

the Practical Farmer

Practical Farmers of Iowa Newsletter

Vol. 17, #1
Spring 2002

TELLING OUR STORY

Robert Karp

As moisture returns to the Iowa soils and spring planting begins I find myself reflecting on the past months of intense and often bitter debate over new hog lot legislation in Iowa. Listening to the different sides of the issue has made one thing abundantly clear to me: it is time for PFI and our extraordinary members to tell their story to the rest of Iowa.

On the one hand, there is a growing and increasingly vocal group of citizens who want clean air and water and an attractive countryside. Feeling powerless in the face of large-scale agribusiness, these folks have turned to legislation and the legal process for a remedy.

On the other hand, there is a strong segment of the farm population who believe that the citizens described above haven't got a clue about the realities of farming. As one farmer put it "the environmentalists want to turn Iowa into a park." This group is struggling to imagine that a happy and prosperous marriage is possible between agriculture and the growing environmental values of society.

Somewhere between these two perspectives stand the bulk of Iowans, who find themselves not quite sure who to believe or what to think. Sensing there is some truth to both perspectives, they have perhaps decided to sit back and watch.

The voices we have heard less of, however, and the voices we need to hear more of on behalf of the future of Iowa agriculture, are those of the environment-minded farmers and the farm-minded consumers—in other words, the bread and butter membership of PFI. Because it's one thing to find a way to mitigate and control the

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**See page 3 for PFI's
new address and
phone number.**

(Telling our story continues on page 2.)

harmful side effects of an unbalanced approach to farming, and it's another to farm in a way that is ecologically sound and profitable from the start. This is what is so unique and important about the efforts of PFI members.

Regulations and control in some form have certainly become necessary, but ultimately we need farmers with the desire, capacity and knowledge to farm in harmony with their surroundings. We need consumers who care enough about good farming and good food to change the way they shop. We need businesses and entrepreneurs that allow these farmers and consumers to find each other and make a square deal in the marketplace. And we need policies that encourage all these good efforts.

Helping create this kind of positive future is the day-to-day work of PFI. And yet, as the recent debate suggests, we have a long way to go. How are we going to get there? What are our next steps?

Real Change

Real change, I believe, takes at least two things. On the one hand it takes a nucleus of profoundly committed people who are willing to "live the change" they want to see in the world. PFI members are an inspiring example of just this kind of committed nucleus. A second ingredient, however, is the willingness to learn how to effectively communicate with and educate a diverse and ever widening circle of farmers, consumers, entrepreneurs, policy makers, and community leaders. Here, I think, we have a lot to learn.

A year ago, when I introduced myself to the PFI membership, I expressed my desire to "share with every Iowan the wealth of wisdom, knowledge, passion and vision that live in our members and staff." Now I am pleased to report that PFI has received two grants focused on helping us develop a

[Real change requires] the willingness to learn how to effectively communicate with and educate a diverse and ever widening circle of people...

The soil has been tilled, now is the time to sow our vision across the state.

three-year "comprehensive communications and community outreach plan" to begin to accomplish that goal.

Over the next three months, with the help of a highly respected consultant here in Iowa, we will begin to craft this plan and over the next three years we will implement it. What might you expect from this process and this plan?

Great Expectations

In the first place, we are going to need your help and insight to develop the plan itself, so you might be called to participate in a focus group or to fill out a survey. We appreciate how busy you are, but your help is vital to the success of this effort.

Secondly, in order to implement this plan we will need to have more staff time devoted to communications. So you can expect to get to know at least one new PFI staff member designated to this task.

And finally, what might you expect from the plan itself? I don't know the detailed answers to that yet, but I think you can reasonably expect some of the following:

- some design changes to the PFI logo and website;
- some rethinking of the content, length and design of the PFI newsletter;
- PFI research appearing in new formats designed to suit the needs of different audiences;
- profiles of PFI members, projects and research appearing more regularly in the newspapers and other media;
- more Op Ed pieces in newspapers written by PFI members and staff.

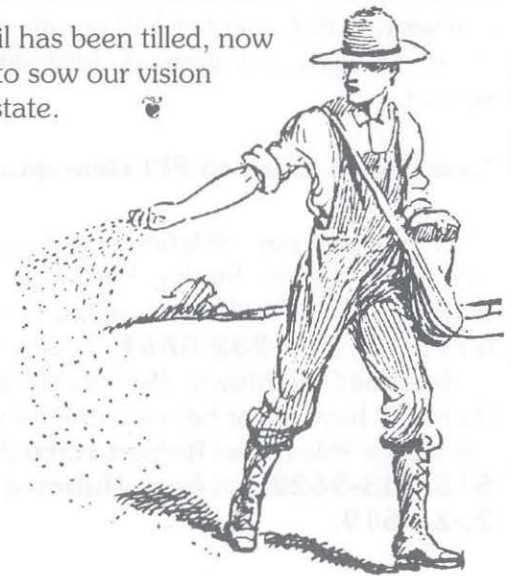
Hopefully we'll see some new kinds of education and outreach projects too. For example, you might see us putting a larger emphasis on in-depth, how-to workshops and technical assistance designed to put a solid footing under the next wave of farmers interested in sustainable agriculture. You might also see:

- the annual meeting become a 2-day event with scope for an even greater number of participants.
- marketing campaigns designed to educate a larger cross section of consumers about the benefits of buying local and regional foods.
- bus tours or press conferences for policy makers and community leaders that showcase PFI member farms, research and a sustainable approach to agriculture.
- opportunities created for young people to learn, work and research on PFI farms and PFI farmers more active as educators.
- more efforts to build the PFI membership.

Obviously, a good communication and outreach plan isn't worth much if there isn't something worth communicating. Without successful members, research, and projects there is no point in making such an effort. So our first priority will always be supporting you, the members, in your efforts to "live the change."

At the same time, if we cannot multiply the PFI vision a thousand fold across Iowa, there is little likelihood that we will ever move beyond the kind of bitter debates of the past months. Iowans of all stripes, occupations and affiliations have something to learn from the PFI experience.

The soil has been tilled, now is the time to sow our vision across the state.



**Editor's Note: PFI has a new address.
It's P.O. BOX 349, Ames IA 50010-0349.
Our new phone number is 515-232-5661.**

For years, members, guests, sponsors, media reps, agency personnel, and even a few staff have expressed bewilderment and sometimes outright consternation about multiple addresses for PFI business. In 1985, when PFI was founded, it seemed important to have a farm address to reflect the character of the organization. Dick Thompson was PFI's first President and kindly offered use of his rural Boone address. That's the one you have seen on so many PFI publications and return envelopes – 2035 190th Street, Boone, IA 50036. Since Dick has remained so keenly involved with the life of the organization, it seemed perfectly appropriate to

sustain that rural Boone address as PFI's mail home.

Sharon Thompson might see it differently. I suspect she's the one who trudged down the driveway in the worst weather to collect and sort not only the Thompson's personal mail, but also armloads of correspondence directed to PFI. I'm sure not all of it was solicited either. Still, the Thompsons kept things straight, moving PFI documents on to the right people as smoothly and frequently as possible, often by personal delivery.

(Address and phone update continues next page.)

