



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Practical Farmers of Iowa announces its winter Farminar lineup

NATIONWIDE —Practical Farmers of Iowa, an organization that advances profitable, ecologically sound and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture, will be hosting eight online seminars called Farminars Tuesdays, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. central standard time, from January 10 through March 13. Farminars provide an opportunity for farmers to learn from other farmers in the winter season without having to travel. Any computer with an Internet connection may be used to participate.

Kathy Barkalow, of Oxford, IA, has watched Practical Farmers of Iowa Farminars regularly this fall. “Farminars add value to your life; they give you a different perspective. I would highly recommend you watch them, even if you aren’t a member of PFI,” says Kathy. “There is a wide range of topics covered, from livestock to produce, and PFI’s Farminars are very simple to participate in.”

Many winter Farminars will feature a beginning farmer learning from a more experienced farmer. Other Farminars will bring together multiple farm experts to present various perspectives on a topic. Participants log in to view the program live online and ask questions throughout the presentation in real time. This season’s programming includes a farmer and his accountant, vegetable farmers operating CSAs (community supported agriculture) programs, row crop and livestock farmers, graziers, farmer’s market veterans and pastured poultry farmers. Topics include tax preparation, business feasibility, pricing, pest management, recordkeeping, farmer’s market profitability, and adding small grains and livestock to a row crop farm.

To register and participate in the Farminars, visit www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar. Recordings of 44 previous Farminars can also be viewed at this URL.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa Winter Farminar Lineup

Tuesday, January 10, 7-8:30 p.m., “Tax Preparation Training for Farmers” with Jerry Peckumn and Leo Brooker, CPA

Farmer Jerry Peckumn and his CPA Leo Brooker talk about tax preparation basics and how to properly file farm business taxes. Topics covered will be guided by participant questions but will likely include business deductions, preparing tax documents for farm employees and recordkeeping tips to make tax season less stressful.

- Jerry Peckumn is a row crop and livestock farmer who lives near Jefferson, IA. Before farming, Jerry provided agricultural banking services. He enjoys the native prairie on his land and is active in many organizations to improve the lives of farmers and their land stewardship.
- Leo Brooker, Certified Public Accountant at *Brooker and Co.* in Jefferson, has been Jerry’s tax advisor for the past 25 years.

Tuesday, January 17, 7-8:30 p.m., “Scale and Profit: A Financial Snapshot of Three CSAs Featuring Blue Gate Farm, Fair Share Farm and Grinnell Heritage Farm

This Farminar is targeted to those currently operating or thinking about starting a CSA. It will help CSA farmers determine the proper scale for their CSA based on their skill level, farm size and markets. The presenters will cover profit potential, legal structure, goals, vision and more!

Three farm businesses will provide a financial comparison of CSAs of varying scales, including profit and loss and balance sheets. The presenters will participate in discussion with the audience about the pros and cons of their operations with respect to scale and markets.

- Blue Gate Farm, near Chariton, IA is owned and managed as a sole proprietorship by Jill Beebout and Sean Skeehan. They sell fruits and vegetables, honey, jams, free-range eggs and hay, which have been sustainably raised. Their products are *Certified Naturally Grown by the national nonprofit of the same name*. (CNG provides certification for small-scale, direct-market farmers who use natural methods.) Customers can purchase Blue Gate Farm products at the Downtown Des Moines Farmer’s Market, at the farm and through Blue Gate’s 40-member CSA.
- Rebecca Graff and Tom Ruggieri manage fair Share Farm, Kearney, MO, as a Limited Liability Company. They began farming in 2003 and grow a wide range of sustainably raised products. Most of these products are sold through their 120-member CSA, which uses CSA member labor.
- Grinnell Heritage Farm, near Grinnell, IA is owned and managed as a C-Corporation by Andrew and Melissa Dunham. Their produce and herbs are *USDA certified-organic* and are available at several Iowa farmer’s markets and through their 220-member CSA. They also sell them wholesale to specialty grocers.

Tuesday, January 24, 7-8:30 p.m., “Insect Pest Management in Organic Vegetable Production” with Kate Edwards and Steve Pincus

Participants will learn organic-approved strategies to mitigate the damage caused by flea beetles, cucumber beetles, thrips, European corn borer, cabbage root maggot, and aphids.

- Kate Edwards, an engineer-turned-farmer, is renting a small acreage near Solon, IA and plotting her growing and business strategies, which include selling through diverse farmer’s market, wholesale markets and CSA markets. She is newly enrolled in Practical Farmers of Iowa’s Savings Incentive Program.
- Steve Pincus runs Tipi Produce with Beth Kazmar in south-central Wisconsin. In business since 1976, Tipi grows 45 acres of certified-organic vegetables, melons and berries for local wholesale and CSA. Steve and Beth have taught a range of topics at regional conferences and workshops. They have the background and experience to interpret scientific information for on-farm use.

