the Practical Farmer

A quarterly publication of Practical Farmers of Iowa

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PFI member Ron Rosmann talks to field day participants about his test plots of orgainc corn and soybeans

In this issue

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the Practical Farmer

the Practical Farmer keeps farmers and friends of farmers in touch with one another and provides informative articles about the latest on-farm research, demonstration and observation to help all types of farming operations to become profitable, while caring for the land that sustains them. Provided as a member benefit to PFI supporters, ***the Practical Farmer*** also serves to update members on PFI programming.

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True wealth

I read a book last weekend, True Wealth, by Juliet Schor that didn't mention our organization by name, but the author could have. There are no more shining examples of the solutions she presents than the members of Practical Farmers of Iowa.

"For most Americans, the future holds more economic uncertainty and lower real returns for their labors," Schor writes. "Standard macroeconomics is failing. Its whole approach is vacuous because it's indiscriminate." Our current economic system asks: How fast can we grow? How big can we get? How much can we buy? "We remain trapped in this myopic debate when what we need is a conversation not about *how much* but about *what*."

Schor describes a better economic model, one where people rely less on "business as usual" spending. People spread their risk with multiple sources of income and support. They rely much more strongly on their communities than Americans have in recent decades.

Sound familiar? So many of you are diversified in your farming operations, providing you with more resilience when a crop fails or a market drops.

Lion is a 15-year-old, "shelter-dog hybrid," say Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf, the pup's owners. Lion got his name because as a puppy he liked to "lie" around in the sun so their then young children, Andrew and Jess, thought he should be called Lion. In his youth, Lion was an avid hunter, protecting the garden's harvest from rabbits. "These days he does more watching than chasing," says Tim. Wherever Jan and Tim go on the farm, Lion is never far behind. A gregarious fellow, Lion loves house guests and his favorite treat is human affection.

Schor says, "A diversified income stream makes sense when the labor market is going through ups and downs, or long-term decline."
You are master networkers, thriving on the field days, workshops and online conversation opportunities that PFI staff provide. "The networked environment makes possible a new modality of organization production that is radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs, locally connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial comments," says Schor.

You thrive on the open sharing of information. Ours is not the world of copyrights, patents and trademarks — nor secrets about what worked and what didn't on your farms. A good example of how the next generation is adopting your level of openness: Sara Hanson and Ryan and Janice Marquardt are willing to share their complete business plans at our upcoming annual conference so that we all can learn from the panel of financial advisors there to advise them.

Teresa and son Paul cart home tomatoes for canning from Farm to Folk in Ames.

Excellent Joy

"Usually farm culture washes out after three successive generations have been removed from working the land. I notice, though, that farm culture can be rekindled in a single generation. City folks who marry farm people or who move to rural areas to begin their own farming operations acquire the yen to work the soil in just a few years and pass along to their children their hardy work ethic and the spiritual commitment to make the land produce. This rapid reversion to farm culture probably taps into strands of genetic memory that lie dormant until agricultural activities stimulate the emergence of a wealth of survival skills that are included in their DNA."

From PFI member Michael R. Rosmann's book, Excellent Joy (available at www.icecubepress.com)

Schor makes the point that "True Wealth" is more "knowledge-intensive." He says, "Knowledge is the scarce resource in the transition to sustainability," but it is in abundance with PFI farmers! Dick and Sharon Thompson, a shining example, have a thick book and more of it that they have shared. (See our website if you haven't taken a look at Thompson Agriculture Alternatives.)

I agree with Schor: I am optimistic "that there is a way forward that is better for humans and the earth." True Wealth involves "re-skilling, food sufficiency, renewable energy, and the forging of social bonds at the community level." Including the PFI community!

Working for you,

P.S. Every time you renew your membership or provide PFI additional support, I am grateful for the gift and vote of confidence you have given to this organization!

The making of a seed saver and his seed-saving advice

by Sally Worley

Glenn Drowns has been an avid gardener since early childhood. As a high school senior in the late 70's, Glenn's love of watermelon motivated him to create a variety that could withstand the frequent frosts and the short growing season of the mountain area. Named for the mountain at the foot of which it grew, the Blacktail Mountain Melon was a success and started Glenn on the road to seed saving.

Glenn moved from Idaho to Iowa in 1984 and purchased the 40-acre farm that comprises Sand Hill Preservation Center in 1988. Glenn's three main goals in operating Sand Hill are to preserve rare and endangered poultry, livestock, and vegetable and fruit crops; use educational outreach to showcase sustainable organic methods; and provide a small sanctuary for native plants and animals.

Although Sand Hill is a small business, it has a large outreach. Glenn and his wife Linda are the principal employees, sending a seed-and-poultry catalog each January to a customer base of 18,000 and selling limited quantities of seed, sweet potato slips and poultry breeds to each customer. "If someone purchases slips from me and then turns around and sells 5000 slips of that variety, more power to them," says Glenn. "I'd rather see it out there being grown than extinct. We have a huge collection but small quantities because I don't have the manpower or interest level to do it on a large scale."

Sand Hill's collection includes more than 700 tomato varieties, 75 pepper varieties, 200 corn varieties, 200 squash varieties, 185 sweet potato varieties, and just fewer than 235 poultry breeds.

What follows are the Drowns' best tips for how to save seeds from a few crops that are feasible to save on a commercial scale.

General Seed-Saving Tips

If you plan to save seed, pick randomly from plants of a particular variety rather than selectively picking fruit from plants that have superior characteristics. "Ideally you want to save seed from at least 12 to 25 plants," recommends Glenn, "to get good representation of that set of traits."

Purchase a set of multi-sized strainers. Make sure the strainers are devoid of rims that can catch seeds, or you may inadvertently mix seeds of different varieties.

Remember, good seed sinks, and immature or "bad" seed floats. Immature seed may germinate if planted the next season, but the germination percentage is going to be lower with a shorter shelf life.

The quicker the seed dries, the better the germination and quality. Don't use the microwave or put in the oven. "I use old handmade incubators (see photo above) that I set at 98 degrees with a fan," Glenn says.

Store seeds out of direct sunlight in sealed jars to keep humidity low. "I like to use baby food jars because of the seal inside. Seeds are often good for five to 10 years stored at room temperature.

"It is hard to find time to save seeds if you are also growing produce for sale," says Glenn. "But, it can save money and maintain a variety that is hard-to-find commercially, particularly if you are certified-organic."

Tomatoes

When it comes to saving high-quality tomato seeds, Glenn says, "Fermenting removes the bacteria-laden jelly coat." If the jelly remains, the sugar layer will gum up once the seeds are sown. Bacteria grow in that layer as soon as you wet the soil. This causes damping off and the introduction of pathogens. "Seeds cleaned through fermentation will have a germination rate of 90-100 percent." The fermentation process will also allow you to use blemished tomatoes for saving seeds.

To save a large quantity of tomatoes, harvest tomatoes into a five-gallon bucket. Glenn saves smaller quantities of tomato seeds in recycled milk containers (see photo above). Squeeze the seeds into the bucket and throw the pulp onto the ground. For more efficiency, throw the entire tomato into the tub, and chop with a straight-handled hoe or carpenter's mixer.

Ferment the tomatoes at room-temperature. Fermentation time is temperature-dependent: four to five days in warm weather, up to a week in cooler weather. "When it's fermented, the tomato solution will be foamy and stinky," says Glenn. "When rinsing off the seed, if it rinses clean, it's suitably fermented. If it doesn't separate easily from the pulp, it needs to ferment more."

Once fermented, add water, stir, let set for a few minutes, pour off foam and floating seeds. Then rinse the seeds in a strainer and dry the seeds on absorbent paper such as paper plates or pop flats. Avoid wax-coated paper and cardboard that won't wick the water away. "In two to three days the seeds should be sufficiently dry for storage. It typically takes a week to 10 days from picking tomatoes to storing seeds," says Glenn.

If you are saving one variety of seeds from multiple harvests, you can ferment and process each harvest and combine the dried seeds.

Glenn estimates that a bushel of tomatoes will yield approximately one ounce or around 8,000 seeds. Glenn isolates his tomato varieties by a minimum of 15 feet before saving seeds.

Sweet Potatoes

While technically not a seed, Glenn highly recommends farmers start their own sweet potato slips as well as expand the types of sweet potatoes they grow. According to Glenn sweet potatoes do well in Iowa soil. He says that the biggest mistake people make is over-fertilization. "When the soil is too rich, sweet potatoes will produce few tubers and an abundance of vines."

Glenn feels that many more sweet potato varieties can grow well in Iowa than are typically grown here, voicing concern that sweet potato genetics are directed by market availability, with one large company propagating the majority of slips sold. "They produce the varieties that are easiest for them to get slips from and ones that make the biggest sweet potatoes," Glenn explains. "Biggest isn't always best; big sweet potatoes have a shorter shelf life and are fibrous.

"Sweet potato slips are expensive, and much of what you get in the mail is marginal," he continues. "Each time a sweet potato slip is moved or altered, it can reduce yield by 25 percent."

To start slips, take an eight-foot 2x4 and cut it into three. Build a frame with two of these pieces and two eight-foot 2x4s. In the third or fourth week of April, set the frame on the surface of freshly tilled ground. "My rule of thumb is to start when corn is being planted. There might be a little frost but no hard freezes," say Glenn. Lay overwintered sweet potatoes in the frame so they're not quite touching. Glenn suggests using bratwurst-

sized spuds. Do NOT cut them. Fill the frame with sphagnum peat moss and saturate with water. Make hoops with #9 wire, place over the frame two to three feet apart and cover with clear plastic. "You want to keep them very warm until they sprout," says Glenn. "I run a soaker hose down the middle so I can connect it from the outside and keep the bed wet until I see sprouts." If it gets hot, open the ends during the day. When it reaches 95 degrees, pull off the plastic. Keep the tubers watered and covered as long as possible. If they get too cool, they will rot.

In about two weeks, you'll see your first sprouts. "If the weather is warm, you'll be pulling them constantly, and should have all you need sometime around the end of May." Pull off the slips of potato and plant them about one foot apart. Glenn plants his sweet potatoes into black plastic. "If you want success, black plastic cinches it. I put the plastic out about a week before I plant them." Do not transplant the slips into other containers. "Stick them directly into the ground, keep them as wet for a week and you're set.