But the organization has grown immensely in fifteen years. Despite electronic communication, there seems to be more paper flying around than ever. And there are more staff to whom it has to be redirected. For the sake of consolidation, security, and simplicity, we have taken a post office box in Ames. As noted in the headline, it's P.O. Box 349 in Ames.

It will take some time to get everyone used to this change. I'll continue to make a stop at Thompsons to pick up strays. (It's my best excuse for seeing what those two are up to, anyway.) As for Dick and Sharon Thompson, neither rain nor sleet nor hail nor drought nor flood, can deter our gratitude for their generous service.

New Phone Lines to PFI Headquarters

We're also consolidating and streamlining our phone system. Starting June 1st or soon thereafter, there will be one main number to dial for PFI. It's **515-232-5661**. That will get you to the Ames downtown office. Each staff person there will have his or her own extension. You will still be able to dial **Robert Karp** directly at **515-233-3622** and **Gary Huber** at **515-232-5649**.

Meanwhile, **Rick Exner's number remains 515-294-5486**. His mailing address remains 2104 Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, IA 50011.

Membership Services Moves Downtown

In an effort to provide better service, Nancy **Dundatscheck**, membership services coordinator, will move from an ISU campus office to PFI's downtown Ames office. Use the new phone number, **515-232-5661**, to reach her.

Starting in June 515-232-5661 will be PFI's main number.

Change is always tough. Please be patient with us and each other during this transition. ☘



Not afraid to get her hands dirty, Katherine Parker digs in with PFI.

MORE THAN A FAIR TRADE

Katherine Parker

As the newest addition to the PFI office, I am excited to introduce myself to the rest of the PFI members. A little history... my name is Katherine Parker, I grew up in northern California, and after graduating from college I joined the Mission Intern Program of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. The **Mission Intern Program** is a 3-year experience for young adults to work on peace and justice issues, and I feel that supporting systems of sustainable agriculture is critical to achieving this vision worldwide. The first half of my assignment was in Japan at the Asian Rural Institute (ARI), and I am excited to be spending the second half in Iowa with PFI.

ARI is an international community where rural leaders from so-called third world countries can come for a 9-month training course in organic agriculture and community development. My main

I was attracted to PFI by the strong commitment...to building relationships around these important issues.

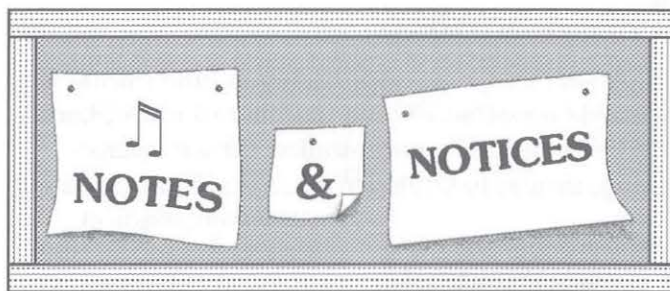
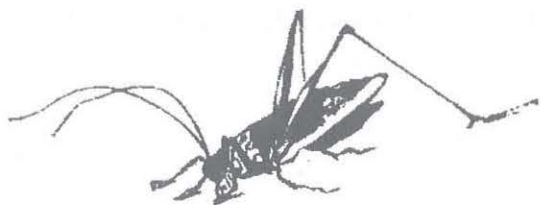
responsibilities were in recruitment and graduate outreach, but along with all other community members I worked to sustain our food life by weeding cabbages, milking cows and cooking meals for the 50+ people who ate together every day. The motto of ARI is "That We May Live Together," and that is what the experience was all about – living together and forming relationships around food, music, work, spiritual and cultural experiences. I fell in love with this picture of community, especially the understanding about how all aspects of food production, from transplanting rice in the spring to eating the tofu we processed from our soybeans, connect people together.

I am excited by the focus PFI puts on relationships in our food life.

I hope that in the year and a bit I get to spend at PFI that I can share in that same community here. I was attracted to PFI by the strong commitment of this organization to building relationships around these important issues – from field days and community days where farmers can share their experiences producing food to All-Iowa meals where consumers come to appreciate the value of local, sustainably produced food. I am excited by the focus PFI puts on relationships in our food life.

I've got my fingers in a lot of paint pots here because PFI has so many exciting programs. For starters I'll be involved in the Downtown Farmers' Market, PFI camp, a cluster group, Community Days and On-Farm Field Days, case-studies of integrated farming, and of course, a little work around the office to keep things running smoothly.

Editor's Note: Katherine makes a great addition to our staff. She's been busy fund raising and has stepped in as secretary to the board in addition to the duties she mentions above. We know she's eager to get out to PFI farms, so please give her a warm welcome and extend an invitation yourself. She's not afraid of hard work! (I've seen her plant potatoes.) You can reach her at 515-232-5661. 🍷



♪ HORTICULTURAL CROP TRAINING PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY



PFI recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for a new project to provide hands-on training during 2002 on production and post-harvest handling topics to farmers who want to grow and market horticultural crops. Collaborating on the project are Patrick O'Malley and Eldon Everhart, ISU Extension Commercial Horticulture Field Specialists in eastern and western Iowa, respectively. Gary Huber of PFI is providing the support for growers in the middle third of the state. Thirty farmers applied to be involved, and initial visits to the farms chosen to be part of the project are now underway. For more information, contact **Gary Huber** at 515-232-5649 or ftf@isunet.net.

♪ NEW PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

A recently completed PFI-led project has produced two publications that are now available. One titled "**Local Foods & Institutional Food Services: A Match for Iowa's Future**" is a promotional brochure designed to encourage the use of local foods by local institutions.

The second is titled "**Expanding Local Food Systems by Marketing to Iowa Institutions.**" It contains descriptions of key issues, suggestions for success, and overviews of the five institutional buying efforts that were at the core of the project. The project that created these publications was supported in part by a grant from the USDA Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program. The publications are available on PFI's website (www.pfi.iastate.edu) or by contacting **Gary Huber** at 515-232-5649 or ftf@isunet.net.

♪ IOWA SHARES

An exciting new opportunity in fund raising is available now that PFI is a member of Iowa Shares. This is an umbrella organization for workplace giving, similar to United Way. PFI will participate in



several campaigns at places such as Iowa State University, where employees sign up to have donations deducted directly from their paychecks by the employer. Employees will have an opportunity to give to either the general Iowa Shares fund, from which PFI will receive a portion, or they can give directly to PFI.

This is an opportunity for PFI members to inform work colleagues about PFI and encourage them to donate. In the future you will see the Iowa Shares logo on many PFI publications. Contact **Katherine Parker** at PFI, 515-232-5661, with your questions.

♪ BEGINNING FARMER LOOKING FOR CONNECTIONS

My name is Shaun Murphy, and I have recently returned to my home state of Iowa to begin farming. Last fall I enrolled in the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings Program (based out of Lewiston, MN), in order to prepare myself for this new adventure.

The Farm Beginnings Program helped me to begin the process of developing a business plan that encompasses my financial, marketing, and production needs. In addition, I am considering the complex impact I will have on my ecosystem, as well as my role in the local community. The Farm Beginnings Program also provided opportunities for me to network with many other farmers, both beginning and experienced.

Having recently joined PFI, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the meeting in January. The discussions I attended and the sheer number of participants helped to minimize my sense of isolation.

