



PRACTICAL  
**FARMERS**  
*of Iowa*

2022 Annual Report





*The Sunflower Experience at Ann Franzenburg's Pheasant Run Farm near Van Horne, Iowa in September 2022.*

*Cover: Meredith Nunnikhoven hosted a field day on her farm, Barnswallow Flowers & Produce, in July 2022 near Oskaloosa.*

## From the President

2022 wrapped up my ninth, and final, year on Practical Farmers' board of directors. Thanks to all of you within PFI who have allowed me to serve this amazing, curious, welcoming, hard-working and humble organization.

I have been fortunate to be part of PFI's extraordinary growth during my time on the board. When I started in 2014, the PFI office in downtown Ames, Iowa, housed a handful of staff, and a membership of 3,500 was a stretch goal on the horizon. We now have more than 30 staff – and our membership exceeds 6,300, nearly double that aspirational goal.

This growth would never have happened without each of you in our network supporting us, exploring questions through on-farm research, talking to your friends and neighbors about PFI and identifying the common ground – the values we all share – that inform our strategic planning.

While I had the opportunity to “drive the tractor” by serving on the board, you, members of our PFI network, are the ones who have been fertilizing, planting and bringing in the PFI harvest.

Thank you, PFIs, for helping this organization flourish. I look forward to seeing where we grow together in 2023 and beyond!

*Ann Franzenburg*

**Ann Franzenburg**  
*Board President*

## From the Director

The trajectory of agriculture in the Midwest – fewer farms and farmers, food insecurity, increased input reliance, water pollution, soil loss, habitat loss and shrinking rural communities – can feel disheartening as these trends diverge from Practical Farmers of Iowa's vision.

But our network is working hard to change course and work toward diverse farms, healthy food and vibrant communities. With continued growth in membership and programs, I am more hopeful than ever that working together, we can reach our vision. To truly change agriculture for the good, we must use multiple strategies – including making incremental changes within the existing agriculture landscape and creating new systems from the ground up.

Our farmer network is truly a big tent, representing a spectrum of production practices, farm scales and enterprises. While their farms are diverse, PFI farmer members have common goals of wanting to raise crops, protect their soils and provide for the greater community. Through our broadening suite of programs, we are deploying multiple approaches to help farmers achieve these goals in ways that work for their unique circumstances. This annual report shares a sampling of the impressive amount of work we accomplished together – work that is getting Iowa on track toward our vision.

The PFI staff and board are eager to continue growing our footprint in 2023 as we work to diversify farming, and in turn create positive economic, environmental and community impact across Iowa and beyond. Working together, building new and improved systems, I am confident that we can and will create agriculture that serves us well in the long-term.

*Sally Worley*

**Sally Worley**  
*Executive Director*

## Our Mission

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

## Our Vision

An Iowa with healthy soil, healthy food, clean air, clean water, resilient farms and vibrant communities.

## Our Values

- Welcoming everyone
- Farmers leading the exchange of experience and knowledge
- Curiosity, creativity, collaboration and community
- Resilient farms now and for future generations
- Stewardship of land and resources

## Our Guiding Principles

- Farmers lead our programming.
- We focus on providing extensive opportunities for members and others to network.
- We secure extensive media featuring farmers and our projects.
- On-farm research and demonstration is a core part of our programming.
- We partner with agencies, organizations and universities that can effectively help us achieve our goals.

## From PFI’s 2021–2026 Strategic Plan

### Practical Vision

- Many voices driving Iowa’s agriculture narrative
- Effective leaders creating positive change for our food and farm systems
- PFI well-positioned for success, impact and growth
- Robust markets for a diversity of farm products
- Healthy environments stemming from responsible land stewardship
- Thriving rural communities filled with resilient and profitable farms
- Farming is a desirable vocation and new farmers are equipped to succeed
- A diverse and inclusive PFI network

### Strategic Directions

- Equipping a deep bench of leaders to inspire change towards a diverse and vibrant landscape
- Strengthening our network to foster deeper connections, a sense of shared community and partnerships that help spread PFI’s vision
- Driving the narrative and amplifying diverse viewpoints
- Paving a path to prosperity for regional food and farm businesses
- Growing organizational capacity for long-term impact