"The biggest trick with saving sweet potatoes is overwintering them, and the biggest mistake people make is to keep them cool. You want to keep them 60-65 degrees and dry. Keep them dirty, don't wash them, don't handle them a lot; each time you turn them you're going to bruise them."

Peppers

Glenn doesn't harvest peppers until the day before a killing frost is predicted. If it's a variety that ripens to red, he picks the peppers red. "Don't pick any slimy or rotten ones, or the ones worms have eaten and mix them with the ones that are solid." When picking peppers, harvest into two buckets. Peppers that are starting to shrivel or are red-ripe, seed out right away.

Glenn lets green peppers sit for three weeks in his shed before he saves seed. "Once harvested, the pepper concentrates on getting nutrients to the seed. You should still have a good eating pepper to freeze." If you have hot peppers, don't seed them individually. Put hot peppers in a bucket for two weeks, take a straight handled hoe with water, chop up the peppers, strain and rinse the seed. Do this outside for ventilation.

For other peppers, remove the cores, put them in a dish pan of water and extract the seeds. Marginal seed will float to the top. Skim that seed off, and put the rest of the seed through a strainer. Let the seed dry, then store.

Cucumbers

It is easiest to save cucumber seed if you are producing one variety. If not, you need to isolate a variety by ¼-mile or more to prevent cross-pollination. Cucumbers should ripen past eating stage to get mature seeds; slicing cucumbers will ripen to a cream color, and picklers will ripen to yellow-orange. It is okay if the ripened cucumbers are soft.

Harvest ripe cucumbers into a tub, chop and ferment. Fermentation time will be similar to tomatoes. If a variety has few seeds, cut them cucumber in half lengthwise and scrape out the seeds rather than put the entire fruit into the tub. When they are sufficiently fermented, the viable seed will go to the bottom. Skim off the floating seeds, rinse the pulp from the seeds through a strainer, and dry.

Beans and cowpeas

From a 50-foot row of pole beans, Glenn typically gets 5-10 pounds of seed. He tries to keep 50 feet between varieties to prevent crossing. Harvest beans once they have dried or when they are almost dry. Let them dry completely at room temperature and separate the beans from the pods.

For more on seed saving, visit: www.sandhillpreservation.com

PFI Local Food Study uncovers disparity between perceptions and purchasing practices

by Tomoko Ogawa and Rich Schuler

Many PFI members have expressed interest in increasing purchases from local farmers. In response, PFI launched a Local Foods Project in May 2010. To increase local food purchases, or to intentionally spend a certain percentage of our food dollars on locally raised food, we must first grasp how our food dollars are currently being spent on foods grown locally and in distant places.

Numerous studies document the economic benefits to the community in buying local, and many of us have pledged to purchase more locally grown food. But just how much local food are individuals really buying? Uncovering the answer requires a real commitment by participants. Fortunately, PFI had six dedicated families that painstakingly recorded their total food purchases for 15 months.

What is local?

Before beginning the study, the first task was to answer the question, "What is local?" This turned out to be more difficult than expected. For example, should the definition of local food be based simply on the distance it travels? Does it need to be purchased directly from the farmer? Should bread made by a local bakery with grain from out of state be considered local? In the end, we settled on food produced in Iowa. (See detailed guidelines in the "Methodology" section.)

Next, we recruited 22 households, and two businesses, but by the end of 15 months, only six households completed the study. Participants are Harold and Marilyn Andersen, Joel and Amy Logan, Dean Lewis and Anita Maher Lewis, Tomoko Ogawa, Teresa Opheim and Rich Schuler, and Susan Posch.

What did we expect to see in terms of the local foods purchased throughout the year? First, if a household was actively purchasing locally, we expected the local food expenses to vary with the seasons. We also expected a wide range of daily purchases from $0 on a "non-shopping day" to more than $100 on a "big shopping day." To create a plot that was easy to read, PFI staff reported the data as a 90-day average. Each daily food purchase point on such a graph is the average of that day and the preceding 89 days. Not only does this approach "smooth out" the peaks and valleys of the various shopping days, it also illustrates how purchases vary by the season (see Figure 1, below, for one participant).

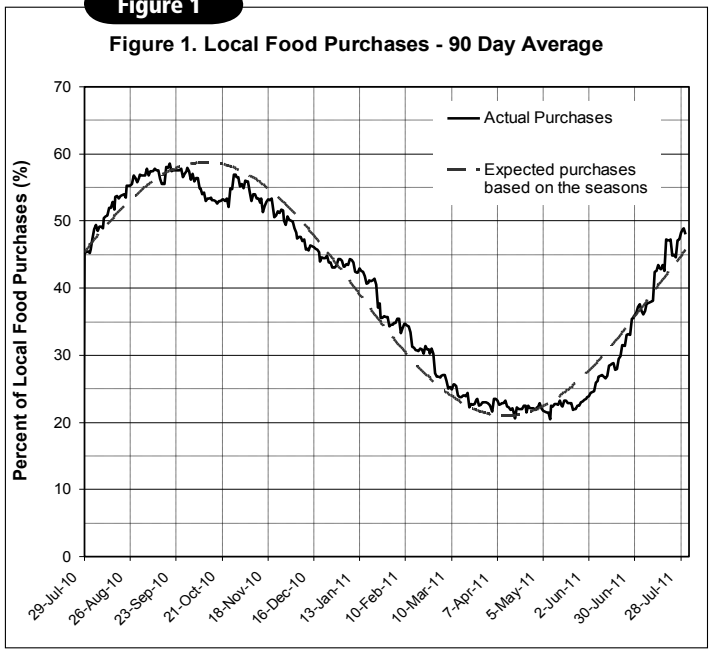
Tips for increasing local food purchases

From what the participants learned through this project, here are some tips for increasing your local food purchases:

- Start by reading labels and learning how far the food travels at the grocery store or food coop.
- Ask questions at grocery stores, farmers market and other food venues about where food is from. This builds awareness and shows that your desire to supporting local producers.
- Shop at farmers' markets.
- Join a CSA (vegetable subscription service).
- Join an online year-round local food outlet such as Farm to Folk, Iowa Food Coop or River Valley Co-op.
- Buy seasonal food in bulk and preserve it for use in the off-season.
- Purchase dairy and meat products from local farmers or lockers.

Figure 1

Figure 1. Local Food Purchases - 90 Day Average



Perception differs from reality

The rigorous approach yielded a rich harvest of unique results, which (thanks to the participants) are supported by nearly 3,000 days of recorded food purchases. The most dramatic finding from this project was that the perception of buying habits does not match reality. For example, one of the questions in the pre-survey study focused on local food purchasing goals for the study. The minimum percentage goal for all participants was 50%, and the majority was more than 75%. In stark contrast to the perception, the 90-day average percentage of local food purchases for all the participants at the end of the study was 32.8%. The peak 90-day local purchase average for all participants on single day was 75.8%, and a value of 75% local was exceeded on only four days.

As one of the participants, this project helped PFI staffer Tomoko Ogawa examine her food purchases. She had always thought that she was good at eating locally, but through this project, she realized how much she depends on the industrial food system. Similarly, some of our participants found it surprising to see how little they actually spend on local foods. After two months of record keeping, Merissa Landrigan says, "I was shocked to learn that for someone who does almost all her shopping at Wheatsfield Co-op and through Farm to Folk, I was still spending only about 12% locally." After the study, participant Sue Posch decided to join a second Community Supported Agriculture (CSA or vegetable subscription service). Reviewing her food purchases made her realize that the stores she has been shopping in Ames do not carry many local products. She says, "The

Participant Sue Posch (left) and friend Beth Larabee

project is making me even more appreciative of the CSAs and farmers' markets in the area."

Dietary restrictions, home gardens affect purchases

Dietary restrictions affect participants' local food purchases. One participant is on a gluten-free diet. The choice to consume organic, gluten-free food limits this person's capacity to purchase local food. Also about halfway through the project, Tomoko realized that her lactose intolerance was more serious than she had thought, and she dramatically cut her dairy intake. At that point, dairy represented the majority of her local foods purchases. Eliminating dairy from her diet resulted in a reduction in her local food consumption.

Marilyn Andersen

The Local Food Study illustrated that food purchasing patterns are also influenced by home gardens. One of the participants has a large garden from which she derives most of her family's food throughout the growing season. Another participant had a medium-sized garden that supplements the household vegetables. As expected, the local food purchases for these participants decreased during the growing season and increased during the offseason.

Purchases dependent upon food outlet offerings

Shopping venues influenced the percentage of local food purchases. The participant who shopped primarily at farmers' markets had a sharper decrease of local food purchases during the offseason compared to those who shopped at year-around local food outlets such as Farm to Folk, Ames. The participant with the highest 90-day average on a single day (75.8%) bought meat in bulk directly from a producer. This type of purchase is possible in any season, and results in a large local food percentage whenever those purchases are made.

Joel and Amy Logan

Rich Schuler

After 15 months, our study has concluded that when households keep accurate records, they discover that they simply aren't buying as much local food as they think. It's clear that all participants in the study lean heavily on the industrial infrastructure model of food production and distribution. Shifting the bulk of food to a local economy requires a significant commitment from the community to purchase food grown locally. The challenge to making this shift lies not only with the individual community members but in creating a "local food infrastructure" capable of both growing and delivering the variety and quantity of food required to support an entire community. This cannot happen without the demand created by a critical mass of residents within any community.

Methodology

PFI solicited participants from PFI Member Survey respondents who indicated interest in increasing their food purchases from PFI farmers. We also sought Farm to Folk (F2F) members to participate.

PFI provided the participants with an Excel spreadsheet to document their food purchases. The spreadsheet contains three sheets. In the first sheet, participants enter their food purchase dollar amounts. The formulas in the spreadsheet automatically provide the percentage of local versus distance food purchases. The formulas also give cumulative food spending as well as average daily food expenditure. Sheets (2) and (3) provide 30-day and 90-day moving averages of food purchases per person respectively.

We have set the following rules so that all the participants have the same understanding of what is local and how purchases should be recorded to increase the accuracy of the data collected.