Currently I rent a portion of an acreage near Storm Lake, Iowa, and plan to spend my first year adjusting to the demands of a farming enterprise. This summer I will be exploring vegetable and small-scale livestock production on my farm. I am also interested in visiting farms for educational purposes and locating on-farm employment in the Storm Lake area. If anyone has any suggestions or offers in this regard, they would be much appreciated. I can be reached at 712-843-5424; 5434 210th Ave., Albert City, IA 50510; or at shaunbm@hotmail.com

♪ HOOP RATIONS COOPERATORS NEEDED

PFI is studying how to optimize the rations that are fed to pigs in hoophouse finishing systems. Most of the published comparisons of hoophouse vs. conventional confinement are based on the typical confinement ration. But pigs just eat more total feed in hoops than they do in other confinements, so why feed them the same rich ration?

Working with Mark Honeyman, PFI cooperators are comparing their customary finishing ration to one that includes oats or other small grains. We hope that this simple study will lead to more profitable finishing for hoophouse producers. But we need more producers to take part! If you finish pigs in hoops and want to test out this innovation, consider joining. In return for your efforts, PFI will reimburse you up to \$400. For more information, please contact Farming Systems Coordinator **Rick Exner**, 515-294-5486, dnexner@iastate.edu

♪ WOMEN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE NETWORK CELEBRATES 5TH ANNIVERSARY IN JULY

Come celebrate at WFAN's two-day summer meeting at Springbrook Conservation Education Center near Guthrie Center. The 5th anniversary celebration begins on Tuesday, July 16, with a brunch at Full Circle Farm in Boone County. The 10:00 AM meal and farm tour is hosted by WFAN member, Nan Bonfils, and her WFAN-sponsored intern, Eli Blair.

Then we'll caravan to Springbrook for a meeting that begins at 1:00 PM and extends into an



WFAN

overnight of festivities. On Wednesday, July 17, Laura Jackson and Dana Jackson will join us to discuss their new book, The Farm as Natural Habitat. (See review p.26.) The WFAN meeting continues through July 17, overnight, ending July 18.



LEOPOLD CENTER

There will also be a Jackson book-signing, co-sponsored by WFAN and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, later on July 17 in Ames.

For details, contact Denise O'Brien, 712-243-3264, hnob@metc.net

🎵 OUT AND ABOUT FOR PFI SUMMER FIELD DAYS

Every PFI member should receive the complete Field Day Guide in the mail. As the newsletter goes to press, here's the lineup. You can read more about them in the guide or contact **Rick Exner** at 515-294-5486 or dnexner@iastate.edu We will also keep you updated on the PFI web page – www.pfi.iastate.edu

June 15

Gary Guthrie, Growing Harmony Farm, Nevada

June 23

H.A. Wallace Country Life Center, Greenfield — Guest Speaker at 3 P.M.. Frank Holdmeyer, editor of Wallaces Farmer

June 30

Central Iowa Community Day see p. 8

July 8

Dean and Judy Henry, Berry Patch Farm, IFVGA field day, with PFI cosponsoring — cover crops for nematodes, organic musk melons, followed by visits to Pat Black farm and ISU hort farm. \$15 charge.



(PFI field days continue p. 16.)



**PFI AG
YOUTH AND
FAMILY CAMP
MOVES TO
NORTHEAST
IOWA**

They're off and running at Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point, Iowa. This is the eighth year for PFI Camp. As we go to press, Shelly Gradwell has put together a better-than-ever program. By the time this newsletter reaches you, camp may be history – it's June 2-6 for Youth and Family Camp, preceded by Sustainable Agriculture Student Leadership Program, May 31- June 2.

You can still get involved

It's not too late to be part of the camp experience. The true cost of camp is always higher than the fee charged. You can still help support program costs for \$100, provide a camper scholarship for \$75, support a student leader for \$50, or provide camp supplies for \$25, or any amount. Send your gift to the attention of Shelly Gradwell, PFI at P.O. Box 349, Ames, IA 50010. Thank You! 🐾



COMMUNITY DAYS 2002

Nan Bonfils

You and your neighbor are invited to attend Community Days hosted by PFI members this summer. Here's the lineup for 2002.

Sunday, June 30 – Central Iowa



Open House 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. at Northern Prairie Chevre LLC at Woodward, hosted by **Kathy Larson, Wendy Mickle and Connie Lawrance**, aka *the goat moms*. Call 515-438-4022 or goatmom@netins.net

Saturday, August 10 – Western Iowa

4:00 PM at Rolling Acres Farm, Atlantic, hosted by **Denise O'Brien** and **Larry Harris**, in cooperation with Women, Food, and Agriculture Network. Come see Denise's imaginative system for raising fresh berries in February! Enjoy the orchards and turkeys too. Light refreshments. Contact Denise at 712-243-3264, hnob@metc.net.

Saturday, September 14 – Eastern Iowa

Z-J Farm, Solon, hosted by **Susan** and **Jeff Zacharakis-Jutz** and family. This is the Annual Harvest Fest at Z-J farm, the home of PFI's President. Farm tours at 3:30 P.M., potluck at 5:30 and square dancing at 6:30. Details at 319-624-3052 or zjfarm@ia.net

Last year PFI piloted this Community Day project. This year we are focusing on the three "open farm" events across the state described above. Each one will be designed to:

- reach out to new people in each community and better acquaint them with PFI
- give PFI members in each district another opportunity to get together
- network with other like-minded organizations

- showcase enthusiastic PFI members and let more folks see the fine work they are doing.

These community days developed as a hybrid of a traditional field day, see pages 7 and 16, combined with an open house. Typically, Community Day host farms do not feature heavy-duty field trials and research, but there's plenty of innovation to showcase and stories to tell.

Look for details in the Field Day Guide, at the presses now and soon to be mailed to every PFI member. We will also keep you updated on the PFI web page – www.pfi.iastate.edu

SOUTH AMERICA IN IOWA?

Rick Exner

We can all think of examples to show that the world is getting smaller and more interconnected all the time. Just get on the Internet and you can probably run into your own name several times out there in cyberspace. Practical Farmers of Iowa has also become known in some places you might never expect. Like Perú.

In fact, it turns out that Perú has organizations that, like PFI, are helping producers work for a better environment, more profitable markets, and healthy communities. And Perú has its equivalent to Iowa State University where scientists and administrators are finding new ways to partner with grassroots organizations to sustain natural resources and help people remain on the land.

This summer, PFI members and those in the ISU community will have an opportunity to meet some of their counterparts from this South American nation. We anticipate that this will be the beginning of a relationship on both an organizational and personal level, and we hope that there will be opportunities to learn and to teach for PFI members. In mid-August, PFI and ISU will host an event for PFI members and ISU sustainable agriculture faculty and students to meet representatives from the effort in Perú. If you would like to attend or have interest in being part of future exchanges, please contact Rick Exner, 515-294-5486, dnexner@iastate.edu.



SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES FOR ALL-IOWA MEALS

Rick Hartmann

All-Iowa meals have become a popular event. These meals, at hotels, conference centers and other locations, have local ingredients as their distinguishing characteristic. PFI has been acting as a broker between food purchasers and farmers (the PFI Grower Network) for All-Iowa meals in central Iowa for several years now. The effect has been to teach farmers and food buyers how to work together, educate consumers about the availability and importance of local foods and to provide marketing opportunities for farms seeking to establish themselves. Looking back on the 2001 season provides some interesting insight into local food meal trends and the local food scene in general.