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Tuesday, January 31, 7-8:30 p.m., "Profitable Recordkeeping: Simple Strategies for Keeping Better Records" with Joel Winnes and Ryan Herman

Designed with farm profitability in mind, this farminar will focus on how to track expenses and income, and collect data that can help farmers make informed business decisions.

- Joel Winnes is a beginning dairy farmer in northeast Iowa. He currently works for an organic, grass-based dairy near Waukon, IA and aspires to own his own farm someday. Joel is in his second year of the Savings Incentive Program offered by Practical Farmers of Iowa.
- Ryan Herman is a grazer on a beef farm in northeast Iowa. Ryan and his father, Gene Herman, have 190 cow-calf pairs. They raise calves on grass as yearlings and sell them to a grass-finishing program. The Hermans have not raised hay since 2005, relying instead on stockpiled pasture and purchased hay.

Tuesday, February 7, 7-8:30 p.m., "Improve your Farmer's Market Sales" with John Wesselius and Dru Montri

Coming home from market with only \$50 and a vehicle full of product can be discouraging. Participants will learn how to calculate the costs of attending farmer's markets, how to set a farmer's market income goal and strategies to reach that goal and achieve a profit that's worthy of the effort.

- John Wesselius and his family operate The Cornucopia near Sioux Center, IA. Their annual sales revenues exceed \$100,000 and are generated on a six-acre property. Two of those acres are covered in gardens, one and a half acres in grass for pastured poultry and the balance in trees and buildings. They sell their products at the Sioux Center Farmer's Market, Sioux City Farmer's Market and the Falls Park Farmer's Market in Sioux Falls, SD. John is passionate about growing for market!
- Dru Montri is the director of Michigan Farmer's Market Association (MIFMA). She has a background in horticulture receiving her B.S. from Michigan State University (MSU) and her M.S. from Penn State. In addition to her work with MIFMA, she is pursuing a dual doctoral degree at MSU in Horticulture and Community and in Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies. She and her husband own and operate Ten Hens Farm in Bath, Michigan.

Tuesday, February 21, 7-8:30 p.m., "Integrate Small Grains into Large Grain Row Crops and Integrated Livestock Farms" with Wade Dooley and Tom Frantzen

Farmers who attend this session will learn how adding alternative crops can reduce input costs and pest pressure while helping them raise more profitable and healthy livestock.

- Wade Dooley is a beginning farmer with a conventional background. He hails from a large grain and cow/calf farm near Albion, IA. His family has been farming in central Iowa since the 1890s. Dooley works on the family farm and is experimenting with cover crops, wholesale watermelon production and increasing profit without increasing the farm's land base.
- Tom Frantzen is a longtime member of Practical Farmers of Iowa, serving as a past board president and board member in the early years. He farms diverse crops on 385 tillable acres near New Hampton, IA and raises hogs and cattle with his wife, Irene, and son, James. Frantzen is pioneering a number of innovative farm practices such as installing farmstead windbreaks to reduce cattle stress and reducing on-farm energy use with solar and geothermal technologies. Tom and Irene Frantzen were awarded the 2010 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award by Practical Farmers of Iowa.

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Tuesday, February 28, 7-8:30 p.m., "Pricing Poultry: Eggs, Broilers and Turkeys" with Garrett Caryl and Kim Alexander

Many consumers are demanding "farm fresh eggs" or "pastured poultry." Participants will learn how to price and market their niche poultry products for profit during this Farminar.

- Garrett Caryl is a beginning farmer who farms near Marshalltown. He raises and markets pastured broiler chickens and a small rare breed of "red wattle" hogs. He is enrolled Practical Farmers of Iowa's Savings Incentive Program.
- Kim Alexander grew up on a mixed-crop and livestock farm in western Iowa. The 1980s Farm Crisis drove him to Texas where, inspired by Joel Salatin, he and Gloria, his wife, rented an abandoned farm 20 minutes from Austin. They built *Alexander Family Farm*, one of the first operations of the kind in Texas, selling pastured poultry eggs through the wholesale market to local restaurants and grocers. Alexander Family Farm also sells beef, broilers and turkeys directly to consumers. After 25 years in south central Texas, Kim purchased 160 acres of his family's farm in western Iowa, and in 2010, he returned to the state to raise livestock for local markets, building business in Iowa while Gloria manages the Texas farm.

Tuesday, March 6, 7-8:30 p.m., "Determining Whether Your Produce Farm Will Flourish or Wilt" with Grant Schultz and Chris Blanchard

Farminar presenters will talk about how to raise healthy food for the local community and make a profit. Participants will learn how to use financial sheets to guide their a farm's production systems, markets and scale.