1. "Local" = within Iowa
2. Include only food and drink
3. Baked goods are "local" if baked locally
4. Do not include home gardening equivalents — this survey is measuring purchases from Iowa farmers
5. Do not include sit-down restaurant expenditures
6. Do not include tax and bottle deposits

Participants who have CSA subscriptions were asked to provide the start/end dates of their shares as well as the cost. We then divided the cost by the number of days for the period when they received produce. Participants entered these daily CSA costs during the period of their shares. This was done to avoid a spike in local food purchases at the point when a participant pays the CSA cost for the entire season. Instead, daily cost of the CSA share is shown throughout the season.

Best flavor is in the taste buds of the tester

by Tomoko Ogawa

The flavor of beef is created by complex variables. While the discussions such as grass-fed versus grain-fed or confinement-raised versus pasture-raised are gaining media attention, there are no clear-cut answers to define the taste of beef.

Participants sample eight different ribeye steaks.

Feeding systems, breed, handling methods, aging lengths and methods, processing and packaging all have roles in influencing the flavor and texture of beef. Within each category, there are many variations as well. For example, both grass and grain may be fed at different stages in the development of beef cattle. And, most of all, everyone has different taste buds.

To explore the nuances of flavor among beef produced by PFI farmers and learn about a variety of production practices, enthusiastic eaters as well as beef producers gathered together at Griffieon Family Farm in Ankeny for the beef tasting field day on Saturday, September 17.

Renown Chef Donna Prizgintas, Ames, who has cooked for many PFI events and for other nonprofit organizations that she supports, prepared the beef. Seven PFI beef producers — the Bratch-Prince, Carney, German, Griffieon, Jepsen, Cory and Specht families — generously donated their rib-eye steaks for this tasting event. The hosts of this field day, Craig and LaVon Griffieon, also purchased rib-eyes from Cattlemen Beef Quarters (distributed by Sysco) at Iowa State Fair to include in the blind tasting.

The goal of this tasting was to provide a rare opportunity where people could compare the flavors of several kinds of meat and learn about different production practices from the producers.

Amy Christensen and Ron Lindhart

We designed a score card to help participants identify the beef they liked best. For this purpose, the questions on the score card were short and straightforward, asking tasters to list their top three favorites as well as to rate texture (mushy, very tender, tender, good bite, chewy, very chewy, tough) and flavor (gamey, weak, well-marbled, rich, too fatty, well-balanced).

Farm	***Prairie Cattle Company***	***Carney Family F***
Farmers	**Ray Bratsch-Prince**	Karen, Bruce, Conr Jared & Derek Car
Region	**Ames, IA**	Maxwell, IA
Breed	**Angus**	Angus cross-calf
Diet/Feed	**Pasture, then grass hay in winter**	Birth to weaning o pasture; at growin season annuals
Raising Protocols	**Cow bought as 600-lb. heifer at Tama Sale Barn, May 2009. Cow had calf in 2010 and a premature calf, which it lost in 2011**	Home raised calves pasture in April, we October. Vaccinated with Vision 7 & Vira + Somnus. From we Jan 1, calves were annuals oats &turni feedlot to finish
Finishing Protocols	**Cow stayed on grass until its butcher date. Lost weight due to July heat**	Feedlot ration of g corn, wheat & corn
Slaughter house	**Mid-West Pack Locker, Nevada**	Mingo Locker
Butcher	**Larry Rasmussen**	Alex Frooginpol
Aging Technique/Time	**Dry aged, 8-10 days**	10 Days
Antibiotics	**None**	None
Grazing practice	**Management intensive rotational grazing**	Rotational grazing, management inten grazing, and some density grazing
Feed Additive	**salt and mineral**	100% drug free, no or hormones, No a byproducts. *Carneys produce b and grass-based be this is the informat grain-based beef
Packaging	**Butcher paper over plastic wrap**	
Other		

Beef Tasting Event

The responses were as diverse as the different backgrounds each beef entry represented. The exact same beef entry received comments such as "Not much flavor" and "Very smooth deep flavor." This shows how everyone has distinct preferences, depending on where we are from, what kind of food we are used to eating, etc.

The chart at the right is the summary of the production systems for the rib-eye steak provided by PFI producers for the event.

Event hosts Craig and LaVon Griffieon

Earl Hafner and Dan Specht lend a hand with the grilling.

Farm	***The Cory's at Prairie Hill Farm***	***Thankful Harvest***	***Griffieon Family Farm***	***Grass Run Farms***	***Prairie Quest Farm***
nie, Amber, ney	Tom, Mary and Spencer Cory	Tom and Kristi German and family	Craig and LaVon Griffieon	Ryan and Kristine Jepsen, different producers in the region	Dan Specht
	Polk City and Elkhart, IA	Holstein, IA	Ankeny, IA	IA, MN, WI, SD, NE and MO	North East Iowa, Driftless
	White Park	Angus	Limousin	Predominately Angus	Red Angus, Red Devon, and crosses of the two
n perennial g late	Grass to 6 months, silage and hay 6-11 months, grass finished 11-19 months	100% Grass-fed and Certified Organic forage	From weaning on they are fed corn silage, cracked corn and all natural protein with no animal byproducts	100% Grass Fed, no grain or starch ever, no animal by-products	Totally grass fed, with grasses and legumes grown on the farm, either grazed directly or harvested for hay or silage to be fed in winter months
, born on eaned in d at weaning shield 6 aning to on winter ps then to	Calves purchased from Steve and Paula Moeckly. Selected in the fall when calves are worked. No implants or vaccinations	The cattle are born and raised on our farm. They are on an all forage diet from the time they start grazing after birth until they are harvested	Herd breed from stock that has been part of the farm since 1960. Cows and calves are born on the farm. Calves on blue grass/fescue/ white clover/alfalfa mix from birth until weaned at either 6 months or 500 lbs.	No confinement, no antibiotics, no added hormones	All calves are born and raised on my farm, and are grazing unless deep snow prevents it
ground hay, n syrup	On grass till processed.	The animals are raised on pasture during the growing season and in our yards during the winter months	Calves are around 1,200 lbs. and usually 18 months old when finished	Grass finished.Nearly all cattle grade USDA Select or Choice	Most calves are fall born, harvested at about 2, allowing a full season of grazing. Yearlings are grazed in a large group along with their mothers and younger siblings. When approaching harvest, they are given choicest grazing available. They can choose sweetest, highest energy grass as the leaders in a leader/follower system
	Mingo Locker	O'Neill Packing, Omaha; Quality Refrigerated Services, Omaha	Mingo Locker	JF O'Neill & Packing Company, Omaha	Edgewood Locker
	Alex Frooginpol		Alex Frooginpol		Kerndt Brothers
	Cooler, 14-21 days	Wet aged, 30 Days	Dry age, 12-18 Days	Wet aged, 7-30 days (customer choice)	Hang 10-12 days in cold storage.
		None		Never	None
sive high stock		Short duration grazing with long rest periods (over 60 days).	Rotational grazing on cow/calf paddocks until weaning. Moved every 5 days. Restored riparian area along Four Mile Creek, fenced off buffer area and installed two rocked crossings to give cattle water access	Cattle graze pasture during growing season and are fed hay or stockpiled feed in the non-growing season. Encourage producers to rotationally graze and most do	Rotational grazing is used, generally not in an individual paddock longer than 5 days, with a minimum 30-day rest period between grazing
implants nimal ooth grain eef, and tion on	100% drug-free, hormone-free, 100% grass finished.	100% drug- and hormone-free, 100% grass-fed, 100% vegetarian. No animal byproducts. 100% Grass-fed, Certified Organic feed. No added hormones or antibiotics	100% drug- and hormone-free, 100% vegetarian. No animal byproducts		
		Cryovac		Cryovac	Wide variety includes vacuum packed with automated weights label, accurate to .01 lbs.
	Sell meat by the bundle. Discounts start at 30 lbs. Works well for budget-minded families	The farm and cattle are Certified Organic (One processor is certified organic, the other is not.)	They are given free choice mineral. Practice low stress stock handling techniques. No prodders, no dogs, no loud noises		USDA Organic by MOSA. Low stress handling is emphasized

Registration has begun for PFI's 2012 Annual Conference this year's theme, "Made from Scratch"

Practical Farmers of Iowa is cooking up an agriculture with a blend of benefits for both farmers and consumers: profitable enterprises, healthful food, strong communities, clean air and water — and a commitment to farmers of the future.

This year's theme, "Made from Scratch" will be reflected in the keynote address, given by Fedele Bauccio, co-founder of Bon Appétit Management Company. In 1987, Bauccio set out to revolutionize the food service industry by bringing fresh, made-from-scratch food to the contract market. (Read about Bauccio on page 18.)

The conference will be held at the Iowa State Center, Scheman Building, Suite 102, in Ames, January 13–14, 2012.

More than 30 informative sessions are being offered, beginning with Soils 101, at ISU Agronomy Hall, before the official start of the conference.

PFI adds "Soils 101" course

New this year! Practical Farmers of Iowa will be offering a short course on soils before the official start of the conference. The course will run from Thursday, January 12: 1:00-8:00 p.m., to Friday, January 13, 8:00-11:30 a.m.

Instructors for the course include: Dr. Lee Burras, Iowa State University; Dr. Andrew Manu, Iowa State University; Amber Anderson-Mba, MS, Sustainable Agriculture; Tim Landgraf, vegetable farmer from One Step at a Time Gardens; and Francis Thicke, Radiance Dairy.

Topics will include:

- Landscape history and soil formation
- Soil morphology, classification, taxonomy and architecture
- Activity: soil texture by feel method
- Soil colloids
- Soil water
- Organic matter
- Soil pH
- Soil maps
- Nutrients and fertility
- Soil biology
- Soil ecology
- Indicators of soil health you can measure on your farm
- Presentations on practical soil management from vegetable farmer Tim Landgraf and dairy farmer Francis Thicke

The course will be held at the Agronomy Department on the Iowa State University Campus. Dinner will be included Thursday evening. Register for the class when you register for the conference. For more information, contact Kevin Dietzel at Kevin@practicalfarmers.org or 515/232-5661.

Abe Collins joins us to talk about soil carbon


Abe Collins

Abe Collins grazes cattle at his Vermont farm and is the founder of New Soil Matrix, New Soil Quantum, and a co-founder of the Soil Carbon Coalition. "Everything good comes from the soil," Collins said. "That's our basic assumption. Increasing soil carbon is the key to our environmental security, and to both urban and rural development." For many years, Collins said, the common-knowledge maxim has been that it takes 1,000 years to build one inch of topsoil. But that is no longer true. We now know how, he says, to build up to eight inches of topsoil a year to pull carbon out of the air and thereby to draw down dangerous CO_2 levels in the atmosphere. Collins encouraged land managers to enter The Soil Carbon Challenge, sometimes called the World Carbon Cup, an international competition to see how fast land managers can turn atmospheric carbon into soil organic matter.