Meal events using predominately local foods no longer are being exclusively arranged through the PFI Brokering Project. Groups who are planning conferences are becoming sophisticated enough to arrange for purchase or delivery of food directly from local farmers. Chefs and food buyers are also working more directly with farmers to purchase food. This is testament to both farmers learning to better market their products and chefs making a commitment to the local food movement.

Also in 2001, many PFI Grower Network members made it clear that the All-Iowa meals were

...testament to both farmers learning to better market their products and chefs making a commitment to the local food movement.



If you have a farm product to sell and would like to join the Grower Network, or would like to host a local food meal for your group ... contact PFI.

evolving into a vehicle for promotion, education and research for them. Farmers saw just as much value to having their product and name on the menu at certain events as the sale of the food itself.

This prompted an emphasis on marketing and promoting local foods. The Grower Network sponsored the first annual banquet for local foods education, *Harvesting the Best from Iowa's Farms and Chefs: An Autumn Banquet and Fundraiser*. Interestingly, even local farmers we don't normally work with on a regular basis donated a considerable amount of products for the promotion of local food systems.

Thanks to all the PFI Grower Network farmers in 2001. We made a valuable contribution to the local food movement across Iowa. We have challenged people to think more critically about their food and where it comes from. PFI plans, with your help, to continue to educate Iowans on the use and value of local foods. For the 2002 season, we would like the All-Iowa meals to be a self-supporting component of the Brokering Project. We are also considering supporting the formation of a group that could viably supply regular and larger deliveries of fresh, local produce to institutional customers.

If you have a farm product to sell and would like to join the Grower Network, would like to host a local food meal for your group or organization, or would like to support the local food movement in your community, please don't hesitate to contact me. Dial 515-232-5661.



PORK NICHE MARKET GROUP

Gary Huber

A new effort has started to support the development of niche markets for pork. The Pork Niche Market Working Group (PNMWG) has met five times since last November. Its mission is to foster the success of highly differentiated pork value chains that are profitable to all participants, that incorporate farmer ownership and control, and that contribute to environmental stewardship and rural vitality. Strategies to achieve this mission include:

- Identify and address the needs of producers, input suppliers, processors, distributors and entrepreneurs currently involved in pork niche marketing
- Assist with the start up and development of new enterprises focused on alternative and niche pork production and marketing
- Foster cooperation and coordination among agencies, universities, non-profits, and others working to support alternative pork production, processing and marketing
- Foster cooperation whenever appropriate among private enterprises involved in niche pork marketing
- Assist with the development of promotional and educational materials on alternative pork production and marketing in Iowa
- Assist with pork niche market development on local, regional, national and international levels

Four teams are currently working to address needs identified by participants. The topics being addressed by these teams include: 1) production and herd health research; 2) credit and investment; 3) certification, market assessment and promotion; and 4) business planning and feasibility studies. A Steering Team provides oversight and Gary Huber of PFI serves as a part-time coordinator for the working group.

The working group has had participation from nearly 30 organizations, including seven partners that are contributing more than \$40,000 to support the group's work. These partners include the Leopold Center, ISU Cooperative Development



PNMWG Steering Team: Mary Swalla Holmes, ISU Extension; Marty Schwager, Iowa Pork Producers Association; Rich Pirog, Leopold Center; Jackie Gunzenhauser, Iowa Farmers Union; Dave Holm, Iowa Institute for Cooperatives; Gary Huber, PFI. (Missing is Tom Rial of the Greater Des Moines Partnership.)

Center, Iowa Pork Producer Association, Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, Practical Farmers of Iowa, and the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

For more information about the working group, contact Gary Huber at 515-232-5649 or fff@isunet.net.

BOOST FOR PASTURE-RAISED FOODS

Gary Huber

A three-state collaborative project to conduct market research on consumer messages for pasture-raised foods is underway. The lead group is the Midwest Food Alliance, which is based out of Minnesota. Other collaborators include PFI, the Leopold Center, ISU Extension, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture at the University of Minnesota, and the Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems at the University of Wisconsin. Funding for the project is coming from partner groups and Food Roots, a non-profit organization that recently changed its name from Fires of Hope.

The project will work to research and develop strategic consumer communication messages and strategies for pasture-raised products marketed directly to consumers in the Midwest. Activities will include polling and focus group research in the

PFI Leadership Campaign 2002

Yes! I would like to help support PFI. Enclosed please find my tax deductible contribution in the amount of:

50 100 250 500 1000 Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone # _____

Check here if you want your gift to remain anonymous.

Return this card to the address on the other side.

Special thanks to these folks who have contributed to the Leadership Campaign since our last quarterly newsletter. For a complete list of donors, see *The Practical Farmer*, vol. 16, #4, p. 10.

Barbara Sanders, Waterloo

**Clare Hinrichs
and Tom Richard, Ames**

Your gift is always welcome. 🍷

three states, followed by the development of communication messages and strategies for farmers and cooperatives that are marketing pasture-raised food products.

Input from PFI members who market pasture-raised foods would be helpful, especially concerning key marketing questions they would like answered. If this is you, please contact Gary Huber at 515-232-5649 or ftf@isunet.net. 🍷

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Dundatscheck
Membership Services Coordinator

This is an exciting time for me. Not only because it's springtime, (the fresh smells of overturned soils, newly emerging seedlings, and all those morels to hunt!) but also because of the new blood that keeps enriching PFI. I am lucky enough to have immediate contact with people who walk directly into my office and share their vision about farming with me. Take Brian Keehner, an ISU student originally from Northeast Iowa. He wants to get into farming like his father, but also wants to learn more about marketing and developing the business savvy to survive in today's economy. Brian wants to try newer, more ecologically sound farming practices and get away from the more conventional commodities production. He is excited about the

future and is turning to PFI to access the tools for his success. We wish you luck, Brian, and all the rest of the new PFI members this season!

Editor's note: This list was prepared as the newsletter went to press. The folks listed below have joined PFI since February 2002. If you feel you have been overlooked, please contact Nancy Dundatscheck at 515-232-5661.

District 1

Brian and E.N. Blessington, Breda

Jim and Janene Combes, Nemaha

Elaine Knudson, Sergeant Bluff

Merle D. and Millie Oxley, Sac City

D.G. and Rosemary Partridge, Wall Lake

Susan and Mark Wheeler, Sioux City

District 2

Scott and Kristy Garber, Marshalltown

Brian Keehner, Ames

District 3

Solveig Hanson, Postville

(New members continued next page.)

**Your gift to the PFI Leadership campaign is tax deductible.
Enclose a check written to Practical Farmers of Iowa
with this completed form and mail it to
P.O. Box 349, Ames, IA 50036-0349.
Thank you.**

District 4

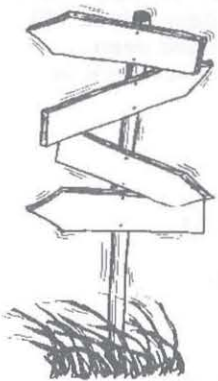
Marty and Sheila Bintner, Brayton
Dr. Ken Henrichse, Winterset
Jim Nelson, Manilla
David North, Perry
Richard Rauterkis, Shelby

District 5

Joe Eichelberg, Wayland
Kenneth Gingerich, Iowa City
Neil and Rebecca Goltz, Grinnell
Tanya Meyer, Williamsburg

Out of State

Paul D. Johnson, Perry, KS



BOARD BUSINESS: KEEPING THE ROWS STRAIGHT

As we enter the busy planting season, it's a good time to thank PFI board members for their work. Serving on the PFI board is voluntary. By PFI bylaws, board members must be farmers to be district directors. The ten voting board members and two advisory board members gather quarterly "to keep the rows straight." There is also an annual two-day planning retreat.

