Practical Farmers of Iowa holding 'winter webinar' series](#)

**Lydia English**, PFI's senior field crops viability manager, was featured on [Brownfield Ag News: Small grains cost share available in 5 Midwest states](#)

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**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](mailto:elizabeth.wilhelm@practicalfarmers.org)

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