Danish farmer to speak on responding to regulation


Kaj Munck

In 1988, Kaj Munck and his wife, Anette, raised 65 sows and no finishers. Now they have 400 breeding sows and sell about 8,000 pigs per year. Meanwhile, regulations on farming in Denmark have grown as well, including a ban on subtherapeutic antibiotic use in 1998 and an upcoming ban on gestation crates (in 2013). Kaj will share information about his operation, including his nutrient management procedures and markets, and his take on the various aspects of animal welfare and environmental regulation in this intensely farmed and populated nation. Come and help us welcome Kaj to Iowa!

Beginning farmers vet their business plans with experts

Come hear farmers "pitch" their business plans to the experts! In this session,


Sara Hanson

beginning vegetable farmer Sara Hanson and beginning mixed livestock farmers Ryan and Janice Marquardt present details of their business plans, including their projected income statement, cash flow statements, and marketing plans. A panel of experts, including a private banker, investor, and Farm Credit lender, will offer feedback on strong points of the plans as well as suggestions for improvements.

Off-farm inputs: Using less to earn more


Matt Liebman


Craig Chase

Data from Iowa State University says that adding a third crop to the corn and soybean rotation can increase farm income while reducing farmers' dependence on volatile input markets. Not convinced? Come learn ways to reduce your use of herbicides, nitrogen fertilizers and GMO seeds and the economics behind these money-saving alternatives from research conducted by agronomist Dr. Matt Liebman and economist Dr. Craig Chase. In addition, see the differences between non-GMO and GMO technology packages from 2008-2011 of this study.

Extending the season in your kitchen

ISU Dining Director Nancy Levandowski and the new ISU executive chef Richard Rexroat will share how they freeze Iowa produce at an institutional scale to serve Iowa produce during the off-season. Learn also the tips for dehydrating produce and root cellaring from expert preservers (and PFI members) Donna Prizgintas, Lonna Nachtigal, Beth Kemp, and Mary Swander. Watch a dehydrating demo, taste little pieces of summer with dried cantaloupe melons and watermelons, and learn how to make these delicious fruit candies. The session also includes a tour of commercial kitchen at one of the ISU Dining facilities.


Lonna Nachtigal

Increasing vegetable production to fill the markets


Rufus Haucke

Rufus Haucke joins the conference to provide one farm's success in meeting the growing demand for vegetables. Rufus's Keewaydin Farms markets products to Minneapolis, Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago through grocery stores, restaurants, wholesale distributors, and an on-farm CSA that serves the Madison area. Rufus also owns Keewaydin Organics, a wholesale distributor that markets products from 40-50 southwestern Wisconsin farms. The warehouse, located in Viroqua, contains storage space, coolers and a kitchen that should be in operation by next May.

Other informative sessions include:

Cover Crops: 101 and Advanced

Farmer Strategies For Saving Energy – and Money

A Vegetable Farm's Journey to Success

Increase Sales through Season Extension

High-Energy Forages: The Key to Grass Finishing

Security Through Improved Soil Health

Profitable Pigs with Alternative Feeds

Producing an Abundance for your CSA

Investing in Farms and Farmers

Profitable Nut and Fruit Tree Crops

Mobile Meat Processing: Successes and Failures

Balancing Steel and Herbicides to Reduce Resistance

Mastering Strawberry Production

Preserving Your Farm

Lots of Local Foods

Crop Insurance: Options for Fruit and Vegetable Producers

Beginning Farmers: Sharing Tips on Getting Started

Non-Operator Landowners: Farming Your Land More Sustainably

Policy: Influencing Policy on the Local Level

Field Crops: What Are You Planting This Year? Come and Share

Check www.practicalfarmers.org and your mailbox for more details!

Fedele Bauccio to provide keynote address for 2012 PFI Annual Conference

by Teresa Opheim

The keynote address for the 2012 PFI Annual Conference will be given by Fedele Bauccio, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Bon Appétit Management Company. Bon Appétit provides food service to more than 400 cafes in 31 states, including corporations such as Target and Yahoo! and colleges including American University and St. Olaf.

Bon Appétit leads its industry in implementing sustainable practices. The company spends more than $55 million annually purchasing from local producers. It has used rBGH-free milk and yogurt since 2002, hamburger from animals raised without the routine use of antibiotics since 2003, and cagefree shell eggs since 2005. In 2007, Bon Appétit launched a campaign to drastically reduce the carbon footprint of all its cafés, and in 2011, Bon Appétit's foundation released a report documenting the lack of legal protections and rights for farmworkers.

A childhood filled with flavor

A first generation Italian-American, Fedele says, "I know a little bit about the value and simple pleasures of good food." He grew up chomping on "fresh tomatoes like they were apples, the juice dribbling down my chin.

"Early on my mother instilled in me the importance of growing, cooking and savoring (preferably with friends) the freshest ingredients from the garden." He's disheartened to read statistics about how, for example, first graders can't even identify a tomato. However, like the surge of beginning farmers to Practical Farmers, Fedele sees "on college campuses, everywhere, another side of young Americans" who are "reconnecting themselves to our beautiful countryside, the fertile soil and the flavorful ingredients of my own childhood."

"I am in this game to change it, not to complain about it."

Fedele Bauccio

Humble beginnings to his own company

Fedele's first job was washing dishes in the commons at University of Portland; within six months he worked up to become a kitchen worker peeling vegetables. He founded Bon Appétit in 1986 to "transform the food that people eat at college and in the workplace."

When the company began its Farm to Fork local purchasing program back in 1999, "it was originally to address the loss of flavor we'd noticed in produce grown on a large scale and shipped cross country," says Fedele. "Flavor and taste were critical to me. I allowed the chefs to go out in the community. And support local farmers, and gain their trust to grow our apples, lettuce and tomatoes. We called it Farm to Fork before it was fashionable."

Today Bon Appétit is working to increase its purchases from mid-size poultry and hog farms, cattle ranches and dairies that meet its stringent criteria. According to the Bon Appétit website, "By doing so, it will nourish this critically endangered segment of agriculture known as the 'disappearing middle.' And by requiring third-party humane certification, Bon Appétit also hopes to increase the supply of ethically raised meat and poultry, which has not kept up with demand as the meat industry consolidates under ever-more-massive factory farms."

Reducing food wastes, reduces carbon footprint

Through the company's "Low Carbon Diet" program, Bon Appétit has reduced food waste by 20 percent. Most of their food is fresh and prepared daily on site so chefs adapt their menus to use what's on hand, including using excess food in soups and stocks. Bon Appétit has also developed cooking methods that use cuts from an animal through its "nose to tail" policy. "With a United Nations Report on food waste worldwide stating that over half of all food produced is wasted or discarded due to inefficiencies in the supply chain, we're stepping up to do everything we can to reduce our contribution to the problem," Fedele says.

Fedele and Bon Appétit have received many awards. Fedele was honored with one of the inaugural James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards (also won this year by PFI member Fred Kirschenmann, Senior Fellow of the Leopold Center, who will introduce his friend, Fedele, at the PFI conference.)

Fedele said his work is "about rebuilding a regional food system capable of providing healthy food to everyone, while enabling farmers to make a living. It's about shortening the supply chain and fostering personal connections between producers, chefs and diners. It's about supporting the work of small family farmers and preserving the integrity they bring to the food they produce."

For more on Bon Appétit and Fedele Bauccio, visit www.bamco.com or the company's educational site, Circle of Responsibility: www.circleofresponsibility.com.

Policies of Bon Appétit

Farm to Fork: Bon Appetit's first choice is to purchase seasonal, regional and organic produce from local farmers and artisan producers within a 150-mile radius. These local products are served within 48 hours of harvest.

Meats: The company purchases only turkey breast and chicken that has been produced without the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics that belong to classes of compounds approved for use in human medicine. Hamburgers are made with fresh ground chuck from beef raised on vegetarian feed without antibiotics or added hormones. For other meats, Bon Appétit chefs buy products free of antibiotics as a first preference. Free-range, organic and grass-fed beef and pork from local sources is served at many locations.

Cage-free eggs: Bon Appétit's shell eggs are from sources that meet the animal care standards of Humane Farm Animal Care, an independent farm animal welfare certifying organization.

Dairy: Fluid milk is free of antibiotics and recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH). Local sources are the first choice for dairy purchase.

Seafood: Seafood is purchased in accordance with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch guidelines for sustainable seafood. Locally-sourced fish is the first choice for seafood purchases. Tuna is dolphin-safe, packed in water.

Fair Trade: Bon Appétit supports farmers' rights and offers Fair Trade Certified, shade grown and organic coffee options wherever possible.

Low Carbon Diet: Bon Appétit's Low Carbon Diet program promotes seasonality, provides alternatives to foreign and bottled water, conducts energy audits of equipment and develops innovative waste management programs. Diners have the opportunity to calculate and reduce the carbon footprint of their own food choices with an interactive calculator at www.eatlowcarbon.org.

Leave A Legacy

"Our legacy? We want Practical Farmers of Iowa to carry on for generations to come so we have designated PFI as a beneficiary of our life insurance policy."

Sean Skeehan & Jill Beebout
Blue Gate Farm

There are ways to provide for your loved ones AND leave a legacy for Practical Farmers of Iowa. You can do both, and it's easy.

- ***Designate a portion of your retirement plan for PFI***
- ***Leave a life insurance policy***
- ***Make a gift through your will***
- ***Make a gift now and receive income for life (charitable gift annuity)***

Many such gifts can help you and your family today as well as help our mission years into the future. You can put some in place today without affecting your cash flow during your lifetime. Want to learn more? Contact Teresa Opheim, Executive Director, 515.232.5661 or teresa@practicalfarmers.org.

Important: Consult with your own legal and financial advisors before making any planned gift.