In between there are emails and phone calls, envelopes, faxes, and messages of all sorts. (Contact information is on the back cover of the newsletter.) Board members aspire to serve the membership and guard the resources of the organization while moving its mission forward. In this section of the newsletter we give you a chance to become better acquainted with board members elected in 2002. You can also read up on district events.

Meet Nina Biensen, District 2 Director

I graduated with a BS in Animal Science from Iowa State University in 1975, a time synonymous with the earth cooling. While at Iowa State, I captured my husband Kelly; we were married and proceeded to live on his family farm. We have one son Ryan, who will be 19 shortly.

Although the farm involves 248 acres of tillable ground, the main income source is from raising hogs. Our hog operation consists of approximately 125 purebred Berkshire sows and we sell breeding stock. When the disastrous hog market struck in 1998-1999, it spurred us to start direct marketing pork as **Eden Farms** to the "white table cloth" restaurants in Des Moines and Ames.

While no chef would buy pork from us based on our claim that it was the best pork, they willingly bought the pork on the basis that it came from a small, family farm. Because of the demand for premium pork by out-of-state restaurants, Eden Farms has joined with Harker's to cut, then distribute the pork throughout 18 Midwestern states. Through this channel, independent producers



raising high percentage Berkshire pigs are paid a premium on the pigs that they market.

In addition to the hogs, the farm is home to two working livestock dogs who metamorphose into chickens during thunderstorms. Two working farm cats also insist on sneaking into the house and having their litters in the nooks and crannies. I also have two quarter horses, which can be ridden or driven, but are primarily for aesthetic value at the present time.

I am a member of the First Presbyterian Church in State Center where I have taught Sunday School to both preschool and junior high students. I have served as deacon and as chairperson of the deacons. Additionally, I am a wrestling official with USA Wrestling and volunteer my time throughout late spring and early summer to officiate freestyle and greco wrestling tournaments for athletes between 6 and 18 years old. I have also served as the wrestling commissioner for the Iowa Games for 12 years.

In my spare time, I work full time for the USDA in their Des Moines office. 🐾

Elliott and Kirschenmann Speak at District 2 Meeting in February

Nina Biensen

The District 2 meeting of Practical Farmers of Iowa was held Saturday, February 23, 2002 at the Maynes Grove Four Season Lodge just south of Hampton. Speakers for the meeting were **Wende Elliott** on "Wholesome Harvest - an organic meat marketing alliance" and **Fred Kirschenmann**.

...those producers who have the greatest potential to survive will be the ones who have differentiated products and develop new market relationships.

Kirschenmann's topic was "The Increasing Need for Producer Alliances - What is Working and Why."

Wende noted that only 4% of the public's food money was spent at Farmers' Markets; 96% of the food dollars were spent in grocery stores. She was interested in capturing a greater share of the grocery store dollar for producers who were raising meat in socially -acceptable ways. During the 2001 marketing year, 8 producers sold products through Wholesome Harvest. In the future Wende plans to grow the market so that 20 farmers can be suppliers. Notably Wholesome Harvest has been USDA-FSIS certified regarding their organic meat claims. Wholesome Harvest is currently focusing on free-range chickens and ducks, with plans to expand into lamb and beef.

Fred explained that there were challenges and opportunities for midsize farms to build alliances as the access to markets would become more limited in the future. He noted that consolidation in the future would be driven by the retail sector as these businesses attempt to reduce transaction costs. He added that those producers who have the greatest potential to survive will be the ones who have differentiated products and develop new market relationships.

Barriers such as biased public policies and inadequate capital, and lack of infrastructure to support mid-sized farms exist. However, Fred noted that the climate since September 11 has changed. He pointed out that consumers were looking for products that they could trust and feel safe about. Additionally, food products that were produced closer to home were more desirable as people were looking for "good feelings" akin to the comfort food like meat loaf and macaroni 'n cheese. 🐾

(More board business p.14)

Leo Benjamin, District 1's New Director

Diane Benjamin

Leo Benjamin and wife Diane (that's me!) live near Whiting, Iowa. We have eight children, ages 10-27.

Leo was raised on a family farm near Onawa, Iowa. He graduated from Whiting High School. Leo graduated from Iowa State University in the last class of their 2-year engineering program. Even though engineering is interesting work, nothing compares to farming.

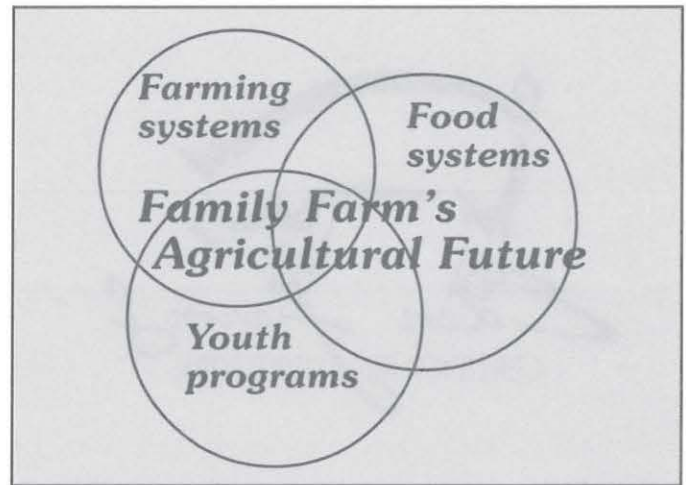
Currently we farm 500-600 acres; all are crop shares. Philosophically Leo avoids cash rent. He would rather have a partner any day than a landlord or employee. With crop share we cultivate the relationship with a landowner; we walk down the same path together. If we cash rent, the landowner and farmer take different paths. We are diminished to just so much money.

We raise hogs for Niman Ranch. We are slowly transitioning to more organic crop production every year.

Our reason for joining PFI is the support group from other farmers who think "outside the box."

Our reason for joining PFI is the support group from other farmers who think "outside the box." The reason for serving on the Board of Directors is the firm belief that we need more farmers, not fewer.

PFI implements this thinking through PFI farming systems, food systems, and youth programs. (See Venn diagram, right.) Leo would like to see them more integrated, such as a student/internship paired with mentors working through the farm/food systems that we each are developing on our farms to encourage younger people into agriculture.



The Benjamin family sent along this Venn diagram to illustrate their viewpoint.

District 1 Holds Winter Meeting

Meryl Wise

On Saturday, March 16, 2002, at 5:00 PM, District 1 held its annual winter meeting at the Townehouse in Sac City, with approximately sixty people attending. The Townehouse chefs prepared an evening buffet with food from local growers: trout from Chuck Ehlers, Manning; range chicken from Roger Lansink, Odebolt; and Niman Ranch ham. Supper was followed by a message from PFI executive director, **Robert Karp**, and talks by four other PFI members.

