

Practical News - Connection and community at the Iowa State Fair + New field crop farmer events

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Member day at the Iowa State Fair builds connection and community

The Iowa State Fair is home of the butter cow, 4-H barns, giant turkey drumsticks – and this year, PFI's first member day at the fair!

Sporting bright "Don't Farm Naked" shirts, 30-plus PFI staff and members gathered at the fair, meeting up to socialize and connect with new and old friends.

PFI staff also entered the state fair's statue contest. Our statue, titled "Equipping Farmers to Build Resilient Farms and Communities," featured a design (pictured above) inspired by and in memory of long-time PFI member and farmer-leader

Dan Specht, who developed, bred and shared his open-pollinated sweet corn, "Dan's Blue-Blond Sweet," for over a decade before he died suddenly in 2013.

The basket is swathed in PFI's barn quilt pattern, a nod to the barn quilts adorning the farmsteads of the past and present. The "husk" of the corn highlights PFI's "big tent," featuring field crops, horticulture, livestock and habitat.

See our [full event schedule](#) for more opportunities to connect with staff and members.

NEWS

Nominate a farmer for PFI's Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award



Practical Farmers of Iowa gives this award annually to a person or couple who has been most influential in creating healthy soil, healthy food, clean air, clean water, resilient farms and vibrant communities. PFI board members will choose the winner based on the nominations you submit.

(Pictured here: Paul Mugge, who along with his wife, Karen, was PFI's 2020 award recipient)

Nominations are due by Sept. 16.

New field crop events this fall



PFI is excited to offer more ways for field crop farmers to connect this fall.

Check out the full list of **September field crop farmer meet-ups.**

Plus, we have **new fall field crop field days planned,** including:

- Advanced Cover Crop and Nutrition Management
- Livestock Between the Rows: An Adaptive Approach to Diversifying an Illinois Row Crop Operation

Habitat incentives program enrolling farmers



Did you know PFI can help you achieve habitat-related goals on your farm?

Funding is currently available to support prairie strips and precision conservation analysis on your farm.

Precision conservation technical support and funding is in partnership with Pheasants Forever.

[Enroll today on our website.](#)

"Picking Up Rocks:" Youth farm perspectives from our summer magazine



Earlier this spring, **Rachel Burke**, PFI's beginning farmer engagement coordinator, met with students at Bishop Garrigan Catholic School in Algona, Iowa.

After biology class was dismissed, Rachel sat down with students who farm alongside their families to hear their interests and concerns.

Hear more of these perspectives and our beginner farmer programing in our **[summer magazine.](#)**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Year in the Life With Jenny & Emilio: "What to Expect From Rotational Grazing"



Saturday, Aug. 24 | Noon-2 p.m. | Red Oak, IA

Hosts: Jenny Horner and Emilio Moreno

Jenny Horner and Emilio Moreno are beginning farmers in Red Oak, Iowa. They farm on Jenny’s family farm, Spring Lake Organics, which includes 110 acres of certified organic hay. Jenny added goats to the farm to help revive the land with rotational grazing and foraging. Their future plans include producing value-added products and getting started with agrotourism.

**** This is a Spanish-interpreted event. To register, please contact Valeria at (515) 232-5661.**

PFI at the Farm Progress Show



Aug. 27-29 | 8 a.m.-5 p.m. | Boone, IA

Practical Farmers of Iowa staff and farmers will be located in the **Varied Industries tent at booth VIT9513 for the duration of the event.**

Find our booth to join conversations, ask questions and share practical advice on topics such as cover crops, small grains, grazing, conservation cost-share and more.

Featured field days



Sept. 3: Field Day – Transitioning Ground and Changing Generations

Hosts: Matt & Jocelyn Vermeersch, Maggie McQuown and Steve Turman

10 a.m.-Noon | Red Oak, IA

Matt and Jocelyn Vermeersch are first-generation farmers collaborating on a farm transition with Maggie McQuown. They are also working to transition the row crop ground to permanent pasture.