## 2022 PFI Board of Directors

### DISTRICT 1 (Northwest)

**Nathan Anderson** - Vice President

### DISTRICT 2 (North Central)

**Wendy Johnson**

### DISTRICT 3 (Northeast)

**Ann Franzenburg** - President

### DISTRICT 4 (Southwest)

**Jon Bakehouse** - Treasurer

### DISTRICT 5 (Southeast)

**Gayle Olson**

### AT-LARGE FARMERS

**Carmen Black**

**Jack Boyer**

**Vic Madsen**

**Mark Quee**

**David Rosmann** - Secretary

### AT-LARGE FRIENDS

#### OF FARMERS

**Kristine Lang**

**Matt Liebman**

## Current PFI Staff

### **Debra Boekholder**

*Membership & Office Assistant*

### **Alisha Bower**

*Senior Operations Director*

### **Valeria Cano Camacho**

*Latino Engagement Coordinator*

### **Sarah Carlson**

*Senior Programs & Member Engagement Director*

### **Steve Carlson**

*Membership & Office Manager*

### **Margaret Chamas**

*Livestock Viability Manager*

### **Rebecca Clay**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*

### **Lydia English**

*Field Crops Viability Manager*

### **Chelsea Ferrie**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*

### **Stefan Gailans**

*Senior Research Manager*

### **Taylor Hintch**

*Field Crops Education Coordinator*

### **Morgan Jennings**

*Field Crops Viability Coordinator*

### **Amos Johnson**

*Livestock Education Coordinator*

### **Miranda Johnson**

*Senior Human Resources Coordinator*

### **Tamsyn Jones**

*Senior Editor & Magazine Coordinator*

### **Kayla Koether**

*Senior Farm Viability Manager*

### **Liz Kolbe**

*Senior Farmer-Led Education Manager*

### **Sarah Krumm**

*Senior Graphic Design & Photography Coordinator*

### **Emma Liddle**

*Membership & Events Coordinator*

### **Martha McFarland**

*Farmland Viability Coordinator*

### **Vanya North**

*Habitat Education Coordinator*

### **Nick Ohde**

*Marketing & Communications Director*

### **Mike Roelf**

*Information Systems Manager*

### **Lara Schenck**

*Grants Manager*

### **Chastity Schonhorst**

*Bookkeeper*

### **Jacqueline Venner Senske**

*Senior Horticulture Education Coordinator*

### **Elizabeth Wilhelm**

*Media Relations Coordinator*

### **Brad Woodson**

*Habitat Viability Manager*

### **Sally Worley**

*Executive Director*

### **Emily Yaddof**

*Marketing & Communications Coordinator*

### **Grace Yi**

*Habitat Viability Coordinator*

### **Christine Zrostlik**

*Senior Marketing & Communications Manager*

## PFI Co-Founders

### **Larry Kallem**

*Ames, IA*

### **The late Dick & Sharon Thompson**

*Boone, IA*



In memory of Sharon Thompson, 1934–2023



Staff converse at PFI's fall staff retreat in 2022.

# Farmer-Led Education

Practical Farmers of Iowa's farmer-led education department stewards PFI's network of diverse farmers and creates the platforms for them to share their knowledge and experience. More than **3,954 people** attended the **217 events** that PFI held in 2022 featuring more than **269 leaders**. Staff and PFI members also presented or attended a minimum of **113 other events** on behalf of PFI.

## Events in 2022

43

Field Days

12

Farminars

22

Meetups

69

Annual Conference Sessions

## Other Events

- Cooperators' Meeting
- Farm Business Coaching Workshop
- Beginning Farmer Summit
- Explore Farming Workshop Series
- Small Grains Conference
- Agronomists in the Know Call Series + In-Person Meeting
- Flower Workshop
- Apple Growers Workshop

All of these events help farmers learn and strengthen their network of peers, mentors and allies, which leads to changes on the farm. For example, **72%** of those who came to field days intend to make changes as a result of attending.

Jeff and Deb Sindelar hosted a field day on a perennial fruit many growers are curious about – honeyberries. This fruit has the potential to extend the season for growers and is reportedly quite tasty. Growers came together to learn about the Sindelar's experiences raising and marketing honeyberries, including learning about the results from their 2022 PFI on-farm research on the subject.

Sandy McAntire, who farms near Toledo, Iowa, says, "I appreciated seeing the operation and ideas for management, and also connecting with like-minded folks." Others appreciated seeing mature honeyberries in production, as well as getting a chance to see another unique fruit, hardy kiwi, in production.



Deb and Jeff Sindelar



Honeyberries



Honeyberries growing at Deb's Berry Farm near Newhall, Iowa.

“

"I appreciated seeing the operation and ideas for management, and also connecting with like-minded folks."

- Sandy McAntire

# Research

PFI's research program empowers farmers to generate and share knowledge through timely and relevant on-farm research. It's timely and relevant because farmers set our research priorities.



Shae Pesek and Anna Hankins

Anna Hankins and Shae Pesek of Over the Moon Farm and Flowers near Coggon, Iowa, participated in two trials in 2022: "Grazing Turkeys on Cover Crops vs. Farmyard" and "Replacing Corn With Oats in Ration for Pasture-Raised Broiler Chickens." Anna says that conducting research on questions specific to their farm not only honed their skills at observation and data collection, it gave her and Shae vital insights into their farm's production practices.

"We are 1,000 times more confident understanding our numbers, and it feels so good to be ending the year that way," she says. "It also makes us feel much braver about scaling up where it makes sense, and doing so with clear insight about production and production practices. Trials like this help build a case for pasture-raised livestock to be financially viable for us, and hopefully other farmers too."



Turkey poults upon arrival to the farm.

“We are 1,000 times more confident understanding our numbers, and it feels so good to be ending the year that way.”