Chuck Ehlers gave an interesting explanation of aquaculture, or fish farming, which he does on his farm. He has found a niche market for raising walleye and trout.

Roger Lansink focused on green manure and cover crops for organic farming. The discussion concluded that all farms could benefit from cover crops.

Harlan Grau, Newell, discussed the art of neighboring. He told about his farm operation

In the true spirit of a cob roll there was plenty of time at this district meeting to ask questions, share information and experiences.

where he works with four other farmers in managing their farms together. With narrowing profit margins and increased expenses, one can see that this is a viable arrangement for many operations.

The final speakers were **Dan** and **Colin Wilson** of Paullina. They discussed the farrowing system that they use for their pigs. Their talk included an inspiring slide presentation about how their farrowing has evolved over the years from pasture to Swedish system to greenhouse. In the true spirit of a cob roll there was plenty of time at this district meeting to ask questions, share information and experiences.

District 4 Combines Potluck With Direct Marketing Workshop

Donna Bauer

Members of PFI and INCA (Iowa Network for Community Agriculture) came together for a winter district meeting on March 8, 2002 at Iowa Harvest Mercantile and Eatery. Iowa Harvest LLC is an "all Iowa" store located off exit 86 along Interstate 80. Formerly the Kopper Kettle, the building has been reopened as a limited liability corporation owned by shareholders, some of whom consign products. Along with a gift shop that opened last summer, a restaurant will soon be opening. "About thirty-five people attended, sharing in a wonderful potluck," remarked Gary Huber. "We spent the rest of the evening talking about our farms and families."

In addition to the evening potluck and meeting, an afternoon marketing program was offered, entitled "Marketing – the Creation of Value and Doing Market Research." Presenters were Brad Zumwalt and Dave McLaren, food industry consultants from The Food Processing Center at the University of Nebraska. The workshop was made possible through the North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability.

Meet Verlan Van Wyk, District 4 Director

I was born and raised in the Sully area. I grew up on a farm where hogs were raised on a new hay pasture every year. Feeder cattle came from a

ranch area in Nebraska. When ready they were trucked to Chicago and sold. I recall going to Grinnell to meet Dad returning on the train. We also had a flock of chickens for eggs. Those hens could sure intimidate a little boy!

In 1976 I started farming 50/50 with my folks, raising corn, beans, oats, hay, and a few stock cows for the pasture. A few years later I started farrowing to finish hogs.

My family members include my wife June, my oldest daughter, Erlene, who married last November 2001 to Jamie Fopma. She was very active in FFA Chapter and now works full-time at Pella Hospital.

Hannah is a senior at Sully and is excited for college this fall. She spent her junior year in Germany as a Rotary Exchange Student. She traveled throughout many countries while there and is invited back this summer to visit her family.

Amber is a freshman in high school and is actively involved in FFA and many other school activities. She will be attending FFA Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. this summer.

Andrew is in 3rd grade. He loves playing Game Boy and playing with pet kittens. Aaron is in kindergarten and enjoys rough housing with brother and Dad. The boys love to explore creeks and two years back enjoyed a trip to Colorado and



Like father, like son – meet Verlan Van Wyk, right.

Arizona. They loved hiking the trails and exploring the area.

They also enjoy going to grandparents and playing with cousins on their Century Farm – the same farm their mother, grandfather and great-granma were born and raised on. This is the only home Grampa has ever lived in. At 87, he still has cows in the lot and enjoys tending to them. He has no plans of moving. He is a great storyteller and I have learned an abundance of history through his stories.

Grampa is a great storyteller and I have learned an abundance of history through his stories.

He tells of his grandfather's coming to America. He was shipwrecked, rescued and returned by freighter to Europe where he wrote a book of his adventures. He was later successful in getting to America and on to the Pella area.

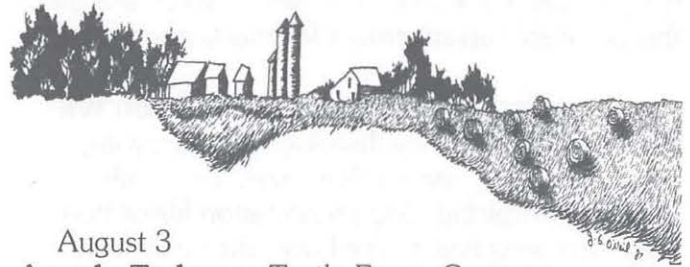
In 1865 this same man took his family to Oregon by boat- down the Mississippi River, across Panama and up the west coast. They lived and worked there until 1870 and then traveled back to Iowa on the new railroad. He returned with a pouch of gold that he used to buy the family farm. Grampa's mother and father purchased the farm from him in 1905 and then Grampa bought it in 1957 after the death of his mother.

I have been a PFI member for 3 years and raise cows and calves, feeding out calves.

Today I have converted some acres to organic crop production. I attended 3 winter workshops and enjoyed meeting new people with common interests and have learned a considerable amount of information. The boys attended PFI camp and enjoyed the opportunity. I see lots of benefits in offering these camps to the youth and would like more of these offered.

Practical Farmers of Iowa

(Summer field days continued from p. 7.)



August 3

Angela Tedesco, Turtle Farm, Granger
Potato Harvest Festival

August 6

Dennis and Eve Abbas farm, Hampton. Topics: sustainable agriculture and landlord-tenant relations (with a panel of land owners and the farmers who rent or custom farm their land) and equipment hygiene for identity preserved grains.

August 10

Western Iowa Community Day, Atlantic, see page 8

August 20

Neely-Kinyon Research Farm

August 23

Wilson Farms, Paullina and **Mugge Farm**, Sutherland — farrowing in a greenhouse, with Dr. Liz Wagstrom, National Pork Board, on alternatives to antibiotics, triticale, chickling vetch, open-pollinated and varietal hybrid corn, shelterbelt in prairie

August 24

Dordt College Ag Stewardship Center

September 12

Dick and Sharon Thompson, Boone

September 14

Tom Wahl and Kathy Dice, Wapello.
Edible fruit and nut crops from trees and shrubs

September 14

Eastern Iowa Community Day, Solon, see page 8

For details on field days, contact **Rick Exner**, Farming Systems Coordinator, at **515-294-5486** or dnexner@iastate.edu

Practical Farmers of Iowa

P.O. Box 349, Ames, IA 50010-0349

May, 2002

Dear Members,

At the business meeting section of the Annual Meeting last January I mentioned several things that I'd like to give you a further update on.

Annual Report

First of all I mentioned that we were hoping to publish an annual report of our activities, which would include a financial report on our last fiscal year. As it turns out we have decided to hold off on creating our first full fledged annual report until next year, after we have completed the "communications plan" which I described in my earlier article. This just seems to make more sense, especially since we have nearly reached the halfway mark of this year. Most of the information that would be in an annual report is also currently available via past newsletters, the website, and hand-outs from the Annual Meeting. Thank you for your patience.

Financial Report

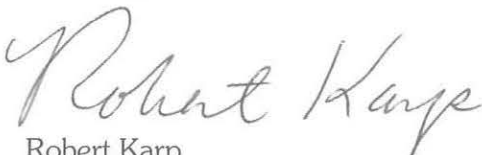
On the next page, however, we have provided a financial report which we feel is important to share with all members. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about this report.

