

 Outlook

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**Practical News - Seven PFI farmers receive Master Researcher Award + New air seeding blog**

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**From** Practical Farmers of Iowa <info@practicalfarmers.org>

**Date** Thu 1/30/2025 1:03 PM

**To** Anna Pesek <anna.pesek@practicalfarmers.org>



**Sustain the work of PFI through a *year-end donation*.**

Your support helps us continue reducing the barriers farmers face and provide the tools and resources they need to build sustainable, profitable farms.

**December 23, 2024**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



## Master researchers recognized at PFI's 2024 Cooperators' Meeting

On January 12-13, farmers involved with PFI's on-farm research program gathered at the annual Cooperators' Meeting in Ames, Iowa, to share results of their on-farm trials, plan projects for the coming year and connect as a community of on-farm researchers.



The annual conference is Jan. 10-11.

Are you curious about what to expect? Research participants were honored with PFI's Award of Chariton, Iowa; **Jack Boyer** of Reinbeck, Iowa; **Dave and Meg Schmidt** of Exira, Iowa;

- Highlights include:
- A keynote by Eric Lee-Mäder
  - Session topics that span the agricultural spectrum
  - Conducted 20 or more on-farm research
  - Practical Farmers events to share the
  - Spanish-language sessions
  - Storytelling by PFI farmers
  - Music by **Matt Woods**
  - Presentation of PFI's 2025 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award

**Preregister by Jan. 2.**

**New research: Does drip irrigation improve potato productivity?**



Irrigation can boost potato yield, depending on rainfall and soil conditions.

In this trial, **Lee Matteson** wanted to find out how much more his potato plants would yield with irrigation – and if that yield boost would be enough to make up for the cost of setting up and using irrigation systems.

While wet weather affected this year's results, Lee plans to repeat the trial to see how irrigation would help in a drier year, and to inform his calculations about the return on investment.

**[Explore the full research report.](#)**

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## Claim a final spot in our produce safety cost-share



PFI's produce safety cost-share is for specialty crop farmers seeking to make on-farm food safety improvements.

If you enroll, you must spend at least \$2,200 on improvements – which could include portable toilet rental, CoolBots, enclosing a packing area and much more. You'll then receive a \$2,000 reimbursement.

**[Apply for one of the few remaining spots today.](#)**

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**New blog: "Seed Cover Crops While You Combine: Four Steps To Build Your Own Air-Seeding Combine"**





**Jack Smith, Ted Smith and Nick Smith** of Epworth, Iowa, seed cereal rye into corn stalks for extra cattle forage. Wanting to save time and resources, they built a combine air seeder. With this cover crop seeding method, the farmers were able to seed cereal rye from the combine while harvesting their corn crop.

The method also lets them seed the cereal rye earlier in the fall, thus capturing more of its benefits. [Read this blog post to see how the Smiths built their air-seeding combine.](#)

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## Enroll in the Empower Farmers Program by Dec. 31



Practical Farmers of Iowa is accepting applications for its 2025 Empower Farmers Program.

This program offers upfront payments to support the success of historically underserved farmers and ranchers by helping to reduce financial barriers. These payments may be used for a range of eligible farming-related expenses.

[Applications are due Dec. 31.](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Save the date: Midwest Covers & Grains Conference**



## Wednesday, March 5 | Baraboo, Wisconsin

The Midwest Covers & Grains Conference brings together Midwestern farmers, supply chain buyers and researchers to promote successful farming with extended rotations and cover crops.

The conference includes opportunities to network with those who buy and sell small grains and cover crops and offers sessions for both beginning and experienced cover crop practitioners.

[Learn more and register.](#)

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## More upcoming events

*All events listed are in Central time.*

**Jan. 9-10: Workshop – [Midwest Meat Summit](#)**

Des Moines, IA

**Jan. 10-11: Conference – [PFI 2025 Annual Conference](#)**

Des Moines, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

## IN THE NEWS

### Members in the News

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

**Grant and Dawn Breitreutz** of Redwood Falls, MN, were featured on [Brownfield Ag News](#): [Breitreutz family receives Minnesota's first Leopold Conservation Award](#)

**Wendy Johnson and John Rafkin** of Charles City, IA, and **Madeline Schultz** of Ames, IA, were featured on [Farms.com](#): [2024 Women Impacting Agriculture Honored](#)

**Danelle Myer** of Logan, IA, was featured on [KMTV](#): [Gifts from your neighborhood: Logan has unique retailers in small town setting](#)

**Suzanne Castello and Barney Bahrenfuse** of Grinnell, IA, and **Sally Worley**, PFI's executive director, were featured in [Progressive Farmer](#): [Iowa Farmers Earn Sustainability Award](#)

**Arlyn Kauffman** of Weldon, IA, was featured on [KBIA: Concluding the first season of KBIA News' series 'The Next Harvest'](#)

**Aaron Lehman** of Polk City, IA, **Ryan Marquardt** of Van Meter, IA, **Tony Thompson** of Elkhart, IA, **Mike Carberry** of Iowa City, IA, and **Cheryl Tevis** of Pilot Mound, IA, were featured in [Morning Ag Clips: Iowa Farmers Union Convention strives for "Fairness for Farmers"](#)

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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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