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Contacts:

Darla and Michael Eeten | GoodEetens Produce Farm | (712) 348-4025 | darlaeeten@gmail.com | goodeetens.weebly.com
Tamsyn Jones | Outreach & Publications Coordinator | Practical Farmers of Iowa | (515) 232-5661 | tamsyn@practicalfarmers.org

Vegetable production field day at GoodEetens Produce Farm – Sept. 14, Everly

EVERLY, Iowa – When Darla and Michael Eeten started GoodEetens Produce Farm in 2010, they intentionally sought to keep the farm at a management size so they could do all the farm work themselves. They also integrated pigs and chickens to help with fertility, bed preparation and weed control.

“We have a close connection to the land and love working with our hands outdoors in the fresh air,” Darla says. “We are committed to producing healthy, chemical-free food and to a clean environment.”

The Eetens raise about 90 different varieties of vegetables, along with strawberries and raspberries, in permanent beds and two high tunnels on 12 acres, which they sell at farmers markets in Sheldon, Everly and Spencer. They also manage a small CSA, and Darla grows wildflowers, makes maple syrup from trees on land she owns near Boyden and bakes bread to sell as value-added products to their customers.

Darla and Michael will host a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day on **Thursday, Sept. 14, from 1-3 p.m., near Everly** (1655 280th St., about 9 miles northeast of town), where they will share their experience with small-scale produce and livestock production, and highlight their various enterprises and production practices.

The event – “A Little Bit of Everything in Everly” – is free to attend and will include a light lunch following the field day. RSVPs are requested for the meal to Debra Boekholder, debra@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661, by Monday, Sept. 11.

Guests will get to tour Darla and Michael’s high tunnels, outdoor rotational vegetable fields and strawberry beds. In their established production beds, the Eetens are experimenting with no-till, maintaining permanent walkways and mulching heavily. They will discuss this, as well as other production practices they use, and they will share their experience with managing a small CSA, high tunnel production and integrating animals into a small farm.

“We want visitors to see how fulfilling it is to grow one’s own healthy, chemical-free food, and to be good stewards of the land,” Darla says.

The mission of GoodEetens Produce farm is to support healthy food in their community. Darla is a lifelong gardener and is also a professional cleaner, and Michael is the pastor at the United Methodist Church in Everly.

Directions from Fostoria: Follow Main Street / 280th Street west out of town for 5.5 miles. The farm will be on the left (south) side of the road, just before the Little Sioux River (look for the GoodEetens Produce sign and the high tunnel).

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.

Practical Farmers of Iowa

(515) 232-5661; tamsyn@practicalfarmers.org

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