- Grant Schultz began farming in 2009 on rented land near Eldridge, IA. His brother Adam plans to join the operation full time in 2012. Schultz Heirloom Farm grows heirloom varieties and saves seeds extensively. The Schultz brothers are newly enrolled in the Savings Incentive Program.
- Chris Blanchard is a dynamic, innovative produce farmer. His farm, Rock Spring Farm, near Decorah, IA has been certified organic since 2001. In addition to growing fantastic produce, Chris helps the next generation by sharing his knowledge and experience with other farmers at conferences across the country.

Tuesday, March 13, 7-8:30 p.m., "Long-Term Fertility Management, Adding Livestock and Longer Crop Rotations to Reduce Costs" with Nathan Anderson and Ron Rosmann

High costs can quickly eat up all your profits. Learn how livestock management and longer rotations can increase your profitability while nurturing healthy soils, plants and animals on your farm.

- Nathan Anderson farms with Sarah, his wife, and extended family near Cherokee, IA. They produce corn and soybeans, and raise beef cattle. Nathan is enrolled in the Savings Incentive Program and is active in Practical Farmers of Iowa's Cooperators' Program, conducting on-farm research in cover crops and pasture improvement. After seven years of farming through high school and college, he recently purchased his first cropland.
- Ron Rosmann and his wife Maria Vakulskas Rosmann are founding members of Practical Farmers of Iowa. They raise organic row crops and livestock along with their sons David, Mark and Daniel and his wife, Ellen. Ron and Maria were awarded the 2009 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award by Practical Farmers of Iowa.

Practical Farmers of Iowa's Winter 2012 Farminars are made possible with funding from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2010-49400-21843 and the Ceres Foundation.

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Founded in 1985, Practical Farmers of Iowa is an open, supportive and diverse organization of farmers and friends of farmers, advancing profitable, ecologically sound and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture through farmer-to-farmer networking, 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](tel:515.232.5661) or visit www.practicalfarmers.org.

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(A shortened version of this release is available upon request.)

For your convenience in finding individuals within your coverage area, I'm enclosing a list of Farminar presenters by community below:

Farminar Presenters from Your Community

Albion | Presenting on: Tuesday, February 21, 7-8:30 p.m.

Wade Dooley, beginning farmer from a conventional large grain and cow/calf farm. His family ancestors have been farming in central Iowa since the 1890s.

Chariton | Presenting on: Tuesday, January 17, 7-8:30 p.m.

Sean Skeehan, of Blue Gate Farm, which produces produce, hay, jams/jellies, handicrafts, and eggs for direct markets.

Cherokee | Presenting on: Tuesday, March 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m.,

Nathan Anderson, produces corn, soybeans, raises beef cattle with his wife, parents and grandparents.

Eldridge | Presenting on: Tuesday, March 6, 7-8:30 p.m.

Grant Schultz, beginning fruit and vegetable farmer with his brother Adam.

Grinnell | Presenting on: Tuesday, January 17, 7-8:30 p.m.

Melissa Dunham of Grinnell Heritage Farm, produces 20 acres of fruits and vegetables, raises beef cattle for direct sales by the cut.

Harlan | Presenting on: Tuesday, March 13, 7-8:30 p.m.

Ron Rosmann is an experienced organic farmer producing corn, soybeans, small grains, managing pastures for beef cattle, and raises farrow to finish hogs.

Jefferson | Presenting on: Tuesday, January 10, 7-8:30 p.m.

Jerry Peckumn is an experienced row crop livestock farmer.

Leo Brooker, CPA advises farmers and small business owners for accounting questions and tax preparation.

Marshalltown | Presenting on: Tuesday, February 28, 7-8:30 p.m.,

Garrett Caryl raises pastured broilers, hogs and is working on a business plan for direct marketing meat.

New Albin | Presenting on: Tuesday, January 31, 7-8:30 p.m.,

Ryan Herman is a beginning grazer and with his father they manage 190 cow/calf pairs.

New Hampton | Presenting on: Tuesday, February 21, 7-8:30 p.m

Tom Frantzen is an experienced diverse organic row crop and livestock farmer.

Sioux Center | Presenting on: Tuesday, February 7, 7-8:30 p.m.

John Wesselius produces abundant produce and poultry for farmers market on a small farm.

Smithland | Presenting on: Tuesday, February 28, 7-8:30 p.m.

Kim Alexander experienced farmer grazes livestock, and manages pastured poultry for local markets.

Solon | Presenting on: Tuesday, December 27, 7-8:30 p.m.,

Kate Edwards is a beginning farmer who grows local produce for farmers market, a small CSA, and wholesale.

Waukon | Presenting on: Tuesday, January 31, 7-8:30 p.m.

Joel Winnes has several years experience managing pastures for a grass-based organic dairy and plans to start his own farm one day.