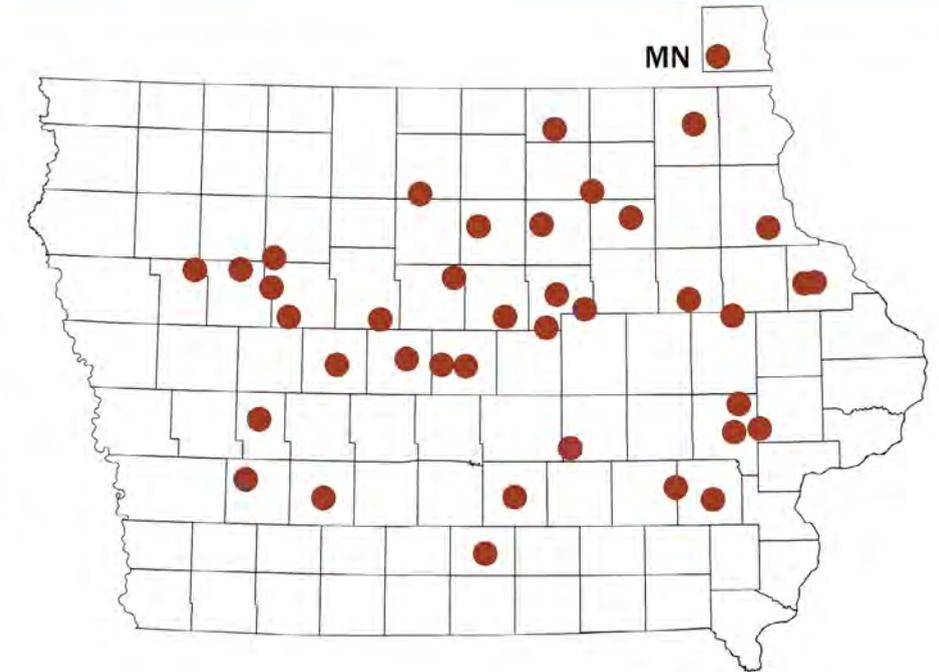
- Anna Hankins



## 2022 On-Farm Research Project Locations

**45** # of farmer-cooperators participating

**75** # of trials completed in 2022



PFI's initial trials in the late 1980s were about reducing nitrogen rates. In 2022, a new cohort of PFI farmers took up the question in a next-generation on-farm soil health experiment. Nineteen farmers across Iowa are participating in the multiyear trial – titled "Can We Reduce N Rates and Improve ROI?" – that is exploring whether farmers who have been investing long-term in soil health-promoting practices can reduce the amount of nitrogen fertilizer they apply to corn without sacrificing yield.

Sam Bennett, a participant who farms near Galva, Iowa, says the trial will provide critical data farmers need to make decisions. "Most farmers don't have the confidence or data to try to reduce fertilizer rates and see what happens," he says. "We get one shot at the best crop every year, and the logical thing to do seems to be to give the crop everything it needs, and more, to maximize yields. This trial will put together a good set of farm-scale data to give farmers the confidence to dial in their nitrogen rate to improve profitability and water quality."



Sam Bennett



# Farm Viability

PFI's farm viability department provides personalized support to help farmers achieve their goals. This department was established in 2022 and encompasses both pre-existing programs and new endeavors launched in 2022.

For many farmers, being viable means being able to access new markets, grow their farm businesses according to their visions and achieve sustainable finances while caring for their land and finding balance in their lives. Our work in this department seeks to address these holistic, multifaceted aspects of viability.

## Business Coaching and Development



Twenty farmers participated in our Cover Crop Business Accelerator program, which entered its third year in 2022. These businesses are creating jobs across Iowa while providing Iowa-sourced cover crops to fulfill the growing demand for cover crop seed and custom services. This is a joint project between Practical Farmers of Iowa and Iowa Soybean Association.

To help established farms make meaningful strides to their goals, we also started our new Farm Business Coaching Program in 2022. Through in-depth consultation, this program helps these farmers strengthen their businesses and make progress toward key recommendations based on farm goals and a business analysis. Mark Westbrook, of Solstice Farm near Waverly, Iowa, is participating to successfully add a cidery that will complement their existing mushroom and poultry enterprises.

"PFI's Business Coaching Program came about at the perfect time for us, as we finished out our fifth season and looked to take our farm business to the next level," Mark says. "The ability to work with a professional consultant and connect with other farmers who are at a similar stage are both great benefits of the program."

## Landowner Coaching

Jane Shey owns farmland near Algona, Iowa, with her mom and siblings. Jane participated to help move the farm toward cover crops and a diverse rotation including oats.

## Land Access Support

PFI is partnering in a Midwestern effort led by Renewing the Countryside to provide technical support to farmland seekers. So far, farmland navigators helped 37 with their land access quest, 10 of whom secured land tenure.

## Markets and Food Access

In 2022, PFI partnered with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development and other organizations to facilitate a Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program in Iowa. This program buys local produce, meat, dairy and value-added products from local producers and distributes it to underserved communities.



