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Award ceremony will honor 2017 Farmland Owner Legacy Award recipients – Aug. 24, Des Moines

DES MOINES, Iowa — Practical Farmers of Iowa will host an awards ceremony and celebration to honor Angela and John Tedesco, recipients of Practical Farmers' 2017 Farmland Owner Legacy Award, on Thursday, Aug. 24, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden (909 Robert D. Ray Drive).

The event is free and open to anyone. Hors d'oeuvres will be catered by Trellis Café and a cash bar will be available. The award presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m., and guests will be able to browse and enjoy the botanical gardens. Please RSVP to Debra Boekholder, debra@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661, by Friday, Aug. 18

In December 2016, Angela and John donated 13 acres of their 20-acre certified organic farm in urban Granger to Practical Farmers of Iowa – the first realized land gift in Practical Farmers' history – to ensure its agricultural legacy, rich soils and reservoir of wildlife don't succumb to a developer's plow, a fate that has befallen many Iowa farms.

Until her retirement in 2012, Angela operated Turtle Farm for 17 years on the land. She converted this conventional row-crop land into a certified organic farm to start one of Iowa's first Community Supported Agriculture businesses. After retiring, Angela began renting her farm to beginning farmer Ben Saunders.

Angela and John wanted to see this land remain a farm for many more generations to come. In 2016 they made the decision to donate 13 acres of their farm to Practical Farmers of Iowa. Making this decision will support the next generation of farmers and conserve the farmland against the risk of future development.

"We were looking for the best way to keep the farm a farm," Angela says. "Because it's right on Highway 17 in Granger, I knew if we sold the land to another farmer, eventually it could get sold for development prices. It's important to us that it remain a farm for someone to continue using in a sustainable manner."

Angela and John, who reside in Johnston, purchased the farmland in 1998, three years after Angela started farming on rented ground elsewhere – and one year after they joined Practical Farmers of Iowa. John says this long history with the organization was a major factor in their decision to donate their land to PFI instead of another group.

"We have experience and trust with Practical Farmers that we haven't developed with other groups," he says. "We knew PFI would be interested in preserving the land for sustainable farming."

The Farmland Owner Legacy Award is granted annual by Practical Farmers to landowners who use their land to help the next generation get started, advance land stewardship and promote long-term sustainability of farm businesses, environmental quality and rural communities. With this award, Practical Farmers calls attention to the important role non-operator farmland owners can play the future success of sustainable agriculture.

Directions from I-235: Take Exit 8B for East 6th Street and head south on East 6th Street. Turn right on Des Moines Street (corner with Alba restaurant). At the T-intersection, turn right on Robert D. Ray Drive and continue straight; you will pass under I-235. The road ends in the parking lot for the botanical garden.

Note: The Grand Avenue bridge in downtown Des Moines is closed. Also, most GPS systems will not navigate you to the botanical garden. Please see the directions above for the best route to reach the botanical garden. Visit dmbotanicalgarden.com/visit-us/directions for more information.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa strengthens farms and communities through farmer-led investigation and information-sharing. Our values include: welcoming everyone; creativity, collaboration and community; viable farms now and for future generations; and stewardship and ecology. Founded in 1985, farmers in our network raise corn, soybeans, livestock, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. To learn more, visit <http://practicalfarmers.org>.