2011 Field Days

(Above) Ken Van Hulzen is pressing forage samples to be used in an optical Brix meter, which measures the sugar content of the grasses. The higher sugar content, the better the grass is at fattening beef cattle and increasing milk production in dairy cattle. Ken is the father of MOB Grazing Field Day host Kraig Van Hulzen, Van Hulzen Farms, Rose Hill. (Right) A field day participant reads the results as daylight filters through a glass prism to reveal a percentage of dissolved sucrose to water ratio.

(Below) Randy and Linda Naeve, Nature Road Farm, Boone, explain to participants how they are using their new high tunnel to capture rainwater to irrigate their crops. (Lower right) Linda demonstrates how the water collects in a large tank and then is pumped through a series of drip hoses to the plants.

2011 Field Days

(Above) Todd Churchhill, Thousand Acres Cattle Company, Cannon Falls, MN, talks about forage quality and grass-fed beef at the Rosmann's field day.

(Top right) The Rosmann family members, Maria, Ron, Ellen, Daniel and Mark, pose for this picture after a rainy but informative field day.

(Middle) Tim Landgraf and Jan Libbey provide an overview of vegetable handling, washing and storage at One Step at a Time Gardens.

(Below) There's always lots of great food at PFI Field Days. Salsa fans sample the fare at Sean O'Sullivan's Value-Added Salsa field day.

(Below right) Sean fires up his custom-built pepper roaster, sending bags of roasted peppers home with field day guests.

2011 Field Days

(Left) James Frantzen hosts a PFI Field Day with his parents Tom and Irene about farm succession, niche pork and energy.

(Middle left) Paul Mugge talks about research projects that he and wife Karen have conducted on their organically certified farm near Sutherland.

(Middle center) Stefan Gailans, ISU graduate assistant, agronomy, examines a non-GMO corn hybrid at Paul and Karen Mugge's field day.

(Middle right) Field day participants (from left to right) , Angie Sullivan, Isabel Blanchard, Chris Blanchard and Harriet Behar learn about fencing and watering for cattle and sheep at the Beard family's field day.

(Adjacent page, top left) Shanen and Beau Ebersole, Ebersole Cattle Co., Kellerton, explain how they raise quality grass-fed beef.

(Adjacent page, top right) Field day goers take a hay rack ride through Francis Thicke's pastures while Francis talks about rotational grazing.

(Above) Craig Fleishman, Cardinal Farms, Minburn, talks with PFI founding member Dick Thompson about Craig's efforts to control weeds by striking a balance between ridge tillage and herbicides.

(Right) The discussion at Craig and his wife Deb's field day also touched on the problem of glyphosate-resistant weeds.

(Middle) The fellas share a laugh during Sharon Krause's organic sheep and prairie restoration field day. (Middle right) Tyler Franzenburg, FFC Enterprises, hosts a field day on organic seed options and managing manure. He raises corn, soybeans, small grains and a small cow-calf herd with his dad, Greg.

(Above) Sharon Krause, Della Terra Ranch, Earlham, is show here with her sheep herd.

(Above) PFI members Mark Tjelmeland (left) and Doug Roberts enjoy refreshments and conversation at Tyler Franzenburg's field day in Keystone.

PFI member and longtime farmer strikes a balance between technology and biology

by Sally Worley

Paul and Nancy Ackley started farming at their current farm near Bedford in 1969 when Paul was discharged from the Army. Their operation started out with farrow-to-finish hogs, a beef cow herd, corn and soybeans. Throughout the years, their operation has changed; most notably they had a shift in focus toward reducing inputs and using biology to improve soil.

Other changes include terminating the hog operation in 2007 and adding a flock of hair sheep last summer. "They've done a real good job," Paul says about the sheep. "They've been one of the best experiments we've ever tried." Paul and Nancy continue to run 80 to 100 beef cattle on grass. Paul produces hay on some of his thin or steep ground. "Maybe we'll crop marginal land three to four years out of six, and then go back to hay with it." Paul and Nancy continue to raise corn, beans and wheat. They farm a total 1100 acres; 750 on farmland they own and 350 on rented land.

Striking a balance between technology and biology

Paul has continued to turn an eye toward practices that reduce inputs, feed the biological life in the soil and decrease erosion. Gully erosion is a serious issue on his Taylor County land. Paul says, "Agriculture is defined as a promotion or encouragement of life. Fifty years or so ago, we got real excited about science and technology, and we left the biology, husbandry and natural processes behind. We still need some of these things. If it's defined as a promotion of life, maybe we need to promote life in the soil. In nature the soil feeds the plant, and the plant in turn feeds the soil. I think industrial agriculture has left this concept behind for 50 years.

"While agricultural advances aren't all bad, and the results of implementing new science and technology were so dramatic that we just can't ignore them, it's still a biological system."

Learning how cover crops could improve his operation

As Paul's farm progressed over the years, he began to see things in the field that indicated you can't indefinitely plant corn and beans, corn and beans. He started to become interested in cover crops and the benefits they brought to his system.

Paul and Nancy Ackley farm near Bedford.

Paul first incorporated winter rye into his rotation in the mid 1970s. "We began by planting some rye behind corn stalks ahead of soybeans off and on," he recalls. "We got really serious about it in the 90s, and even more so after the turn of the century." Paul's interest in cover crops led him to Internet searches on the subject as well as cover crop seminars. "My research made me realize we'd just begun scratching the surface, and there was a whole lot more we can do with cover crops.

> ***"Fifty years or so ago, we got real excited about science and technology, and we left the biology, husbandry and natural processes behind. We still need some of these things."***
>
> *Paul Ackley*

"The soil is full of nutrients; most of them just aren't released," he says. "When you grow different crops, they will bring up different nutrients and cycle them to the next crop. Some of them are a lot more favorable for the crop behind them. Winter rye almost has a symbiotic relationship with soybeans. I've gotten a really good effect planting soybeans into a rye cover crop and corn stalks, equivalent to planting corn into clover sod or soybean stubble."

Winter rye increases soybean health

Planting winter rye prior to soybeans has increased the health of his soybean stand, alleviating the need to spray soybeans for aphids. Paul prefers to plant rye in the fall right after the corn is harvested by mixing it with dry fertilizer and broadcasting it just before a rain. "I try to plant rye as soon after the corn is out as is practical," Paul explains. "If there is a rain coming, I just hire the local coop to do it. They usually have a little time in the fall, and the fertilizer cart might be going into the field about the time the combine is leaving. We are

> *… I think we're going to be able to cut out one herbicide application when we come back behind that cover crop with corn.*
>
> *Paul Ackley*

able to get some of it in before the first of October if the weather cooperates."

Last year he drilled most of his winter rye after corn harvest due to dry conditions. With the dry conditions so far this fall, he is planning to drill it in again this year. In spring, Paul terminates the rye with Roundup. "As far as the soybeans go, there's no hurry to get a kill for them unless the spring turns out dry," he says. "We have had it headed out and not even had it killed and planted into it."

Wheat after soybeans and before corn

Paul has also planted wheat after soybeans and before corn. He feels wheat is a better crop to fill in after soybeans before corn. "Wheat's not quite so grouchy about taking up nitrogen," he says, "and it breaks down faster than the rye when it's terminated." Paul thinks he takes a reduction in corn yield if he doesn't terminate rye two weeks before planting corn. "We had some this spring that got terminated two weeks before it was planted to corn, and we had some that was terminated three days before planting corn," he explains. "It looks like there will be a 10-15 bushel yield difference between the two fields. You can actually see it just walking into them. When we walked the field where rye was terminated three days before corn got planted at tasseling stage, the corn looked like it was nitrogen deficient."

Wheat rotation followed by cover crop reduces weeds

Paul has added a wheat rotation to his farm. The wheat year alone may not be profitable; however, its addition to the rotation will help smooth out the economic bumps because it adds diversity to his rotation. This year he followed the wheat with a cover crop cocktail made up of forage sorghum, pearl millet, winter peas, and sunflowers.

"From our first year on it, I think we're going to be able to cut out one herbicide application when we come back behind that cover crop with corn. This year we didn't do that, but there were very few weeds out there. There was some volunteer wheat, a few stray peas, and that was about it."

Adding animals improves soil

Paul planted this cocktail with the plan to graze his cattle on it over the winter. He planted this mix after wheat in the middle of July so he has substantial growth for the cattle to feed on. "I think it's good to get the cattle on the cropland to use some of the crop stover through the winter. The cover crop mix will also provide good winter feed. They walk through it and knock down about as much as they eat, but that's fine. It creates a real boost in organic matter. Hopefully they'll walk it down to the ground so it's laying flat by next spring."

Cover crops anchor soil against wind and heavy rains

Paul's next concoction will include per acre: 40 pounds of winter wheat, five pounds of hairy vetch, 15 pounds of winter peas, and two to three pounds of crimson clover. "I think we need a grass crop. The fibrous grass roots on our soils to really get the stuff nailed down for the winter and spring when we get those washing rains."

Paul hasn't yet reduced the amount of fertilizer he applies as a result of incorporating cover crops on his farm, but hopes to in time. "That's the goal," he says. "People I talk to say you should give yourself five years to back off the fertilizer and some of the other inputs."

Paul Ackley protects his soil with cover crops.

Savings Incentive Program exceeds fundraising goal, provides help to growing network of PFI beginning farmers

We are proud to announce that PFI has surpassed its fundraising goal for the Savings Incentive Program (SIP). We will be able to serve 100 beginning farmers through the program by 2016!

Practical Farmers of Iowa started raising money for the program in 2010, its 25th anniversary. "We wanted to use that occasion to look to the future and show our commitment to those who will be farming over the next 25 years," says PFI Executive Director Teresa Opheim.

Practical Farmers has now raised more than $290,000 for SIP, $40,000 above our goal of $250,000. The goal was surpassed recently with the news that we have received a $128,800 Assets for Independence grant by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services within the Department of Health and Human Services. The grant is being added to the very generous donations from more than 100 individuals and businesses.

Your generosity is appreciated!

All of the donors to SIP are deeply appreciated. Thank you especially to the following largest donors: AgVentures Alliance, the Soper Family, the Schnieders Family Foundation, G. David Hurd, the Fred and Charlotte Hubbell Foundation, and Helen D. Gunderson (in memory of her parents, Marion and Deane Gunderson).