Jane Shey and her mother, Jean



Jane Shey's farm near Algona, Iowa



**"The ability to work with a professional consultant and connect with other farmers who are at a similar stage are both great benefits of the [Farm Business Coaching] program."**

*- Mark Westbrook*



Theresa and Mark Westbrook with their daughter



# Cost-Share Programs for Cover Crops & Small Grains

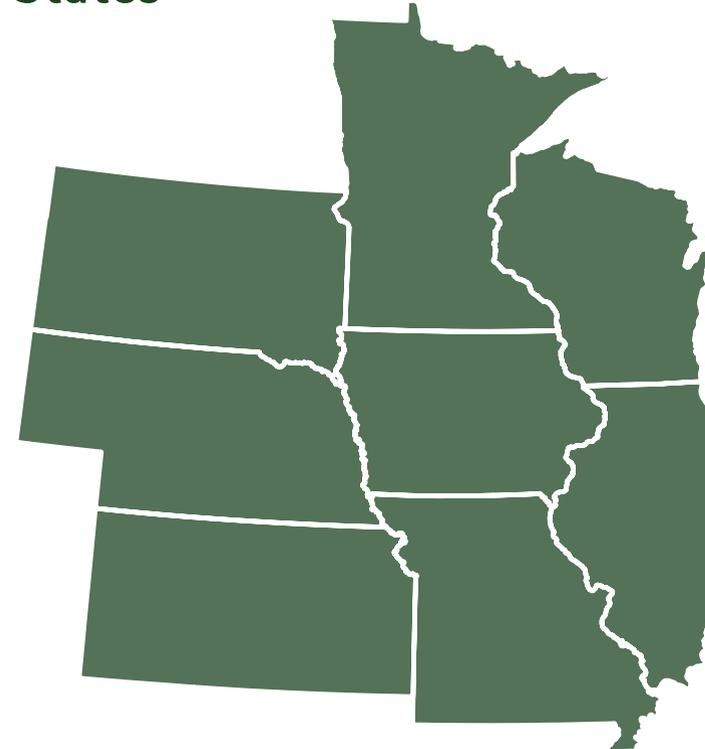
Investments in cover crops cut greenhouse gas emissions, build soil, help clean our water, create habitat and diversify the ag landscape. This program helps farmers get in the door with PFI's network, where they learn from peers how to continue to initiate positive change on their farms.



**72%** of participants said cover crops positively impacted their farm financial goals

**88%** of participants said extended rotations positively impacted their farm financial goals

## Participating States



Jason Opheim from Postville, Iowa, participated in the cover crop cost-share program in 2022. He told Lydia English, who manages this program: "Thank you for helping me on this journey. I truly want to change ag in my area. I want to feel proud when I respond to people asking what I do, and I greatly appreciate organizations like yours that allow me to do so."

## Funders





# Cost-Share and Beginning Farmer Business Development

2022 was also a year for growth in other cost-share offerings, along with continued demand for our beginning farmer business development programs that serve the unique needs of beginning and aspiring farmers.

## 2022 Cost-Share Milestones

18

farmers received \$89,000 in grazing infrastructure cost-share

24

farmers enrolled in food safety cost-share

23

projects received \$89,000 in habitat cost-share



Erlene and Jamie Fopma with their children

Erlene Fopma, who farms near Lynnville, Iowa, participated in the new grazing infrastructure cost-share. As a result, she reduced feed costs and maintained good weight gain on her sheep and goats. “I learned so much more about rotationally grazing,” Erlene says. “My kids learned, my animals were happy and I met new people. This experience was priceless!”

## 2022 Beginning Farmer Milestones

19

farmers participated in the Savings Incentive Program

6

trainers participated in Labor4Learning

9

trainees participated in Labor4Learning

## Continuing to Help Beginning Farmers

While 2022 saw growth in several of our program areas, we continued to focus on bedrock programs, like our Savings Incentive Program – which enrolled its 12th class in 2022. This program helps beginning farmers access the network, knowledge and capital to help their budding businesses succeed.

Natasha Wilson, of West Fork Farm near West Chester, Iowa, found that the business planning emphasized in the program has helped her focus. “It’s easy to feel like you’re failing, or at least just treading water sometimes,” she says. “But we had a clear plan and goals for the year. These set us up so we could keep grinding when things got busy, and gave something good to look back on when we got to the end of the year and wondered, ‘What just happened?’”

2022 was also PFI’s 10th year offering Labor4Learning, a program designed to help aspiring farmers get on-the-job training with experienced farmers. Crucially, the program also pays the trainer farmers for their time and effort.



“My kids learned, my animals were happy and I met new people. This experience was priceless!”