Ballot on Voting Rights and Farmer Definition

I also reported that this Spring we would be sending out a ballot concerning two important proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Organization. These changes, if approved by a majority vote, would allow all members – non-farmers as well as farmers—to have voting rights within the organization. Currently only farmers have voting rights. You would still have to be a farmer, however, to serve on the Board of Directors. Members will also be asked to vote on changing the definition of farmer as stated in the PFI Articles of Incorporation. The current definition is based on "farming as a significant part of one's total income." The proposed definition would be based on anyone who files a Schedule F on their federal income tax return.

The update is simply that all voting members should still expect to get a ballot in late June. The ballot will come with a letter that describes why this ballot is being put to the members, along with an explanation of the pro's and con's of these changes. Please feel free to contact me on this matter with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,



Robert Karp
Executive Director

Practical Farmers of Iowa

Statement of Activities

Year Ended September 30, 2001

Revenue:

Contributions	7,369
Grants	244,239
Interest	7,904
Membership Dues	14,621
Miscellaneous	21,848

Total Revenue

295,981

Expenses:

Program Expenses	310,465
Administration	3,630
Board Expenses	3,822
Depreciation	978

Total Expenses

318,895

Decrease in net assets:

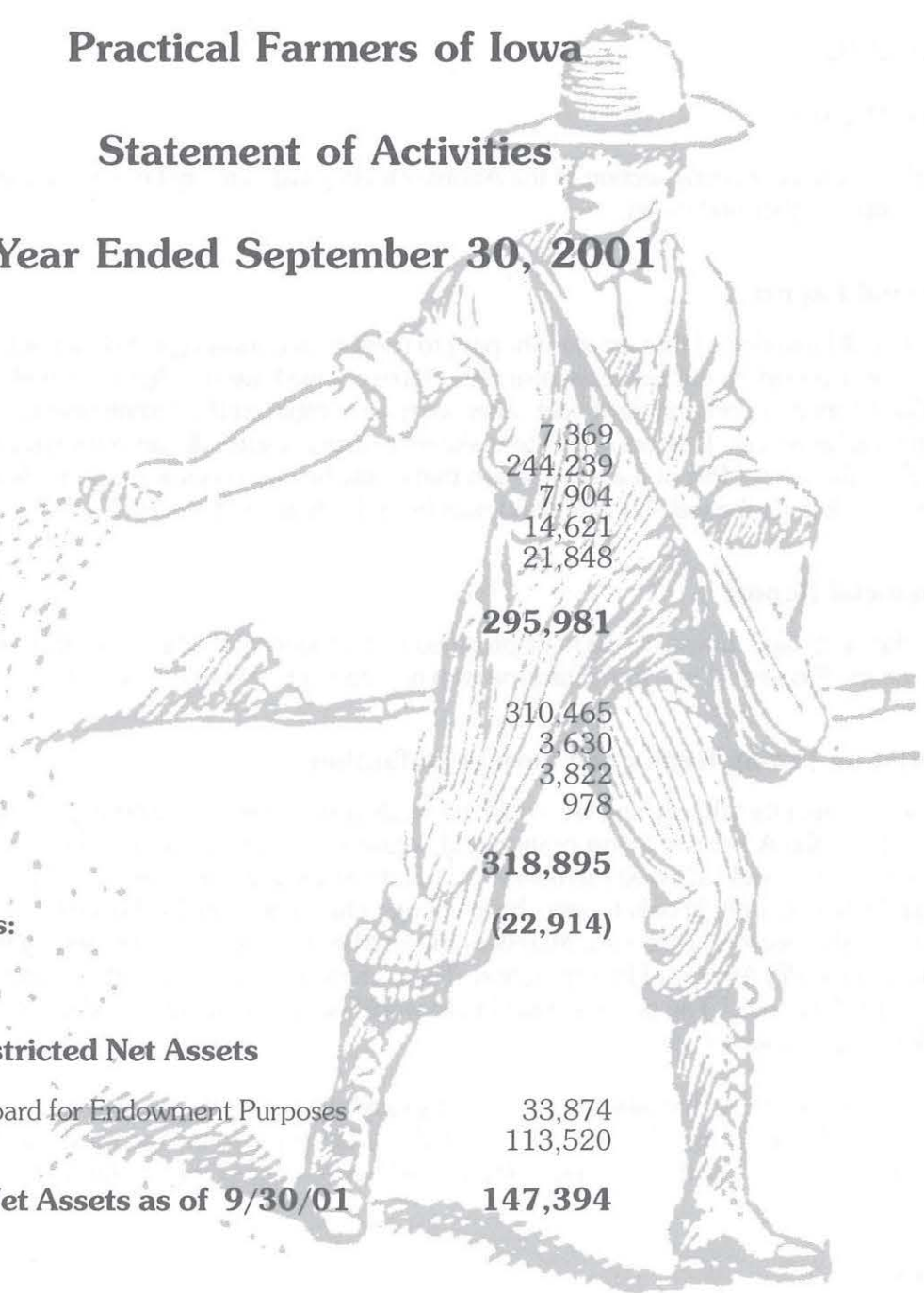
(22,914)

Breakdown of Unrestricted Net Assets

Designated by the Board for Endowment Purposes	33,874
Undesignated	113,520

Total Unrestricted Net Assets as of 9/30/01

147,394



PFI 2001 ON-FARM TRIAL RESULTS - II

(Editor's note: Ahh, spring. Thinking about what to plant and how to plant it. That applies to both veggies and our typical field crops, as this sampling of research from 2001 illustrates. Spring is also a good time to deal with livestock health issues such as parasites. We include some of last year's findings.)

Veggies: Varieties, Fertilization, & Planting

Variety questions have been part of **Angela Tedesco's** thinking about summer squash in the last several years. In the past, cucumber beetles have devastated the squash in Angela's CSA garden near Granger. Beginning in 2000, she examined ways to foil the beetles. Using two different varieties, she compared three planting methods: direct seeding in the garden; direct seeding followed by a fabric cover until flowering; and transplanting starts



The squash transplants were out of the greenhouse by the time of the field day.

Reading Numbers, Knowing Terms

When you see the outcome of a PFI trial, you also see a statistical indication of the strength of the difference observed. The following information should help you to understand the reports of the trials contained in this report. The symbol "*" shows that there was a "statistically significant" difference between treatments; that is, one that likely did not occur just by chance. We require ourselves to be 95% sure before we declare a significant difference. If instead of a "*" there is a "N.S.," you know the difference was "not significant" at the 95 percent confidence level.

Comparing Two Practices Many on-farm trials are of a straightforward "A versus B" type. These trials, which are easy to design and analyze, correspond to the typical experimental question "Is alternative 'B' better than, worse than, or the same as my customary practice 'A'?" This approach can be used to evaluate individual practices or whole systems of practices.

There is a handy "yardstick" called the "LSD," or "least significant difference," that can be used in a trial with only two practices or treatments. If the difference between the two treatments is greater than the LSD, then the difference is significant. You will see in the tables that when

the difference between two practices is, for example, 5 bushels (or minus 5 bushels, depending on the arithmetic), and the LSD is only, say, 3 bushels, then there is a "*" indicating a significant difference.

