

Practical News - Thanks for making our annual conference a success! + New cover crop business video

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

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



January 13, 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Thank you for attending the 2025 PFI Annual Conference!

We want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who attended our 2025 Annual Conference, preconference short courses and the inaugural Midwest Meat Summit last week in Des Moines, Iowa. You helped make these events a success.

The annual conference has been a keystone event for sharing knowledge since our founding in 1985. This year's conference attracted more than 1,000 attendees, along with 100 speakers, 70 sessions and 92 exhibitors. Conference attendees enjoyed locally sourced meals, listened to a powerful keynote address by Eric Lee-Mäder and attended a diverse array of conference sessions.

If you have photos to share on social media from the annual conference, use the hashtag #PFI25 and tag @practicalfarmers in your post.

NEWS

Video: "Getting Started With a Cover Crop Business"



Our latest "Practical Cover Croppers" video shares how **Bill Frederick** and **James Holz** started Iowa Cover Crop in 2014 with a goal of positively contributing to their local community and Iowa agriculture.

Based in Jefferson, Iowa, Bill and James started by selling rye, oats and wheat. Iowa Cover Crop is now a full-service cover crop business offering cover crop seed and application, native seeds and grasses and a growing network of farmer seed dealers across Iowa and beyond.

[Watch our new episode.](#)

Does this video inspire you to start or expand your own cover crop business? PFI is currently accepting applications for our [Cover Crop Business Accelerator.](#)

Enrollment is open for our beneficial insect cost-share



Practical Farmers of Iowa and Xerces Society are seeking urban farmers who would like to plant beneficial insect habitat on their urban farm.

Through our **beneficial insects cost-share program**, PFI funds native plants and costs associated with establishing them so you can create insectary strips or beetle banks. We want to help farmers support beneficial insects that can boost natural predation and pollination on their urban farms. **Apply today.**

Mark your calendars: 2025 horticulture meet-ups

PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

**Horticulture Farmer
MEET-UPS**

Jan.-March 2025

Join fellow fruit, vegetable and flower farmers in your area for conversation and refreshment - on PFI!

RSVP with jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org

Dates, locations and speakers can be found at practicalfarmers.org/calendar

PFI has organized **six horticulture meet-ups** for 2025, with the first taking place Jan. 30 in Decorah, Iowa.

The purpose of the Horticulture Farmer Meet-Ups is to establish networks of local connections and support among horticulture farmers within each region of the state.

To RSVP, email **Jacqueline Venner Senske** at **jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org**.

ON THE BLOG

Reflections from 2024: A year in cover cropping



2024 was a big year for farmer-led research and field days.

As we move forward to another year in cover cropping, let's review the research and field days that happened last year.

[Read the blog](#) to hear from seven farmers or farm groups about their experience with cover crops through the 2024 growing season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dive into commercial apple production at our upcoming workshop



Tuesday, Jan. 28 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Cumming, IA

Join regional experts and fellow growers at PFI's upcoming Commercial Apple Growers Workshop.

Learn the latest on apple production, connect with other growers and take part in a hands-on pruning workshop. Lunch featuring local foods will be provided with time for networking.

[Register today.](#)

Registration is open for the Midwest Covers & Grains Conference



Wednesday, March 5 | Great Wolf Lodge, Baraboo, WI

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

This one-day event will explore topics on everything from interseeding covers into corn to finding viable market options for small grains.

[Find out more and register here.](#)

More upcoming events

All events listed are in Central time.

Jan. 21: Webinar – "Using CRP To Foster Biodiversity on a 160-Acre Iowa Farm"

Hosts: Clarissa Bruns and Bill Anderson

Noon-1 p.m. | **[Online](#)**

Jan. 22: Field Day – Cover Crop 101: Basics of Management, Profitability and Practicality of Crop Use

Host: Chad Petersen

4-6 p.m. | New Liberty, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

James Hepp of Rockwell City, IA, was featured in [Farms.com: Agriculture Graduate's Passion, Determination for Farming Yield Successes](#)

Paul Rasch of Solon, IA, was featured in [Iowa City Press-Citizen: What changes will Wilson's Orchard & Farm make to its Ciderhouse restaurant in 2025?](#)

Wade Dooley of Albion, IA, was featured on [Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network: Practical Farmers of Iowa supporting cover crop businesses](#)

Wendy Johnson of Charles City, IA, was featured in [Charles City Press: Johnson honored with conservation award](#)

Zack Smith of Lake Mills, IA, was featured in [News-Press Now: River Action announces lineup for 6th annual Quad-Cities Environmental Film Series](#)

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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