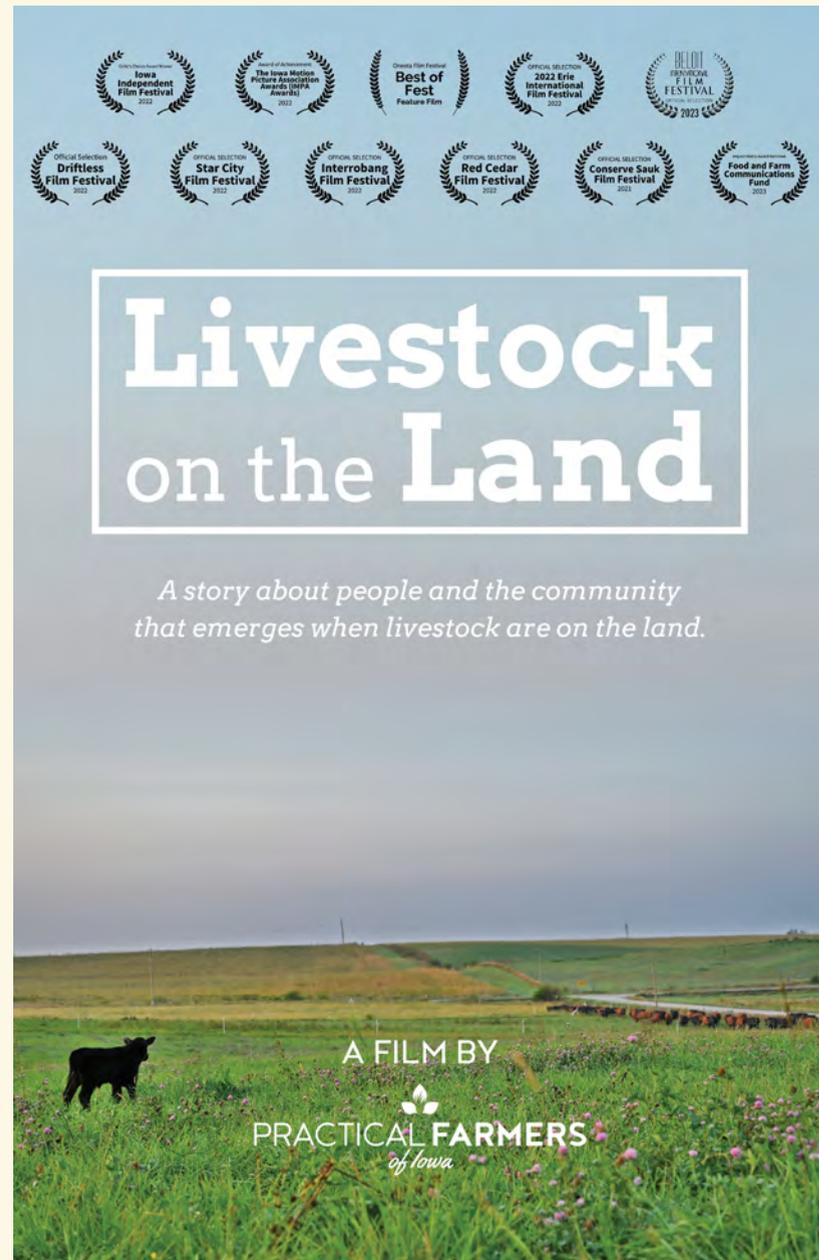
- Erlene Fopma



Natasha Wilson and her daughter

# Marketing & Communications

PFI's marketing and communications department brings the stories of PFI's members to life and shares them with a wide audience. We produce a quarterly magazine, quality videos, several websites, numerous publications and multiple email newsletters, and have a large presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. We also ensure that our members are featured extensively in the media so that many viewpoints are driving the agriculture narrative.



**Our film, “Livestock on the Land,” has more than 232,000 views on YouTube for over 81,000 hours.**

Whether it's through rotational grazing, cover crops or fertility for crop fields, livestock hold the key to protecting our soil, cleaning up our water and even providing habitat for wildlife. But most importantly, livestock give farmers a chance to get started, grow businesses, provide for their families, work together and ultimately, bring back the next generation to start it all over again.

We are finally seeing a broader awareness of the importance of grass, grazing and livestock – and our film, “Livestock on the Land,” has helped tell that story. Since its release in 2021, it's been viewed over 232,000 times on our YouTube channel, won multiple awards at film festivals across the state and been screened at film festivals across the Midwest.

**231**

**members featured in the media**

**335k**

**number of views on our YouTube channel**

**173k**

**number of people who visited our website**

## Driving the Food and Farming Narrative

We work to spread the message about the importance of farmers working together to build resilient farms and communities. In 2022, we did that on both the local and national scale by getting our members featured in a variety of news outlets. PFI members were regularly featured in the Des Moines Register, Cedar Rapids Gazette, Quad City Times, Sioux City Journal and many other Iowa publications. But we know that because of Iowa's central importance to agriculture in the country, we also need to have an influence on the national stage, and so we worked to get members featured in national outlets like National Public Radio and The New York Times.

In November, farmer Will Cannon, of Prairie City, Iowa, and staff member Sarah Carlson spoke on National Public Radio about our efforts to influence large food and beverage companies to support practices like cover crops and diverse rotations. And Nathan Anderson, who farms near Aurelia, Iowa, was featured in The New York Times about how cover crops and diversified crop rotations have helped him build resilience and cut inputs, which is especially important in the face of unstable supply chains and a volatile climate.



