

Practical News - Nominate an Iowa conservation leader by July 1 + We're hiring two new positions

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



New PFI research trial aims to discover if cover crops increase the number of days suitable for field work

Growing cover crops is one way many PFI farmers are challenging prevailing agricultural norms. When grown between and alongside cash crops, cover crops

can reduce erosion, hold moisture, add nutrients back to the soil and boost overall soil health.

Many farmers have anecdotally shared how their cover cropped fields drain more quickly after big rain events, giving them earlier access for field work – and more access across a season.

To date, however, no formal study PFI is aware of has looked at this aspect of cover crops. This year, several farmers launched a new multi-year on-farm research project that seeks to answer, "Do cover crops increase the number of days suitable for field work?"

Read more about this project in [this article from our Spring 2024 magazine.](#)

NEWS

Iowa Leopold Conservation Award nominations due July 1



Nominations for the 2024 Iowa Leopold Conservation Award, which recognizes outstanding land management practices by ranchers, farmers and forestland owners, are due July 1.

The \$10,000 award, given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, highlights efforts in soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat conservation on working land.

[Submit a nomination today.](#)

New research report: "Red Clover vs. Red + Sweet Clover Cover Crops Before Corn"



Green manure cover crops like clovers are often used by organic farmers to provide soil fertility.

Doug Alert and Margaret Smith wondered whether a mix of sweet clover and red clover would be more drought resistant and provide an extra boost to corn yield compared with red clover alone.

[Review their findings in this research report.](#)

Join our team in one of two new positions



We're seeking candidates to join our field crops viability and finance teams.

The **field crops viability coordinator** will provide technical assistance to farmers, plan events and help with cost-share program requirements.

The **finance manager** will oversee internal processes that ensure accuracy for accounts payable and receivable processes.

[View more job openings on our website.](#)

MEMBERSHIP

Help us continue to grow PFI's impact



Our network includes a diversity of people growing a wide range of crops and livestock. This network shares the desire to improve our farms so we can better Iowa and the Midwest.

Donate today to help us continue to grow this community, support farmers conducting on-farm research, drive the food and farming narrative by amplifying diverse viewpoints and achieve our goal of PFI being a household name. Donations at \$100 or more get a PFI-branded cooler bag.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us at our first field crop farmer meet-up of the year



Tuesday, June 25 | 12:30 p.m. | Independence, IA

We're excited for our first field crop farmer meet-up of the year, which takes place tomorrow in Independence.

Enjoy lunch and a chance to chat with other farmers about cover crops, soil health and conservation practices on your farm or the growing season in general. Come connect, share ideas and troubleshoot challenges.

RSVP to attend.

Featured field days



July 2: Field Day – Nutrient Management Using Intercropping in an Organic Operation

Hosted by: Scott & Catherine Wedemeier
10 a.m.-Noon | Maynard, IA

Scott and Catherine Wedemeier own and run an organic dairy and row crop operation called Grassway Farm in Fayette County. **Attend this field day** to see cover crop mixes and small grain-legume

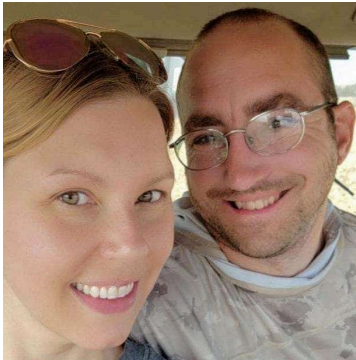
intercropping and learn how these practices benefit the whole farm.



July 10: Field Day – Growing, Processing and Marketing Onions and Potatoes for Wholesale Outlets

Hosted by: Steve Rachut and Ron Rachut
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. | Fertile, IA

Steve Rachut and his uncle, Ron Rachut, each grow onions and potatoes primarily for wholesale markets. At this enterprise scale, production, handling, packing and marketing look different to most direct-market farms in Iowa. **Attend this field day** to discuss machinery and crop fields and to see a vegetable handling and packing facility.



July 10: Field Day – Innovative Strategies for Diversifying a Row Crop Operation

Hosted by: Chris & Shannon Gaesser
4-6 p.m. | Corning, IA

Chris and Shannon Gaesser farm just over 4,000 acres of corn, soybeans and small grains near Corning. They also run GX Agriculture, a farm service business that sells and custom-applies cover crop seed. **Attend this field day** to explore innovative strategies for diversifying rotations and establishing partnerships to build a resilient farm and business.



July 11: Field Day – Organic U-Pick Blueberries and Day-Neutral Strawberries at Blueberry Bottom Farm

Hosted by: Kim Andersen
10 a.m.-Noon | Brighton, IA

Kim Andersen's operation at Blueberry Bottom Farm has seen incredible growth in recent years since planting 5 acres of organic blueberries in 2017. **Attend this field day** to learn what production and marketing lessons Kim has learned to successfully grow her business.



July 11: Field Day – Year in the Life of a Goat Farmer: Goat Health and Management

Hosted by: Adam Ledvina

10 a.m.-Noon | Tama, IA

Adam Ledvina raises Kiko goats on his farm in Tama County. **Attend this field day** to hear Adam discuss general goat health, goat biology and management, what should be in your medical kit and other items to have on hand. **This is a Spanish-interpreted event.**

More upcoming events

June 26: Field Day – Building Soil Health Through Relay-Cropping, Extended Rotations and Reduced Tillage

Hosted by: Doug & Kim Adams and Harley Hett

4:30-6:30 p.m. | Humboldt, IA

June 27: Field Day – Farming Outside the Box: A Fresh Approach to Diversification on a Nebraska Farm

Hosted by: Junior & Katelyn Pfanstiel, Gene & Julie Pfanstiel

10 a.m.-Noon | McLean, NE

June 28: Field Day – Creating Resiliency Through Diversity With Crops and Livestock

Hosted by: Kevin Wagner & family

10 a.m.-Noon | Cuba City, WI

June 30: Field Day – Hands-On Field Day at Garden Oasis Farm

Hosted by: T.D. & Sarah Holub

9 a.m.-Noon | Coggon, IA

June 30: Field Day – Agriculture Supporting Community: Cultivating Food, Habitat and Leaders at Mustard Seed Community Farm

Hosted by: Alice McGary

3-5 p.m. | Ames, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

Jodi Enos-Berlage of Ridgeway, IA, was featured in [Cascade Pioneer: Women & Soil brings new conversation to the Field of Dreams](#)

Ruth McCabe of West Des Moines, IA, was featured in [The Daily Nonpareil: Field day coming up at Armstrong Research and Demonstration Farm](#)

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

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