

The Monthly Feedstuff - Honey bee nutrition and supplemental feeding

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

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Honey bee nutrition for an early spring

The theme for this spring, really this whole winter, is that it's warmer than normal. It feels redundant to say that at this point, but it bears repeating because each month the warm temps bring a new challenge. Right now in Iowa, honeybees are out flying and looking for food but resources are limited. While plants are ahead of schedule, bees are farther ahead still. I've heard from beekeepers that the bees are finding pollen and nectar somewhere, but not much.

With that in mind, it's perfect timing that the Honey Bee Health Coalition released their "[Honey Bee Nutrition Guide.](#)" Foragers, the scouts of the bee world, play a crucial role in sourcing floral resources such as pollen and nectar. In the absence

of these natural resources, supplemental feeding becomes essential. The Honey Bee Nutrition guide delves into the various considerations beekeepers must account for when deciding on supplemental feeding strategies, including the colony's brood status, seasonal nutritional needs and food reserves in the hives.

You can also [check out this article](#) about what PFI members **Gary Guthrie and Dean Coleman** are doing to support hungry pollinators in the early spring.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Blog: "Incorporating Livestock With Small Grains and Cover Crops: Lessons From a Century Farm"



Kevin Prevo is a fifth-generation farmer in Bloomfield, Iowa, growing a rotation including corn, soybeans and rye or wheat. The remaining acreage is pastureland.

The Prevos have about 150 cow-calf pairs, most of which calve in March and April. Kevin's goal is to replace winter hay feeding with grazing cover crops; from fall seeding until the first March calving time.

[Learn more about how Kevin is incorporating livestock on the PFI blog.](#)

Blog: "Exploring Kunekune Pigs"



After years of life captaining ships at sea, **Kevin Martin** and his wife, **Kendra**, traded the rolling waves for rolling hills of grass at their farm near Mount Ayr, Iowa. This topography is what they felt made Kunekune pigs ideal for their farm.

"The way they're bred is that their noses are really upturned so they don't root," Kevin says. "We didn't want anything rooting because our ground is steep, and we're working with some special erosion control systems that we didn't want pigs messing with."

[Read about their journey with Kunekunes on the blog.](#)

Discover a model for creating a meat CSA in our webinar recording



"We're trying to sell meat to make oak savannah restoration profitable at scale," says **Peter Allen** of Mastodon Valley Farm in southwest Wisconsin. "And if we can figure out a way to be profitable and support a family doing it, then it can be more sustainable for other people that can kind of follow this lead."

A key to the farm's success has been selling 12 to 20 pound bundles of meat through their CSA, accounting for about 90% of sales. [Learn how it works in the webinar replay.](#)

BEYOND THE GATE

Register your hives on BeeCheck



This spring, as your bees start flying, and before applicators start spraying, take a minute to register your hives on BeeCheck.

[This mapping tool](#) is meant to help pesticide applicators and beekeepers communicate more effectively to promote awareness and stewardship activities to help prevent and manage drift effects.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter webinar: "Establishing and Grazing Native Perennials"



Tuesday, April 2 | Noon-1 p.m. | Online

Including native perennials in your grazing system can have a range of benefits, from boosting drought resilience in a forage chain to adding important wildlife habitat. However, these native grasses and forbs require adaptive management to thrive.

Join us for our upcoming webinar with **Kevin Fulton**. Drawing on over 50 years of experience, Kevin will share how he establishes and grazes native perennial pasture. [RSVP](#)

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central time.

April 3: Meet & Greet – [Precision Conservation with PFI and Pheasants Forever](#)

Noon-3 p.m. | Mankato, MN

April 11: Meet-up – [Field Crop Farmer Social](#)

5-7 p.m. | Northwood, IA

Friends of PFI events

April 3: Webinar – [Brooder Success: How to reduce brooder mortality for a healthier flock](#)

Hosted by: Food Animal Concerns Trust

2 p.m. | [Online](#)

April 4-5: Workshop – [2024 Badger Sheep Short Course](#)

Hosted by: University of Wisconsin Extension

All Day | Arlington, WI

April 5: Conference – [Regenerative Livestock Systems Symposium](#)

Hosted by: University of Minnesota
8 a.m.-6 p.m. | St. Paul, MN

April 10: Conference – [Regenerative Agriculture Conference](#)

Hosted by: Minnesota Farmers Union
9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. | Braham, MN

[View our events calendar](#)

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