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Practical Farmers of Iowa will host beginning farmer retreat in Indianola, Dec. 1-2

INDIANOLA, Iowa – Practical Farmers of Iowa is organizing its 10th annual overnight retreat for beginning farmers, taking place this year Dec. 1-2 at the Wesley Woods Retreat Center in Indianola (10896 Nixon St., about 8.5 miles south of town). The event starts at 1 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1 and runs through 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2. The annual event welcomes individuals who aspire to farm as well as beginning farmers from all farm enterprises.

The cost is \$20 for PFI members and \$40 for non-members. Registration fees include all materials and workshop costs, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, snacks throughout and bunk-style lodging on-site. Attendees are encouraged to bring a dish to share for the Friday night potluck; Practical Farmers will provide the main dish.

Registration is required by Monday, Nov. 27. Register at practicalfarmers.org or by calling Practical Farmers of Iowa at (515) 232-5661. Attendance is limited, so sign-up soon.

The retreat continues Practical Farmers' focus on farmer-to-farmer education, and features more experienced beginning farmers sharing their experiences and leading small group discussions and group activities. Attendees who are not yet farming on their own will develop a farm vision and work on an action plan to make that vision a reality. Those already farming on their own will focus on their strategic goals and leave with some financial and marketing plans to help build a successful farm business.

All attendees will be given individual work time during the weekend to brainstorm how to apply the knowledge gained during the retreat to their specific farm operations. Advanced beginning farmers from row crop, livestock and horticulture enterprises will be available to provide one-on-one advice throughout the event.

"Having work time during talks and workshops is awesome," says a past attendee. "It helps the information stick and makes me see how useful it can be in the future. The speakers are applicable to many kinds of farming operations and it is so helpful to be surrounded by other beginning farmers for support and ideas."

In addition to helping attendees build successful farm businesses, the retreat aims to bring beginning farmers together to network and create a sense of community among the next generation of Iowa farmers.

Support for beginning farmers is a top priority for Practical Farmers of Iowa members. The beginning farmer retreat is part of Practical Farmers' beginning farmer program that provides resources and opportunities to help beginning and aspiring farmers create viable farm businesses. Other beginning farmer opportunities offered by Practical Farmers include: the Savings Incentive Program, Labor4Learning, Find-A-Farmer, beginning farmer field days, farminars, farm transition work and more.

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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>.