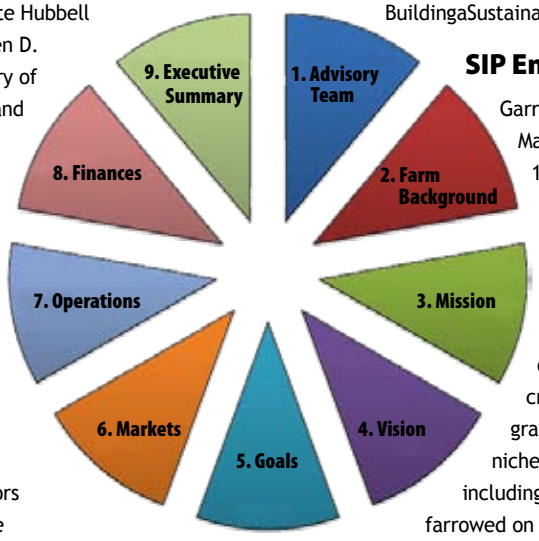
The number of beginners coming to Practical Farmers for networking and practical farming know-how has now increased to more than 500.

There are many factors working against these beginning farmers, such as high-priced farmland and low returns for their labor. Thanks to all of you, PFI plans to be there for them as they successfully establish profitable, environmentally sound businesses.

Over a two-year period, SIP enrollees will create or fine tune a business plan and participate in programming to help their farms succeed.

Business-planning pie

A business plan can act as a road map to a successful business, but creating such a document can seem daunting to busy beginners. Because it is so easy to procrastinate and never develop this important tool, we have incorporated completion of a business plan into the SIP requirements. Ten beginning farmers started their participation in this program in January 2011; 20 to 25 more will begin the journey in January 2012. The business-planning pie chart (below) illustrates the components required to fulfill the SIP requirements.



To help complete this pie, each SIP enrollee has received, "Building a Sustainable Business" guide. This book, developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, walks farmers step by step through the process and can be accessed online at www.misa.umn.edu/Publications/BuildingaSustainableBusiness.

SIP Enrollee Snapshot

Garrett Caryl, 24, Marshalltown, is one of 10 SIP recipients who has started to work on his business plan. He and his fiancé Rebecca Lamb aspire to operate a certified-organic farm with row crops, hay and small grains. They plan to raise niche market livestock including pigs that are farrowed on pasture, egg layers and broiler chickens, ducks and beef cattle on well-managed, high-quality pastures.

Garrett and Rebecca rent a farmhouse and five acres of pasture from a local family that would like to help a beginner get started. The landowner is willing to provide a long-term lease on additional land adjacent to the home-place to someone who will grow organic crops and raise pastured livestock. On this five-acre homestead, Garrett and Rebecca raise approximately 1,500 broiler chickens, a couple of sows and their litters, and maintain two beehives. They use rotational grazing to raise three dairy bull calves owned by friends and family. They also raise hay on four acres at another location, leased from a family friend in Story County.

Beginning farmers Rebecca Lamb and Garrett Caryl are shown here in front of their sow pasture where they raise two sows and their litters.

Garrett works Monday through Saturday off farm and cares for his field and barnyard of mixed livestock in his spare time. In 2009, he founded G-Man Farms LLC while taking classes at Iowa Valley Community College. This May, Garret completed an associates degree in Entrepreneurial Diversified Agriculture.

Rebecca attends Iowa Valley Community College and is studying for an associate's degree in early childhood education and elementary art. She works part time and does farm chores while spearheading the writing of the business plan. Garrett and Rebecca are working on their business plan advisory team, farm background and mission.

Contact Luke Gran at luke@practicalfarmers.org, or at 515.232-5661 to have a copy of PFI's "Business Planning Resource Guide" or the "Building a Sustainable Business" guide, mention previously, mailed to you in print form.

Dordt College Continuous Corn and Three-Year Rotation farming systems

Bioenergy and diversity from sustainable systems and crops

by Rich Schuler

Which cropping system is best for producing biofuels: corn-on-corn, or a three-year rotation? It is well documented that a three-year or longer rotation takes fewer external or "off-farm" inputs compared to a corn-on-corn system. What is the result if we compare these two systems, not only by how much energy is used on the farm, but also by how much energy is produced in the form of biofuels?

The production of biofuels requires significant energy to process the harvested farm products into ethanol or biodiesel. If farmers are planning to sell crops that will be made into bio-fuels or if they are planning to make bio-fuels on-farm, the overall energy use (from the first tilling pass to the delivery of the first gallon of biofuel) could be substantially different. An understanding of all the energy costs associated with varying cropping systems will allow farmers to be better decision-makers in the biofuel marketplace.

The recent volatility in energy costs and the varying claims of biofuel production efficiencies prompted Dordt College and Practical Farmers of Iowa to cooperate in a three-year bioenergy and crop diversity study beginning in 2008. This ongoing project compares two Midwest cropping systems by evaluating the difference between the energy used to grow, harvest and process crops into biofuels and the energy embodied in the final biofuel products. The two cropping systems are defined as: Continuous Corn (corn-on-corn) and Three-Year Rotation (corn, soybean and oats with an under seeding of red clover). Dordt College and PFI chose to analyze these two farming systems to determine which is most practical for producing biofuels.

Dordt College in Sioux Center established the two farming system treatments in a controlled, side-by-side experiment. The Continuous Corn and the Three-Year Rotation treatments have all parts of the rotation present in every year (See photo, top of the page). Each plot is 0.4 acres in size and each treatment is replicated three times. Dordt College representatives took extensive field notes on all field operations for planting and harvesting, all inputs applied to each cropping system and the yield and moisture content of the crops. The red clover in the Three-Year Rotation was only clipped and returned to the farming system as green manure. Only oat grain and straw were harvested from that part of the rotation. Using data from published literature, PFI staff calculated the energy required to process the corn from the Continuous Corn and Three-Year Rotation systems into ethanol, and the soybeans from the Three-Year Rotation system into biodiesel. In addition, PFI staff computed the energy in the final biofuel products (ethanol and biodiesel).

Table 1 (below) includes the results of this study to date, and clearly reveals two distinct categories of efficiency: Energy Efficiency and Land Efficiency. Energy Efficiency is the ratio of the output energy to the input energy, while the Land Efficiency is the net energy derived per acre of land.

In 2009 and 2010, the Three-Year Rotation and Continuous Corn treatments yielded an average of 1.74 and 1.30 M-BTUs for each fossil fuel M-BTU input used to plant, harvest and process the crops into biofuels. These values are statistically different; therefore, the Energy Efficiency, or amount of energy produced compared to the amount needed in the Three-Year Rotation was 29 percent greater than the Continuous Corn system. This was attributed to the greatly reduced amounts of nitrogen fertilizer needed to grow, maintain and harvest the crops in the Three-Year Rotation.

With respect to the energy per acre derived in 2009 and 2010, the Continuous Corn and Three-Year Rotation systems yielded an average net energy of 8.66 and 6.66 M-BTU/acre respectively. These values are also statistically different; consequently, the Land Efficiency, or the amount of energy produced per acre of land, in the Continuous Corn system is 26 percent higher than the Three-Year Rotation system. This result is attributed to the oat/red clover part of the Three-Year Rotation not providing any "biofuel" to the total biofuel produced per acre.

Since neither the Continuous Corn nor the Three-Year Rotation system has a higher efficiency in both the energy and land categories, a definitive conclusion cannot be drawn on the basis of energy alone. On one hand, if the main goal is to maximize the biofuel energy output with respect to the fossil fuel energy input, the Three-Year Rotation system is superior. On the other hand, the Continuous Corn system is the preferred choice if the highest biofuel energy output per acre is the primary objective.

To draw an appropriate conclusion on the overall superiority of either system, the analysis must be expanded to include additional parameters. Consequently, the economics and the CO_2 emissions produced by the two different cropping systems will be evaluated. This "expanded analysis" will be conducted following the 2012 harvest.

Funding for this project is provided by SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program) Questions? Contact Sarah Carlson, 515.232.5661, sarah@pacticalfarmers.org.

Table 1. Summary of the Energy and Land Efficiencies computed for 2009 and 2010.

Year	ENERGY EFFICIENCY (M-BTU/M-BTU)		LAND EFFICIENCY (M-BTUs/A)	
	Continuous Corn	*Three Year Rotation*	*Continuous Corn*	*Three Year Rotation*
2009	1.29	1.76	7.86	6.01
2010	1.32	1.72	9.45	7.32

$$Energy\ Efficiency = \frac{Total\ Biofuel\ Energy\ Output}{Total\ Energy\ Input}$$

$$Land\ Efficiency = \frac{Total\ Biofuel\ Energy\ Output - Total\ Energy\ Input}{Acre} = \frac{Net\ Energy}{Acre}$$

Member Contributions

PFI member book review — Gathering: Memoir of a Seed Saver

by Mary Swalla Holmes

"This book is a gathering of people, seeds and stories." Author Diane Ott Whealy takes readers on a delicious journey through her life, from gathering up memories of grandparents to establishing a world-renowned organization devoted to biodiversity. She is wonderful story-teller, choosing just the right details to entice the imagination. The book is also beautifully illustrated, with an almost scrapbook quality. It even includes a few recipes!

The journey begins with scenes from Grandma and Grandpa Ott's farm near St. Lucas in northeast Iowa. It was Grandpa Ott who handed the seed of the now famous Grandpa Ott's Morning Glory to Diane for safekeeping, sparking her seed-saving campaign. Diane writes, "As I helped him in the garden, it never occurred to me that I was doing anything out of the ordinary, or that a simple act of saving those seeds would one day describe my life's work."

Along the way, she met Kent Whealy, who shared her love of gardening, homesteading and a self-sufficient life style. They lived in Colorado, Oregon, Kansas and Missouri, growing a family and accumulating seeds. Diane describes her obsession for canning and her appreciation for the old varieties of fruits and vegetables that were disappearing from the commercial seed catalogues. In 1974, Kent wrote to several popular back-to-the-land magazines in an effort to contact other seed savers. The mail brought five or six responses and a tiny seed-savers network was begun.

From that humble beginning, each year brought growth and the need for more time, space and support for the organization. The first publication was the "True Seed Exchange" and it quickly grew to three hundred members. In 1979 Kent and Diane changed the name to "Seed Savers Exchange." It was becoming not only an exchange but a repository as well. The purity of the heirloom seed was of upmost importance, and it needed to be grown to survive. Diane and Kent began to dream of a place where seed could be grown and kept viable and also be a showplace — where members could visit and experience the sights and smells of genetic diversity.