Come learn how Matt, Jocelyn and Maggie are making these transitions work and what the vision for their regenerative, grass-based system is. [RSVP](#)



Sept. 4: Field Day – Fitting Farming Into Life at Mogo Farms

Host: Morgan Hoenig

3-5 p.m. | Mount Pleasant, IA

Morgan Hoenig started Mogo Farms in 2008 to grow vegetables to feed her community. Over time, her farm has evolved to provide the boundaries and flexibility she needs to accommodate an off-farm job and other responsibilities. For Morgan, flowers have been the key to flexibility and profit on her farm.

Attend this event to learn how Morgan has built a farm that supports her life, not the other way around.



Sept. 7: Field Day – Cattle Handling and Grass-Based Genetics

Hosts: Jake & Crystal Bigelow

9 a.m.-Noon | Winterset, IA

Are you interested in exploring a grass-based system for cattle?

The Bigelows raise purebred Hereford cattle in a grass-based system, as well as pigs, corn and soybeans. For the past 14 years, Jake has been working towards a sustainable balance among family, farm and finances while feeding his local community with quality products. [RSVP on our website.](#)



Sept. 7: Field Day – Establishing New Prairie for Endangered Beneficial Insects on a Century Farm

Host: Julie Martinez

10 a.m.- Noon | Camanche, IA

Join us for our next field day in partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at The Hardy Farm, owned by **Julie Martinez and Jon Kramer.**

In November 2023, Julie, along with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, seeded 110 acres into native prairie

habitat using a 15-year Conservation Reserve Program contract. This new planting will someday provide critical habitat to several beneficial insect species, such as the imperiled American and rusty patched bumblebees. [RSVP](#)

[View the full field day schedule](#)

More upcoming events

All events listed are in Central time.

Aug. 27: Field Day – [Getting Started With Chestnuts](#)

Hosted by: Elana Gingerich
9-11 a.m. | Parnell, IA

Aug 29: Field Day – [Adding Produce to the Mix](#)

Hosted by: Tate Carlson
10 a.m.-Noon | Storm Lake, IA

Aug 30: Field Day – [Reducing Nitrogen With Rotational Cover Cropping and Biologic Additions](#)

Hosted by: Ross McCaw
4-6 p.m. | Marengo, IA

Sept 5: Meet-Up – [Field Crop Farmer Meet-Up](#)

Hosted by: Richard Sperfslage
5-7 p.m. | Winthrop, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

Brian DeVore of Minneapolis, MN, was featured in [The Minnesota Star Tribune: So much rides on the farm bill](#)

Meredith Nunnikhoven of Oskaloosa, IA, was featured on [KNIA KRLS Radio: Central RED Goes to Barnswallow Flowers](#)

The following PFI members were featured on [KIOW Radio: Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards Presented to Area Farm Families](#)

- **Tom Adam** of Harper, IA
- **Alec Amundson** of Osage, IA
- **Aaron Balderston** of Central City, IA
- **Sean Dolan** of Masonville, IA
- **David Guthrie** of Hopkinton, IA
- **Steve Henze** of Grundy Center, IA

- **Conner Hildreth** of Rockwell City, IA
- **Jason Klinge** of Farmersburg, IA
- **Keith Lovrien** of Clarksville, IA
- **Kevin Prevo** of Bloomfield, IA
- **Nick Sennert** of Linn Grove, IA
- **Jessob Steffen** of Linn Grove, IA
- **Steve Stoermer** of Dickens, IA
- **Mark Vogel** of Panora, IA
- **Brent Wells** of Fonda, IA
- **Mark and Alana Yoder** of Leon, IA
- **Tim Youngquist** of Zearing, IA

Sally Worley, PFI's executive director, and the following PFI members were featured in a [Sand County Foundation news release: **Four Finalists Vie for Iowa Leopold Conservation Award**](#)

- **James Hepp** of Rockwell City, IA
- **Bob and Robby Jewell** of Decorah, IA
- **Wendy Johnson** of Charles City, IA
- **Landon and Anne Plagge** of Latimer, IA

PFI in the News

Lydia English, PFI's senior field crops viability manager, was featured on [KWMT Radio: **Lydia English – Practical Farmers of Iowa's Cover Crop – Cost Share Program**](#)

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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