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Nimrod family chosen to receive 2015 Farmland Owner Award from Practical Farmers of Iowa

AMES, Iowa — Practical Farmers of Iowa's board of directors is pleased to announce that Dale Nimrod, along with his siblings Faith Sherman and Vance Nimrod, are the 2015 winners of the Practical Farmers Farmland Owner Award. Dale of Decorah, Faith of Des Moines and Vance of Mississippi received the award for selling their farmland to a local farm family at a below-market-value price.

The Farmland Owner Award is given to non-operator landlords who use their land to advance stewardship and help get the next generation started on the land. With this award, the organization is calling attention to the huge role non-operator farmland owners are playing in the future success of sustainable agriculture.

Thirty-one percent of U.S. agricultural land is owned by non-operator landlords. At the same time, there has been a surge in those wanting to farm. Practical Farmers has 1,600 of these beginning farmers in its network alone.

The Nimrods' parents purchased a farm in southwestern Iowa in 1944, but their father died before he had an opportunity to work the place. Their mother was determined to raise her family on the farm, a feat Dale thinks would have been very difficult without the support of the small town of Stanton and the local church. None of the three Nimrod children grew up to be farmers. In 2005, they decided the best way to pay back that community was to sell their 240 acres to a local family.

The family selected for the sale was that of Mark and Melanie Peterson, who were unknown to them before they began searching for the right family. The Nimrods' sale price and terms were generous and based on the production value, rather than market rate for the land.

"We were no different from many aging landowners facing this very common situation: We aspired to find a nice, young family who would appreciate the land, the community and the church, and would invest themselves in caring for all three," Dale says. "But far too often I have seen owners who fervently hope for such an outcome put their place up for auction with little more than their fingers crossed regarding their community."

"We're honored to receive this award. We have immense satisfaction in seeing the Petersons on that place."

"What the Nimrods did needs to happen thousands of times over in Iowa," says Teresa Opheim, who leads Practical Farmers' farm transfer work. "As Dale Nimrod says, there are more important goals than getting top dollar at auction for your farmland. Helping beginning farmers is one of those goals."

New Hampton farmers Tom and Irene Frantzen, who are members of the Practical Farmers Farm Transfer Committee, will present the award to the Nimrod Family at the PFI annual conference on Jan. 22, 2016, in Ames.

Previous winners of the Practical Farmers Farmland Owner Award include Helen Gunderson (2013) and Charlotte Shivers, Martha Skillman and Marietta Carr (2014).

For more on the Nimrods' story, see practicalfarmers.org/farmtransfer.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa strengthens farms and communities through farmer-led investigation and information-sharing. Our values include: welcoming everyone; creativity, collaboration and community; viable farms now and for future generations; and stewardship and ecology. Founded in 1985, farmers in our network raise corn, soybeans, livestock, hay, fruits and vegetables, and more. To learn more, visit <http://practicalfarmers.org>.

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