
Beginning Farmer News - Apply for the Empower Farmers Program + Produce safety cost-share is enrolling

From Rachel Burke <rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org>

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet beginning farmer, Tessa Parks

First-generation farmer **Tessa Parks** co-owns and operates W.T. Farms with her partner, **Wyatt Parks**. Their farm is a direct-to-consumer beef operation raising Holstein steers from calf to butcher. Tessa and Wyatt graze certified organic pasture at Sharing Our Roots Farm in Northfield, Minnesota. They also rent land to produce certified organic hay for themselves and to sell. They are part of a larger land transition from conventional commodity row crop farming to a resilient and regenerative farm landscape.

PFI asked Tessa: What first step would you recommend to a farmer trying to find their direct-to-consumer market?

Tessa: The first step I'd recommend is market research. Learn what market opportunities there are in the area, whether your product is missing from any of them and whether you can establish a niche to best reach customers.

Hear Tessa tell the story of her farm and details about starting a calf-to-butcher beef operation at the [2025 Annual Conference](#).

BEGINNING FARMER RESOURCES

Practical Farmers of Iowa is accepting applications for the Empower Farmers Program



The Empower Farmers Program offers up-front payments to support the success of historically underserved farmers and ranchers by helping to reduce financial barriers.

These payments may be used for eligible farming expenses such as equipment, operating expenses, accounting software, contractor services and more.

Applicants may request between \$500 and \$2,000 in funding. [Apply by Dec. 31, 2024.](#)

IMPORTANT: Small entities must file new Beneficial Ownership Information Reports in 2024



A recent ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court has implications for many small businesses. Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, most small entities, including single-member LLCs, must file online reports with the federal government disclosing information about the 'beneficial owners' of the entities.

Beneficial owners are individuals who "directly or indirectly exercise "substantial control" over the reporting company or directly or indirectly own or control 25% or more of the "ownership interests" of the reporting company."

[Learn if your farm business must file an online report.](#)

Find your holiday feast locally



Hosting for the holidays? Source your holiday feast locally by perusing **[our local foods directory](#)**. Find PFI member farmers, businesses and organizations who offer local foods near you.

Current PFI members can be listed for free in the directory. Are you a member, but not listed? **[Learn how to sign up.](#)**

Register for a preconference short course



Three short courses, in addition to the **Midwest Meat Summit**, will be offered before the start of the 2025 PFI Annual Conference on Jan. 9-10.

The courses run half days from Thursday afternoon through Friday morning. Topics include:

- Charting the Steps of Farm Succession
- Extending the Rotation: Finding an Effective Third Crop
- Strawberry Production in Iowa

Register to attend a short course.

The National Young Farmers Coalition's Finding Farmland Course is live



The **Finding Farmland Course** is a one-stop shop to guide you through the financial decisions related to accessing farmland. This free course includes articles, videos, podcasts, activities and resources.

The **Finding Farmland Calculator**, another Young Farmers project, serves as a companion tool throughout the course.

Take the course at your own pace and send the **National Young Farmers Coalition** your questions about the financial concepts discussed or your personal land financing via the comments section in each lesson.

PFI's produce safety cost-share is now enrolling



PFI offers a cost-share program for specialty crop farmers seeking to make on-farm food safety improvements. Participants must spend at least \$2,200 on improvements and will receive a \$2,000 reimbursement.

Improvements include installing a cooler or CoolBot system, enclosing a packing area, purchasing protective fencing and more. **The cost-share is almost full so apply today!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hear beginning farmers share their stories at the PFI Annual Conference



Saturday, Jan. 10-11 | Des Moines, IA

Register now for PFI's 2025 Annual Conference! Since our founding, the annual conference has been a keystone event for sharing knowledge, building connections and celebrating agriculture in Iowa.

Our 2025 conference features a keynote address from conservation leader **Eric Lee-Mäder**, over 70 farmer-led sessions, exhibit hall, networking, a storytelling hour and more.

[Learn more and register.](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

Friends of PFI events

All events listed in Central time

Dec. 11: Webinar – [Advancing Sustainable Pumpkin Production: The Role of Cover](#)

Dec. 12: Webinar – [Managing Risk on Your Family Farm](#)

Crops and Roller Crimper Systems

Hosted by: Rodale Institute
2:30-4:30 p.m. | **Online**

Hosted by: Team Agriculture
Georgia
Noon-2 p.m. | **Online**

Dec. 16: Webinar – Ask an Agroforester: Nut Cooperatives

Hosted by: Appalachian Sustainable Development
1-2:30 p.m. | **Online**

Jan. 7: Webinar – Farm Taxes: Record Keeping Practices

Hosted by: Penn State
1-2 p.m. | **Online**

Jan. 9-10: Conference – Minnesota Organic Conference

Hosted by: Minnesota Department of Agriculture
8 a.m.-5 p.m. | St. Cloud, MN

Jan. 23-24: Conference – Organic Vegetable Production Conference

Hosted by: Fairshare CSA Coalition, ISU Extension & Outreach and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems
9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Madison, WI | **Online**

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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