**Will Cannon**

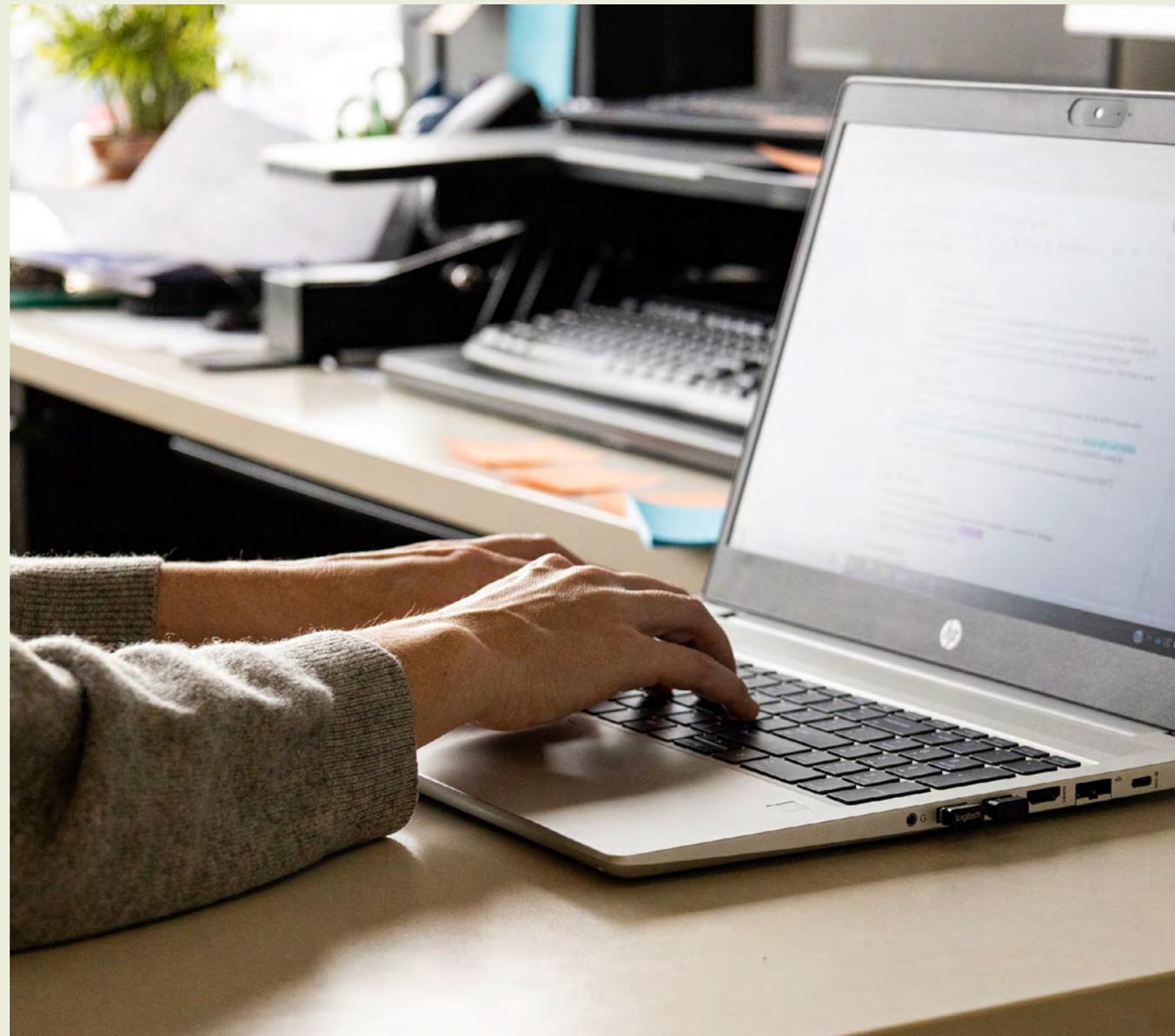


**Nathan Anderson**

## Operations

PFI's operation department helps get the money, people and tools to do our work. In 2022, Practical Farmers hired **13 staff**. We are continuing to hire staff in 2023 as we continue to grow the organization to grow our impact.

