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Field day will explore organic crop and hog production, water quality practices – Sept. 9, near Harlan

HARLAN, Iowa — Soil and water quality are increasingly on farmers' minds these days as they consider ways to reduce erosion, as well as nitrogen leaving their farms. Cover crops are one important tool farmers can use to help boost soil health and hold nutrients in place – but extended crop rotations, prairie strips, buffers and other practices can all augment the impact of cover crops, says Ron Rosmann.

Ron and his family operate Rosmann Family Farms near Harlan, marketing diverse crops and livestock on 700 certified organic acres. The farm consists of cattle, hogs, egg layers and a range of crops, including popcorn, soybeans, corn, small grains, hay and pasture, annual forages and cover crops.

"Integrated, diversified cropping and livestock systems are very important for improving water and soil quality," Ron says. "Multiple conservation practices serve different purposes to that end."

The Rosmann family includes Maria Vakulskas Rosmann; David Rosmann and Becky Tompkins-Rosmann; Daniel Rosmann and Ellen Walsh-Rosmann; and Mark Rosmann, who works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Ag Service.

The Rosmanns will share their experience with organic crop and swine production, as well as water quality and edge-of-field practices they use, at a field day they are hosting on **Saturday, Sept. 9, from 1-4:30 p.m., near Harlan** (1222 Ironwood Road, about 4.5 miles northwest of Harlan.).

The event – "Organic Crop and Hog Production + Water Quality Practices" – is being held in partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa and Iowa Organic Association, and is free to attend. A meal will be served following the field day, with food provided by Rosmann Family Farms and Organic Valley / Organic Prairie. The field day is sponsored by Blue River Hybrids, Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa Organic Association and W heatsfield Co-op.

Guests will hear about the Rosmann family's organic and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)-certified farrow-to-finish swine operation, and the various pig housing options the family has tried. After years of learning lessons, they recently built a new hoop building for farrowing. The family will also discuss their organic crop operation, as well as conservation practices they use, such as field borders, buffer and prairie strips, and agroforestry practices. Hanna Poffenbarger, a PhD candidate with Iowa State University's Department of Agronomy, will be on hand to speak about some of these topics as well.

In addition to Rosmann Family Farms, Maria operates Farm Sweet Farm, an on-farm retail store. Daniel and Ellen started and run FarmTable Delivery, as well as Milk and Honey, a restaurant in Harlan featuring local foods.

Directions from Harlan: Go 2 miles west on IA Hwy 44 to Ironwood Road and turn right (north). Go 2.25 miles until you see the farm on the left (west) side of the road. **Note:** GPS or Google Maps may direct you to minimum-maintenance roads, which may be impassable during rainy conditions.

Practical Farmers' 2017 field days are supported by several sustaining and major sponsors, including: Ag Ventures Alliance; Albert Lea Seed; Center for Rural Affairs; Fertrell; Gandy Cover Crop Seeders; Grain Millers, Inc.; Iowa Beef

Center; Iowa Environmental Council; Iowa State University Department of Agronomy; Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE); ISU Extension and Outreach; La Crosse Forage and Turf Seed; Lemken; Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; MOSA Organic Certification; Natural Resources Defense Council; Organic Valley / Organic Prairie; Riverside Feeds, LLC; The Scoular Company; Trees Forever; Unilever; University of Iowa College of Public Health (I-CASH); Upper Iowa Audubon Society; USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service; Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture; and Welter Seed & Honey Co.

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The Iowa Organic Association (IOA) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the advancement of Iowa's organic food and farming system. IOA was founded in 2006 and serves as an umbrella association to represent all of Iowa's organic farmers, gardeners, food and farm businesses and consumers in building a more sustainable Iowa. IOA's 2017 field day series is made possible with help from the USDA's Risk Management Agency.