

## Practical News - Growing potatoes and onions at larger scale + 1:1 Land matching

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**July 22, 2024**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



### **Steve and Ron Rachut help fulfill regional food demand with potatoes and onions at scale**

In Fertile, Iowa, rooted in soil that once was a marshland, a few fields look different than others in the area. On a rainy July day, field day guests saw **Steve**

**and Ron Rachut's** 35-plus acres of onions and potatoes, toured their wholesale-oriented handling facilities and heard how they grow and market their crops.

Attendees also toured the farm and saw potatoes growing in muck (also called peat) soil, which has about 50% organic matter. While ideal for potatoes and onions, muck soil has its challenges, including being prone to erosion. To cope, Steve and Ron plant onions with a nurse crop of oats to prevent seeds from blowing away.

While growing vegetables has real barriers, such as finding a market in a state dominated by grain crops, operations this size are important for fulfilling state and regional demand for food.

"Farmers are responding to consumer interest in where their food comes from," Steve told Mark Dorenkamp of **Brownstone Ag News** during the event.

**Field days continue through November.**

## NEWS

### Sign up for PFI's cover crop cost-share



Are you intending to seed cover crops in fall 2024? Enrollment is open in our cover crop cost-share program, stackable with any publicly funded cost-share.

Payment rates are \$10 or \$15 per acre on an unlimited number of acres.

Participants must farm in **eligible counties** in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska or South Dakota.

**Enrollment takes less than 10 minutes!**

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### New research report: "Effect of covering brassicas seeded for transplant"



A group of five horticulture cooperators wondered if covering brassica seeds, a crop family most commonly started in great numbers, would result in higher germination rates and greater plant viability.

Three out of five trials found that covering brassica seeds resulted in higher germination rates.

**[Read more about these trial findings.](#)**

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## Looking for land? PFI offers 1:1 land matching



Whether you are a retiring farmer or landowner seeking the next generation to care for your land, or a beginning farmer looking for land to begin or expand your farming enterprise, **[we have resources to help.](#)**

**Martha McFarland**, senior farmland access viability coordinator, offers 1:1 consulting, connecting landowners and beginning farmers with one another.

**[Schedule a consultation today.](#)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Featured field day



**[Aug. 4: Field Day – Adaptive Marketing Through a Collaborative CSA, Value-Added Products and On-Farm Sales at Buffalo Ridge Orchard](#)**

*Hosts: Marcus & Emma Johnson*

1:30-4 p.m. | Central City, IA

Farmers Marcus and Emma Johnson of Buffalo Ridge Orchard, raise 5 acres of vegetables, 2 acres of pears and 15 acres of apples. Through their learnings of the last 13 years, they've built a collaborative CSA by

aligning crop planning with nearby farmers. In short, Marcus and Emma have made their farm thrive and brought others along on their journey. [RSVP](#).

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## Register for our cover crop workshop in Nebraska



**Tuesday, Aug. 6 | 9 a.m.-4 p.m. |  
Gothenburg, NE**

Join farmers in central Nebraska to explore all things cover crop-related!

Farmers of all experience levels are encouraged to attend to learn what does and doesn't work with cover crops, visit research fields and hear from researchers who manage them.

Come network with other farmers while exploring how to make cover crops work in Nebraska. [Secure your spot today!](#)

[View the full field day schedule](#)

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### More upcoming events

*All events listed are in Central time.*

**[July 23: Field Day – Centering Sustainability From Farrow to Finish](#)**

*Hosted by: Andrew VanDerPol*  
9-11 a.m. | Kerkhoven, MN

**[July 24: Field Day – Improving Soil Through Nitrogen Reduction and Conservation Practices](#)**

*Hosted by: Alec & Rachel Amundson*  
2-4 p.m. | Osage, IA

**[July 25: Meet-Up – Field Crop Farmer Meet-Up](#)**

*Hosted by: Chris Von Holten*  
7:30-8:30 a.m. | Walnut, IL

**[July 26: Meet-Up – Farm Family Meet-Up](#)**

Noon-2 p.m. | Charles City, IA

**[July 27-29: Meet-Up – PFI at the Farm Progress Show](#)**

8 a.m.-5 p.m. | Boone, IA

**[July 28: Field Day – Growing Opportunity: Season Extension, Organic Production and Scaling Up at Bridgewater Farm](#)**

4-7 p.m. | Bridgewater, IA

## View our events calendar

## IN THE NEWS

### Members in the News

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

**Adam Ledvina** of Chelsea, IA, and **Daniel Faidley** of Colfax, IA, were featured in [Tama-Toledo News Chronicle](#): **No fence? No sweat**

**Ardyth and Gil Gillespie** of Atlantic, IA, and **Beth Hoffman** of Lovilia, IA, were featured in [Atlantic News Telegraph](#): **Cass County Reads events announced**

**J.D. Hollingsworth** of Packwood, IA, was featured on the [Iowa Farm Bureau website](#): **Conservation in Jefferson County**

**Kim Andersen** of Brighton, IA, was featured on [KCII Radio](#): **In Touch with Southeast Iowa with Kim Andersen: Blueberry Bottom Farm**

**Ron Schoepp** of Lodi, WI, was featured on [WMTV](#): **Rain runoff could impact southern Wisconsin farmers and nearby waterways**

**T.D. and Sarah Holub** of Coggon, IA, **Bill and Grace Matus** of Central City, IA, and **Dan Fillius** of Des Moines, IA, were featured in [The Gazette](#): **My Biz: Community support 'backbone' for CSA farmers**

**Tommy Hexter** of Grinnell, IA, and **Aaron Lehman** of Polk City, IA, were featured in [Tama-Toledo News Chronicle](#): **Local statehouse candidate backs new Iowa Food System Coalition**

**Steve Rachut** of Fertile, IA, was featured on [Brownfield Ag News](#): **Farmers Explore Vegetable Opportunities**

**Steve Rachut** of Fertile, IA, and **Jacqueline Venner Senske**, PFI's senior horticulture education coordinator, were featured on [KAAL TV](#): **Wet May, June and July spells trouble for crop yields**

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### PFI in the News

Practical Farmers of Iowa's on-farm research was mentioned in [Iowa Farmer Today](#): **Wet spring meant planting 'green' for many**

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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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