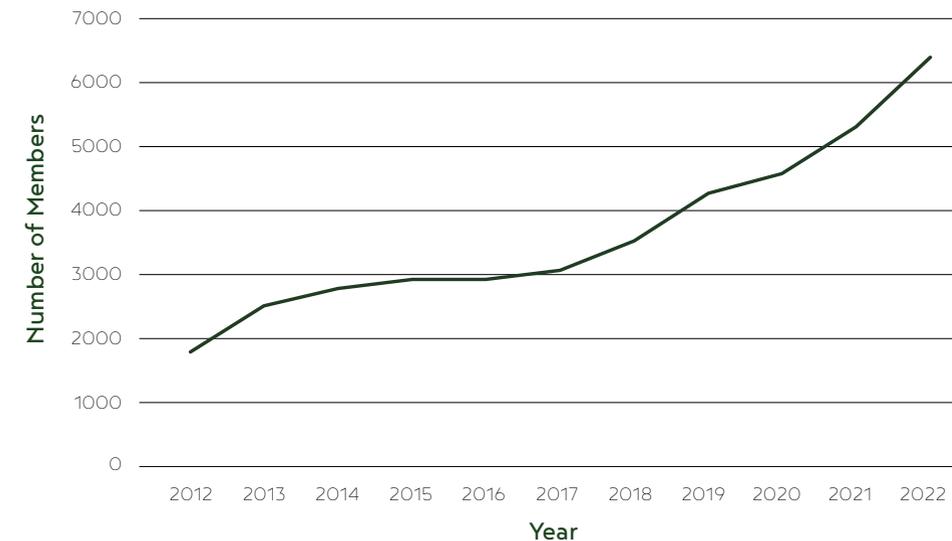
PFI also broke ground on three major information system upgrades: an internal communications suite, a new finance system and a new membership database. These investments will right-size our tools to support our growing organization. They will upgrade the ease of our daily work and allow us to spend more time on our mission.



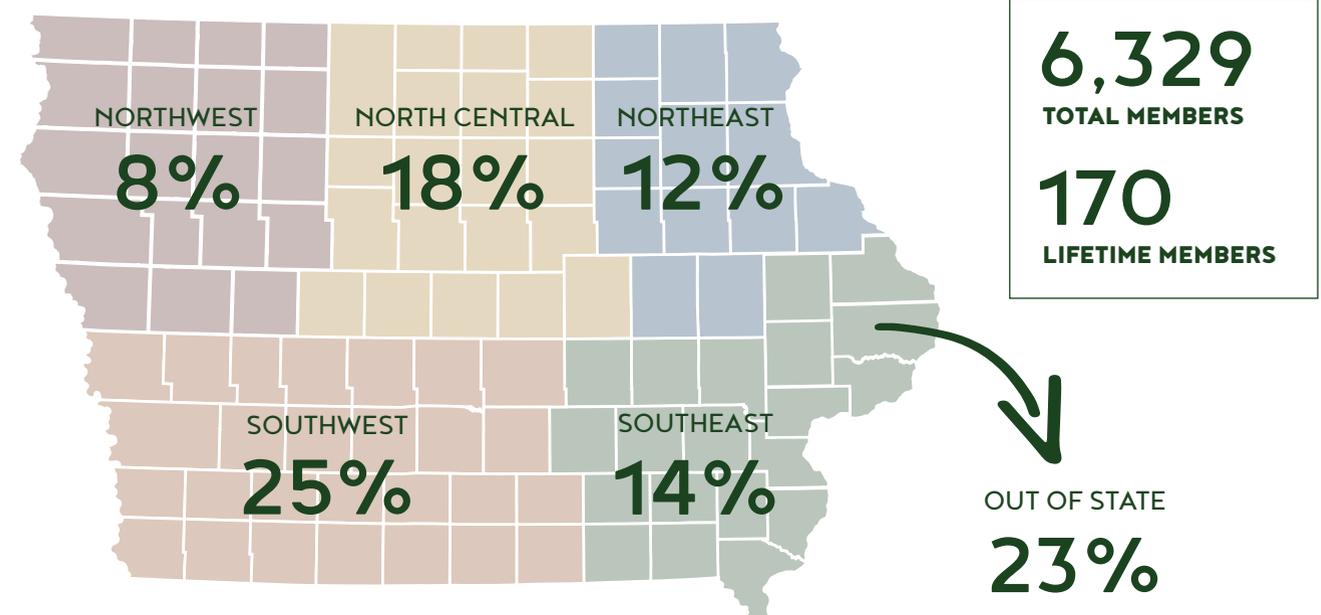
## Membership

Practical Farmers ended 2022 with a **record high membership of 6,329**. **Thirty supporters became lifetime members**, and we ended 2022 with a total of **170**. This growing membership allows us to share farmer-to-farmer learning with a broader network.