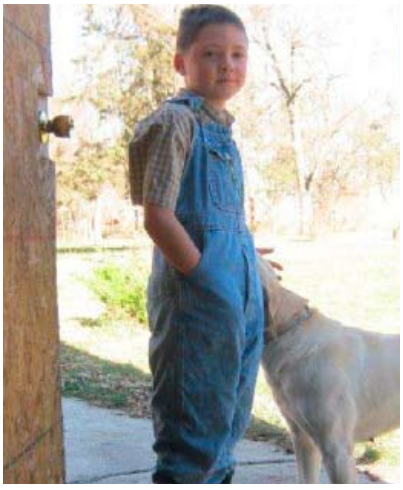
The story continues as the family, and the organization, moves to Decorah, Iowa, and establishes the Heritage Farm. Diane is open and honest about the ups and downs, the challenges and the rewards of a life lived in pursuit of a dream. In one of the last chapters, "The Unexpected Happens," she chronicles the end of her marriage and her realization that the organization has life of its own. As many of you know, Seed Savers Exchange is a thriving organization today. Diane serves as Vice President of Education. The book is $25 and can be ordered online at http://www.seedsavers.org.

Mini Grants help youth find solutions to on-farm challenges

by Luke Gran

Maria Roland and her brother Peter James Roland are creative problem solvers, who used PFI Youth Mini Grant funds to explore on-farm solutions.

For Peter James, moving heavy things around, including big harvests from the garden, is a struggle. He studied the feasibility of training and using a farm dog to pull a small cart to help haul the harvest.



Maria focused on managing the undesirable behaviors of jumping and burrowing exhibited by her goats. She purchased and compared four different containment methods — collars and tethers, moveable pens, two hot wires and four hot wires.

The research helped the Rolands to sharpen their record-keeping skills as they tested, tracked and recorded observations and results of different scenarios employed.

"The collars worked great but added labor because I had to move the place of tethering periodically," says Maria Roland of Storm Lake. "The method I determined was best was a fence with four electric wires."

Peter James bought dog training materials and a dog cart with his mini grant. "I found the dog to be useful all over the farm but was more difficult to train around new people and places like at farmers' market."

Both mini grant recipients agreed that their friends would be interested in applying next year for this mini-grant opportunity.

The Roland kids took photos along the way that they are eager to share with others. They will showcase what they learned at the PFI Annual Conference. Look for their poster presentations among the other posters of Youth Mini Grant recipients in the second floor lobby of the Scheman Building, Ames, IA, January 13–14.

Their research was funded by proceeds from last year's silent auction, held at the annual conference.

PFI members' fungicide debate highlights need for openness and understanding

by Patrick Burke

Back in the beginning of August, many PFI members noticed fungicides being sprayed on fields all across the state. On the PFI General email discussion group, member Jerry Depew wondered why "the only debate seems to be whether it is profitable" to spray fungicide, rather than whether there are adverse environmental impacts.

Many members chimed in, including Jack Knight, who said, "Some of the fungicides have no field re-entry time," meaning that it is deemed safe to re-enter a field right away. Jack told of his experience being sprayed with fungicide from a highboy while detasseling corn. When he complained, he was told he had no basis to pursue the complaint because it was supposed to be safe to re-enter the field immediately. But, as Annie Grieshop pointed out, "no re-entry time" does not necessarily mean "safe for skin contact."

There was much discussion about the toxicity to humans of fungicides in general, but no one seemed to have a clear idea how safe or dangerous they might be as a class. At least one fungicide, vinclozolin (now off the market), is a known endocrine disrupter, causing DNA changes in rats that persist for four generations. As a general rule, many urged caution with agricultural chemicals, because sometimes health effects are not well understood until a product is already on the market.

When the topic turned to avoiding exposure to fungicides while in the field, the consensus opinion was that while you may be able to avoid a highboy sprayer, aerial applicators are a different matter. "You cannot get out of the way once that plane starts its run," says Annie Grieshop, who previously worked for a crop-dusting company. If you've been sprayed, she recommends getting the number off the plane's tail, looking it up on the FAA website (http://registry.faa.gov) and calling both the FAA and the company that owns the plane. "Making noise will get results," she says, but adds, "striving for a cordial and constant relationship with neighboring farmers can go a long way toward solving pesticide issues."

Addressing the problem of spray drift, Grieshop says, "Drift is much more common than we realize." But it's a touchy subject for farmers who depend on the quick and easy application of these chemicals. They may take complaints about spray drift as attacks on their way of life. Loyd Johnson says that his soil tested positive for residue from spray drift last year. "For reporting this, we were vilified by the two farmers, verbally assaulted... with a lawsuit mentioned!" Despite the threat, he says that he recently experienced spray drift again and has reported it.

Wade Dooley, a self-described "conventional" farmer and PFI member, says, "Confronting farmers is a delicate matter, because they are now so used to being attacked and blamed, they just go defensive and stop listening." While some people think conventional farmers must believe chemicals are benign, Dooley disagrees, "Most farmers know that a chemical that kills things probably isn't good for humans!" However, he adds that they'll still use it if it makes things "easier, better, more profitable, etc."

But is all the fungicide really necessary? Dooley says he has noticed seed and chemical companies pushing fungicide in recent years. Seed dealers he says, "always tout the corn hybrids that have the most response to fungicide application," even though "that means the hybrid must be more susceptible to disease than other hybrids." Dan Specht suspects this may be caused by the use of the herbicide glyphosate, which, research indicates, increases disease susceptibility in both corn and soybeans. "Everything I have observed in the field the past two years seems to prove this out," Specht adds.

One common thread of the discussion was the desire for both sides to understand one another. "It would be nice if we could all talk this sort of thing out on a grand scale, with candor and honesty, much as we are able to do within PFI," says Dooley. For that to happen, says Annie Grieshop, "We need to get the corporate interests out of the way. Then we could have fruitful conversations and work toward mutually beneficial change."

Interested in participating in lively discussions like this one? PFI offers five email discussion lists for members: General, Grazing, Horticulture, Policy and Poultry. Just email patrick@practicalfarmers.org and let me know which ones you'd like to join.

PFI News

Mother, daughter duo represents Iowa agriculture in Washington

PFI members Linda Barnes and her daughter Claire Runquist, High Hopes Gardens, traveled to Washington D.C. this year to work alongside politicians and influence agriculture policy.

This summer Claire was named Wallace-Carver Intern by Secretary Vilsack and as such had the opportunity to intern at any USDA location in the country. Claire chose to work in D.C. on policy issues at the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach. She spent eight weeks in D.C. analyzing agricultural and economic policy; assisting in the management of food, nutrition and rural development programs; and taking part in ground-breaking field and laboratory-based research.

Mom Linda Barnes spent time in D.C. recently as well. Linda, Marshalltown Community College professor and farmer, traveled to Washington to speak at a USDA hearing on the farm bill and childhood obesity. Her testimony was also featured as part of an HBO special. She was later named a Champion of Change for establishing the Sustainable and Entrepreneurial Agriculture Program at Marshalltown Community College, a two-year associates degree program and the first of its kind in the Midwest. She made a second trip to D.C. to received the honor. On this trip, she met with President Obama.

Linda is married to PFI member Mark Runquist. Claire is their oldest daughter.

PFI members support Veterans Coming Home To Farm

Several PFI members participated in Veterans Coming Home to Farm, a two-and-a-half-day retreat on sustainable and organic farming, held in July.

The event was hosted by the Farmer Veteran Coalition, a national project out of Davis, CA, that connects veterans with agriculture, and was sponsored by PFI member Maury Johnson, Blue River Hybrids, Kelley. Participating veterans toured livestock, grain and vegetable farms, listened to presentations, and gained plenty of insights from generous and seasoned farmers.

Other PFI members who presented:

- Barney Bahrenfuse and Suzanne Costello, B&B Farms, Grinnell
- Jeff Hafner, Panora
- Andy Dunham, Grinnell Heritage Farm, Grinnell
- Maury Wills, Wills Family Orchard, Adel

Scattergood Farm in the news

Check out the Fall 2011 issue of "Catalyst," a publication of New Pioneer Food Co-op, Iowa City. PFI member Scattergood Farm is featured on pages 17-19. Visit: http://newpi.coop.dnnmax.com/Newsletter/CatalystNewsletters.aspx

PFI announces new fall Faminar lineup

The harvest is done, and it's time to tune into PFI's informative lineup of fall Farminars being held Tuesday nights from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in November, December, January and February. Check out the new lineup below. To participate, go to www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar.

Date	Enterprise	Topic	Experienced Speaker	Beginner	Category
1-Nov	All	Financing options to purchase a farm or start your business	Andy Hunziker, Farm Service Agency	Jason Jones and Erin Drinnin, Wilted Leaf Farm	Financial
8-Nov	All	Working with restaurants and wholesalers: what needs to be done by farmers to sell more through these outlets?	Phil Danowsky, Local Harvest Supply	Kathy and Adam Hohl, Hohl's Pumpkin Patch	Marketing
15-Nov	All	How to use Facebook, Twitter to increase farm sales	Thomas Burkhead, Juan O'Sullivan's Gourmet Salsa	Lorna Wilson, Seven Wilsons Farm	Marketing
22-Nov	Grazing	How to transition continuously grazed pastures or cropland to grazing: selecting forage mixes for success	Karl Dallefeld, Prairie Creek Seed	Eric Madsen, Audubon County Farms	Production
29-Nov	Grazing	The marketing of grass-fed meat	Mary and Tom Cory, The Cory's at Prairie Hill	Dave Schmidt, Rock Valley Livestock Co.	Marketing
13-Dec	Horticulture	Low capital season extension	Rob Faux, Genuine Faux Farm	Ellen Walsh-Rosmann, Rosmann Family Farms	Production
20-Dec	Horticulture	Setting up a system of record keeping to develop farm-level enterprise budgets for annual vegetable/fruit crops	Linda Halley, Gardens of Eagan	Julie Wilber, Wilber's Northside Market	Financial
27-Dec	Horticulture	High tunnel production methods, strategy, planning and pest management	Adam Montri, Mighigan State University Department of Horticulture	Ann Franzenburg, Pheasant Run Farm	Production

Charter member of PFI's Legacy Society talks about her gift to PFI

"It is with great pride and tenderness that I announce that longtime PFI member Helen DeElda Gunderson has become a charter member of the PFI Legacy Society," says PFI Executive Director Teresa Opheim. "Helen has included in her will a gift to PFI of Pocahontas County farmland. In the following comments, Helen talks about her land ethic, the responsibility of being a farmland owner and why she is choosing PFI for her generosity."

