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## **Field day will explore oat, hay and feed production, marketing – Sept. 7, Dunkerton**

**DUNKERTON, Iowa** – Most farmers would agree on the merits of diversifying a farm's enterprises and income streams, such as improved resilience to unpredictable markets and weather. Deciding how to profitably diversify, however, is less straightforward.

For Earl and Jane Canfield, of Canfield Family Farm near Dunkerton, diversification has entailed transitioning their farm over the past few years from raising strictly corn and soybeans for commodity markets to growing and direct-marketing a mix of value-added products, including whole grains like oats, mixed feeds, produce and eggs.

"Profitable enterprise diversification is critical to having a long-term sustainable farm," Earl says. "We had growing concerns about the long-term impacts to our farm of continuing to raise just corn and soybeans, and continuing to rely heavily on transgenic seed technology and all the chemicals that go with that kind of system. So we started looking at the big picture of where we were at and where we felt we needed to be going, and came to the conclusion that we needed to make some changes."

The family, which includes Earl and Jane's four children, decided that, in order to make their farm sustainable over the long-term, they needed to add small grains, forages and livestock (the family plans to start selling meat from grass-finished animals) to, as Earl says, "balance the economics and agronomics of row-crop grain production."

The Canfields will share their experience with this transition – and with growing and marketing oats, hay and feed – at a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day they are hosting on **Thursday, Sept. 7, from 3-6 p.m., near Dunkerton** (8717 Lester Road, about 2 miles north of town).

The event – "Oat, Hay and Feed Production and Direct-Marketing" – is free to attend and will include a potluck dinner after the program ends. A main dish and beverages will be provided; guests are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Refrigeration will be available, and if the timing is right, watermelon and sweet corn grown by the Canfields will be available. **Please RSVP for the meal** to Debra Boekholder, [debra@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:debra@practicalfarmers.org) or (515) 232-5661, by Monday, Sept. 4. The field day is sponsored by Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District.

Guests will learn about growing small grains in Iowa; machinery for small grains and hay production; small grains varieties; and potential market streams. The Canfields will also discuss direct-marketing of grains, hay and straw – including the possibility of direct-marketing small grains to small-scale livestock owners as either whole grains or as part of complete mixed feeds.

"Direct-marketing allows farmers to capture a larger portion of the revenue stream originating from their farm," Earl says. "It also provides needed accountability between food producers and consumers."

**Directions from U.S. 20:** Take the Dunkerton exit. Turn north onto IA Hwy 281 / Canfield Road and travel to Dunkerton. Go through town and continue north for 1.5 miles. Turn west (left) onto Lester Road, the first gravel road that goes west. The Canfields' farm is the first on the right (north) side of the road.

**From U.S. 63:** Take County Road C57 east to IA Hwy 281 (Canfield Road). Turn south (right) onto IA Hwy 281 and go 1.5 miles. Turn right (west) on Lester Road, the first gravel road that goes to the west. The Canfields' farm is the first on the right (north) side of the road.

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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