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Performance: Map of My Kingdom – Sept. 25, in Chariton

The play by Mary Swander addresses the issue of farmland transition

CHARITON, Iowa — A play tackling the critical issue of farmland ownership will be performed on **Thursday, Sept. 25, at 7 p.m. at CB & Q Freight House in Chariton.** The play, “Map of My Kingdom,” was commissioned by Practical Farmers of Iowa and written by playwright Mary Swander. Refreshments and a discussion with the author will follow the performance. CB & Q Freight House is located at 1115 Auburn Ave. in Chariton. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for students. Contact Ray Meyer, rcmeyer@iowatelecom.net or (641) 774-2179, for tickets.

A potluck meal will take place before the show at 6 p.m., at the Chariton Community Center located at 502 North Main St. Those planning to take part in the meal are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. **Please RSVP for the potluck** to Lauren Zastrow at (515) 232-5661 or lauren@practicalfarmers.org by Monday, Sept. 22.

In the play, character Angela Martin, a lawyer and mediator in land transition disputes, shares stories of how farmers and landowners have approached their land transitions. Some families struggled to resolve the sale or transfer of their land, dissolving relationships. Others found peacefully rational solutions that focused on keeping the land – and the family – together.

“Land is the thread that binds all the stories together,” says Teresa Opheim, executive director of Practical Farmers. “‘Map of My Kingdom’ will resonate with those who have been or are working through challenging land transfer issues. We also hope it helps others start those critical conversations.”

According to Dan Wilson, president of Practical Farmers and a member of the group’s Farm Transfer Committee, “the play is a good way at getting at a tremendous farmland transition that is about to take place in Iowa, as elderly landlords begin to pass on. Many farmers will lose farmland – their source of livelihood – during this transition, unless we tackle these issues.”

Fifty-six percent of Iowa farmland is owned by people over the age of 65, according to a report by retired Iowa State University economist Mike Duffy, “Farmland Ownership and Tenure Report in Iowa 2012”. Thirty percent of Iowa farmland is owned by those more than 75 years old.

“Map of My Kingdom” will be performed by Madeleine Russell, an actress originally from Ames who has a BFA with special distinction from University of Oklahoma’s School of Drama and many performance credits to her name there, in Washington D.C. and in Iowa. The play is directed by Matt Foss, professor of acting and theatre history at Iowa State University.

“Map of My Kingdom” is sponsored by: The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, New Bo Books in Cedar Rapids, the Lucas County Arts Council, Principal Financial Group and Sustainable Farm Partners, LLP.

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Founded in 1985, Practical Farmers of Iowa is an open, supportive and diverse organization of farmers and friends of farmers that seeks to strengthen farms and communities through farmer-led investigation and information-sharing. Farmers in our network produce corn, soybeans, beef cattle, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. For additional information, call (515) 232-5661 or visit www.practicalfarmers.org.

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