Helen Gunderson joins PFI's Legacy Society, willing a gift of Pocahontas County farmland.

Helen explains, "When I was studying for my Master of Divinity degree, I was surprised to discover that many of the Biblical messages were about land. There was even a term we learned, "latifundialization." It meant the displacement of people off the land and the land being taken over by the king to grow grapes and olive oil to trade for armaments.

"There was also the Hebraic concept that land was not supposed to be controlled in perpetuity by the same family, that there was to be a Year of Jubilee. Fortunately, one of my two Old Testament professors, Marv Chaney, had grown up on a farm in Kansas and would eventually inherit land. So we had some good conversations about finding the balance between appreciating our inheritance and yet seeking ways to be ethical.

"I want to put some projects in place before I die and make sure my will reflects some of my values. Already, I have put about 35 acres of my land into CRP, using a diverse mix of prairie seed from Carl Kurtz. And I am renting a third of my land to PFI member Betsy Dahl, who is transitioning it to organic production. This year, I am giving some permanent pasture and CRP land and adjacent crop acres to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. And I am giving land to PFI in my will.

"There is much latifundialization at work today. Because of gift laws and inheritance taxes required of beneficiaries who are not related to the deceased, and with today's high land prices, it would be difficult for me to keep land in the hands of people who will farm it sustainably. So the next best thing I can do is give land to PFI. In that way, I help a vital and ethical organization continue its work, and I help keep sustainable farmers on the land.

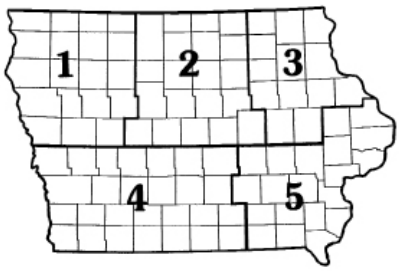
"I would not have the lifestyle to which I have become accustomed if I did not have land that someone else gave to me. On the other hand, I do not want to continue a family dynasty of land ownership. As I write that, I know the notion goes against all the family acculturation that I have been exposed to. I do think of many PFI folk as being sort of like family. However, I am also not so naive as to think that I can control what happens in 20 or 50 years from now with the country, the PFI organization or my land. But I can act with good intention, detach from the outcome and trust the process.

"I've learned a lot about managing my land from PFI members. Mark Tjelmeland, Vic Madsen and Margaret Smith taught me about rental rates and more sustainable practices. Tom Wahl taught me a lot about grafting apples. Rick Exner spelled out the pros and cons of GMO seed to me.

"Being a good steward of my farmland is an ethical, spiritual thing to do. PFI is the only organization I know that is dealing specifically with agriculture that is consistent with my ethics."

DeElda Lighter Gunderson — ***The farmland Helen has designated for PFI in her will was given to her by her grandmother, DeElda, pictured above.***

New Members & PFI Calendar



Welcome, new members

District 1 — Northwest
Amy Crouch, Remsen
Theodore Franklin, Blencoe
Jerry Sindt, Holstein

District 2 — North Central
Lori Asberry, Ankeny
Robert and Donna Atha, Marshalltown
Andrea Basche, Ames
Deborah and Kenneth Blackledge, Nevada
Jean Goodwin, Ames
Jeremy and Kelly Gustafson, Boone
Gregory Jones, Webster City
Jay Jung, Colwell
Dean Lewis, Ames
Susan Posch, Boone
Debra Sabin, Hampton
Larry Sorensen, Nevada
Andrew Stephenson, Ames

District 3 — Northeast
Joe Dunn, Waverly
Rick Juchems, Plainfield
Doug Little, Farmersburg
Luke and Linsey Schuldt, Tripoli
Richard Sloan, Rowley

District 4 — Southwest
Jordan Clasen, Des Moines
Joshua Dolezal, Windsor Heights
Scott Hicks, Lake City
Carol Oliver, Lacona
Brady Smith, Emerson
Kent Stufflebeem, Chariton
Jerry Vos, Minburn
Linda Zintz, Centerville

District 5 — Southeast
Harold Frakes, Brighton
Kevin and Jessica Holst, Eldridge
Justin Reitsma, New Sharon
Justin Rodgers, Winfield
Jordan Scheibel, Grinnell
Dan and Sheila Smith, Bonaparte
Kraig Van Hulzen, Oskaloosa
Tom Whetstone, Wilton

District 6 — Out of State
Tyler Albers, Minneapolis, MN
Anna Blumstein, Berkeley, CA
John Bruihler, Rushford, MN
Bess Casey, Side Lake, MN
Virginia Nichols, Canon City, CO
Deborah Ritt, Platteville, WI
Susan Werner, Chicago, IL
Adam Wilke, Hutchinson, MN

NOV | DEC | JAN

NOVEMBER 1 | Financing Options for Beginning Farmers | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

NOVEMBER 7 | Wholesale Marketing Through Distributors | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

NOVEMBER 11 | Can fish grow lettuce—profitably? | Panora, IA
Tour a startup aquaponics facility and learn how to raise vegetables and fish together!

NOVEMBER 15 | How to Use Facebook to Increase Your Farm's Sales | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

NOVEMBER 17 | Photovoltaics PV101 Hiawatha, IA
This course will be held from 9 a.m.–4 p.m., at the Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center. Price: $110 (or $90 for iRenew members). Register Online for the 8-hour course, which will teach the basics of photovoltaic (PV) systems. Call 319.395.6700 for more information.

NOVEMBER 22 | Pasture Seed Mixes for Success | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

NOVEMBER 29 | The Marketing of Grass-Fed Beef | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

DECEMBER 8-9 | NEXT GENERATION RETREAT: Demystify Business Planning with Richard Wiswall | Y-Camp, Boone, IA
Richard Wiswall, Cate Farm, East Montpelier, VT, author of "The Organic Farmer's Business Handbook: a Complete Guide to Managing Finances, Crops, and Staff — and Making a Profit," will help beginners build better business plans. Contact Luke Gran, luke@practicalfarmers.org, 515.232.5661

DECEMBER 8–10 | ACRES 2011 Conference | Columbus, Ohio
The Acres U.S.A. Conference is one of the truly premier events worldwide for commercial-scale sustainable and organic agriculture. More than a thousand people from around the world gather together to tap the knowledge of some of agricultures brightest minds! Visit: http://www.acresusa.com/events/events.htm

DECEMBER 9–10 | Fearless Farm Finances Training | La Crosse, WI
Join MOSES for a two-day training to help you work with the financial information that matters on your farm. To register, visit: http://www.nexternal.com/shared/StoreFront/default.asp?CS=moses&StoreType=BtoC&Count1=585186183&Count2=502326607&ProductID=136&Target=products.asp

DECEMBER 13 | Inexpensive, Effective Season Extension | Farminar | 7 p.m. Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

DECEMBER 20 | Setting up a System of Record Keeping | Farminar | 7 p.m.
Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

DECEMBER 27 | Grow Better with High Tunnels | Farminar | 7 p.m. Visit: www.practicalfarmers.org/farminar

JANUARY 12–13 | SOILS 101 ISU Agronomy Hall | Ames, IA
Practical Farmers of Iowa will be offering a short course on soils before the official start of the conference. The course will run Thursday, January 12, from 1 – 8 p.m. and continue on Friday, January 13, from 8 – 11:30 a.m.

JANUARY 13–14 | PFI 2011 Annual Conference | ISU Center, Scheman Building, Suite 102
This year PFI is cooking up a sustainable blend of farming at the conference with the theme, "Made from Scratch." Keynote speaker Fedele Bauccio, CEO and co-founder of Bon Appétit Management Company, which spends over $55 million annually on food purchased from within a 150-mile radius of each of its 400 locations. See pages x – x, for more information.

CALENDAR

Grow your farm with PFI. Join today!

This annual membership is a:

- ☐ new membership
- ☐ renewal

I am joining at the level of:

- ☐ Student—$15
- ☐ Individual—$35
- ☐ Farm or Household—$45
- ☐ Organization (including businesses, agencies, not-for-profit groups)—$75

My interest in joining PFI is primarily as a:

- ☐ farmer/grower
- ☐ non-farmer (You will have the opportunity to expand upon this when you receive your membership information form.)

Each membership includes one subscription to ***the Practical Farmer.***

Sustain PFI

For the long-term health and vitality of PFI, we ask you to consider making a donation above and beyond your membership fee. I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to PFI in the amount of:

☐ $1,000 ☐ $500 ☐ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ $_____

JOIN OUR GIFT OF THE MONTH CLUB

The Gift of the Month Club is an easy way to support Practical Farmers of Iowa! Send in your pledge with your credit card information, and we will automatically deduct your donation the first of each month.

YES! I would like to give _____ per month to PFI, to be automatically charged to my credit card the first of the month. ($10 per month minimum)

Practical Farmers of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you!

Individual, Farm or Organization Name*:_____

Mailing Address: _____

Street:_____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Primary Phone (with area code): _____

Alternate Phone (with area code): _____

Email: _____

* For Farm/Household membership, please list names of persons included. For Organization membership, please list one or two contact persons.

Payment:

Total: $_____ = $_____ membership + $_____ donation

☐ Check or money order enclosed. (Please make payable to "Practical Farmers of Iowa.")

TO PAY WITH A CREDIT CARD, PLEASE GO TO: http://practicalfarmers.org/join-pfi.html

Practical Farmers of Iowa
137 Lynn Ave., Suite 200
Ames, IA 50014

Our Vision for Iowa

Farms that are prized
for their diversity
of crops and livestock
their wildlife, healthy soils,
innovations, beauty and productivity
their connection to a rich past
and a fulfilling present
where individuals and families are earning a good living

Wholesome food that is celebrated
for its connections
to local farmers
to seasons,
to hard work
and good stewardship
Communities alive with
diverse connections between
farmers and friends of farmers

Places where commerce,
cooperation, creativity
and spirituality are thriving
Places where the working landscape,
the fresh air and the clean water
remind us of all that is good about Iowa.