### Membership Growth, 2012-2022



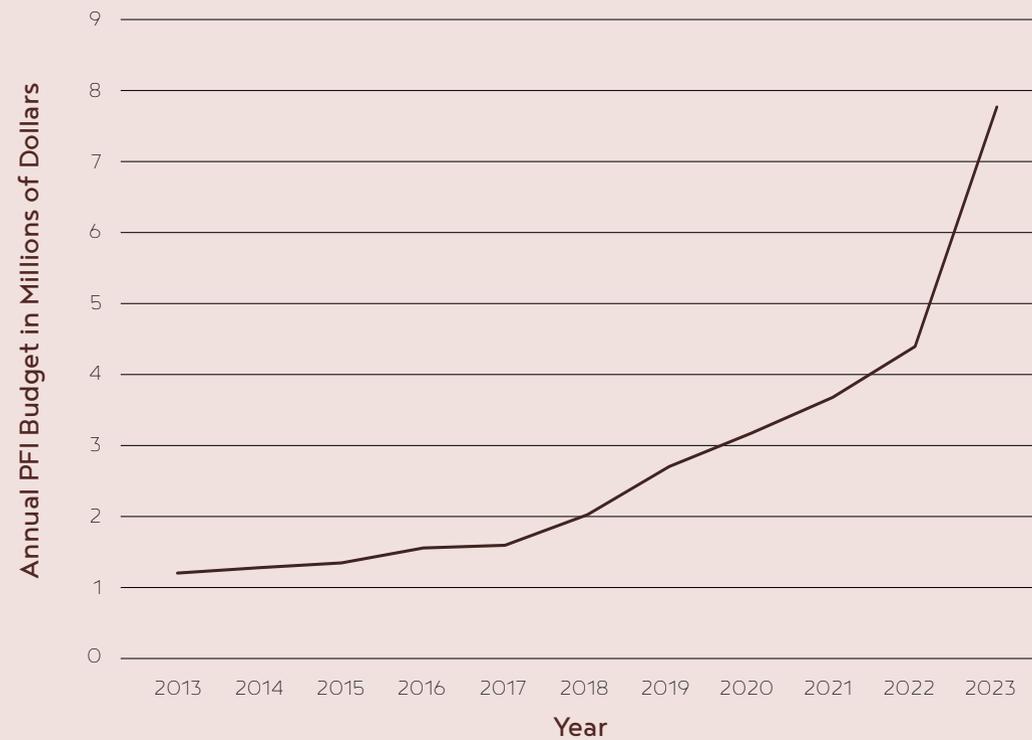
### Membership and Distribution



# Financials

We're pleased to report another strong year in fiscal year 2022 (Oct. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022). The board approved our **fiscal year 2023 budget at \$7.74 million**, which is up \$3.3 million from the past fiscal year. Growth is in nearly all facets of PFI's work.

## Annual PFI Budget, 2013-2023



**\$137,416**

in income from membership dues



**\$140,513**

in income from donations

We are extremely grateful for your donations and your membership income. This money helps us stay nimble in serving our farmers' direct needs. A full list of donors and grantors will be available in the summer issue of our quarterly magazine, the Practical Farmer.

## Showing Commitment to Farmers

**\$653,779**

The amount PFI paid to farmers to host events, conduct research, mentor others and for small grains and cover crops cost-share.

**\$1.2 million**

In fiscal year 2022, the amount PFI facilitated paying farmers enrolled in a suite of cost-share programs we administer for private companies we partner with. PFI helped pay those farmers through their grain merchandiser.



**Judy and Dean Henry of Berry Patch Farm near Nevada, Iowa.**

# Get Involved

## Join or Renew Your Membership

Joining or renewing your membership is easy and immerses you in an incredible community that provides support and education on many agriculture issues, from production, to conservation, to profit and more.

## Serve as a PFI leader

Thank you to all of you who served as leaders of our organization last year. We truly value what you bring to the table and hope you will continue to serve this organization. We would love to have more of you join us to provide governance and guidance, teach at and host events, share your stories with others and help mentor beginning farmers.

## Attend Our Events

We organize events year-round to help you build resilient farms and communities. Please take time to attend, get to know others and learn from our member-leaders. Please bring your friends and neighbors along!

## Engage With Us Online

We know it's not always possible to engage face-to-face. When you can't come to a field day, workshop or conference, connect digitally with PFI: Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn and like, comment, share and retweet our posts – and let us know what you're up to.

## Join the Email Conversation

Joining an email discussion group is one of the simplest ways to stay connected to the PFI community. Keep informed, share events, meet other farmers, landowners and non-farmers interested in diverse agriculture and get the support you need to make practical food and farm decisions. We often hear from members that these forums are one of the most valuable member benefits.

*Stay connected with us!*



[practicalfarmers.org](https://practicalfarmers.org)



[twitter.com/practicalfarmer](https://twitter.com/practicalfarmer)



[facebook.com/practicalfarmers](https://facebook.com/practicalfarmers)



[youtube.com/pfivideos](https://youtube.com/pfivideos)



[instagram.com/practicalfarmer](https://instagram.com/practicalfarmer)



[linkedin.com/company/practical-farmers-of-iowa](https://linkedin.com/company/practical-farmers-of-iowa)



## Donate

Please continue to support Practical Farmers of Iowa financially. Donations are a vital funding source, helping to keep us financially nimble and able to respond quickly and directly to our members' needs. Your donation to Practical Farmers of Iowa is tax-deductible. We graciously accept cash donations, gifts from donor-advised funds, gifts of grain and employer match gifts.

Please consider making a planned gift to Practical Farmers of Iowa. This will not only help you create a legacy benefitting diverse farms and vibrant communities, it may also simplify your estate plans and increase your income. There are many ways to leave a planned gift.

**Visit [practicalfarmers.org](https://practicalfarmers.org) to learn more.**

**PRACTICAL FARMERS** *of Iowa*

1615 Golden Aspen Drive, Suite 101  
Ames, IA 50010