Multiple Treatment Trials The LSD doesn't work well in trials with more than two treatments. In those cases, letters are added to show whether treatments are statistically different from each other. (We usually use a statistical test called a multiple range grouping.) The highest yield or weed count in a trial will have a letter "a" beside it. A number with a "b" next to it is significantly different from one with an "a," but neither is statistically different from a result bearing an "ab." A third treatment might produce a number with a "c" (or it might not), and so on.

Economics Average 2001 statewide prices for inputs were assumed in calculating the economics of these trials. Average fixed and variable costs and time requirements were also used. These can vary greatly from farm to farm, of course. The calculations use 2001 prices of \$1.80 per bushel for corn, \$4.15 for soybeans, and \$1.55 for oats, and \$95 per ton for grass-clover hay in large bales. Labor was charged at \$9.00 per hour.

from the greenhouse. Tables 1 and 2 and Fig. 1 provide the results.

Coincidentally, cucumber beetle pressure turned out to be light for the two years that Angela studied the problem. The trial became more of a comparison of establishment methods. The squash with fabric row covers really took off at the beginning of the season. The Seneca variety was also a quick starter compared to the other variety, Costata. In 2001, the Costata harvest never caught up (Fig. 1); over the whole two-year trial, though, squash variety was not a significant factor.

Angela writes "The direct-seeded squash under cover had better total production in both years. (In the 'Seneca' variety it is even better than the numbers show because the uncovered treatment had 50% more surviving hills than the covered squash treatment in 2001.) It then becomes a question of whether the extra labor to cover the squash and uncover for hoeing, and the cost of the cover cloth is offset by the better production."

Cumulative Summer Squash Harvest

Costata and Seneca Varieties. Tedesco, 2001

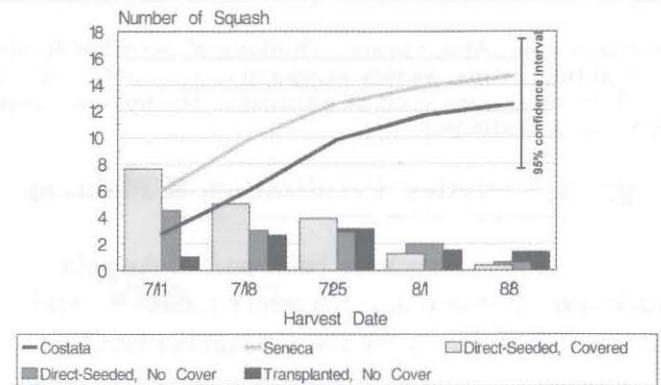


Fig. 1. Weekly harvest by planting method and cumulative harvest by variety in the Tedesco trial.

Table 2 suggests that the answer is "yes," marginally. But if yields are adjusted to equalize the stands, the row covers look even more attractive. Did the two varieties perform differently under the three establishment methods? Only to the extent

Table 1. Tedesco Cucumber Beetle Management Trial

TOTAL PRODUCTION						
VARIETY	DIRECT	DIRECT, COVERED	TRANS-PLANTED	VARIETY MEAN		
SENECA	13.75	16.50	13.75	14.67		
COSTATA	12.25	19.75	5.50	12.50		
METHOD MEAN	13.00	18.13	9.63	13.58		
TWO-YEAR MEAN	14.44	24.00	10.31	16.25		
HARVESTS						
WEEKLY HARVESTS AND TOTAL HARVEST, 2001:						
SOURCE OF SIGNIFICANCE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	TOTAL
PLANTING TREATMENT	**	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	*
VARIETY	*	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
WEEKLY HARVESTS AND TOTAL HARVEST, COMBINED YEARS:						
SOURCE OF SIGNIFICANCE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	TOTAL
PLANTING TREATMENT	**	**	**	N.S.	N.S.	**
VARIETY	**	N.S.	*	**	**	N.S.

* SIGNIFICANT AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL. ** SIGNIFICANT AT 99% CONFIDENCE.

that Seneca is an early starter, and the row covers especially boost the first week or two of harvests.

In Angela's trial, transplanting starts from the greenhouse was not even in the running. However, the question at the **Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center**, Greenfield, was not *whether* to use the greenhouse for bell peppers, but *whose* greenhouse to use. Center gardener Amy Miller and Director Diane Weiland wanted to know if it was better to buy flats of pepper seedlings or to start their own.

Purchased vs. Greenhouse Pepper Starts

H.A. Wallace Center, 2001

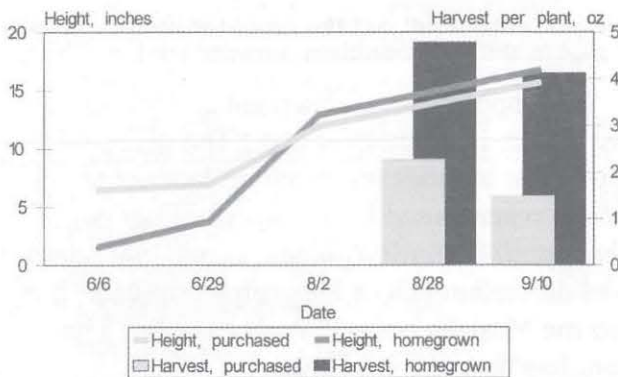


Fig. 2. Growth and yield of homegrown and purchased peppers (King Arthur variety) at the Wallace Center.

Table 2 and Fig. 2 show that, even with just two harvests recorded, the homegrown peppers easily justified the additional cost of labor and materials. Amy reports that the store-bought peppers started out much taller than the homegrown plants and that they began blooming immediately. However, they were vulnerable to winds and rain, which set back the harvest and damaged plants. The homegrown peppers outyielded the store-bought ones, perhaps because they adapted better to the garden.

Variety Comparisons

Varieties and hybrids were mentioned earlier as part of the trial by Angela Tedesco, but the so-called field crops were also part of variety comparisons in 2001. **Ron and LaDonna Brunk and Steve and Tara Beck-Brunk**, Eldora, wanted to know if

the high-priced corn hybrids are really worth the cost, so they compared some of these with cheaper hybrids, throwing in a few short-season hybrids as well (Table 2, Fig. 3). It was necessary for the Brunks to use two experiments in adjacent fields in order to fit all the hybrids they wanted to test. To compare across the two trials, they used the hybrid Pioneer 34B23 in both. Yields shown in the table and figure are adjusted to equalize the yields of this "tester" hybrid in the two fields.

As the table shows, the treatment cost (seed plus drying) was not always justified by the yield. On the other hand, just because the seed was inexpensive didn't mean the net profit was better.

The Neely-Kinyon Research Farm, Greenfield, also looked at corn varieties in 2001. The farm, which represents a partnership of ISU and the community of Greenfield, compared a common hybrid to an open-pollinated variety and two "varietal crosses" whose seed can be saved for several seasons. The varietal crosses came from ISU courtesy of USDA-ARS corn breeder Kendall Lamkey.

Seed costs varied drastically, from \$30.25 per acre for the hybrid to \$1.51 for the open-pollinated corn. Yields also varied widely. The cheapest corn was the least profitable, and the most expensive

(Continued on page XX.)

Hybrid Comparison

Brunk, Beck-Brunk, 2001

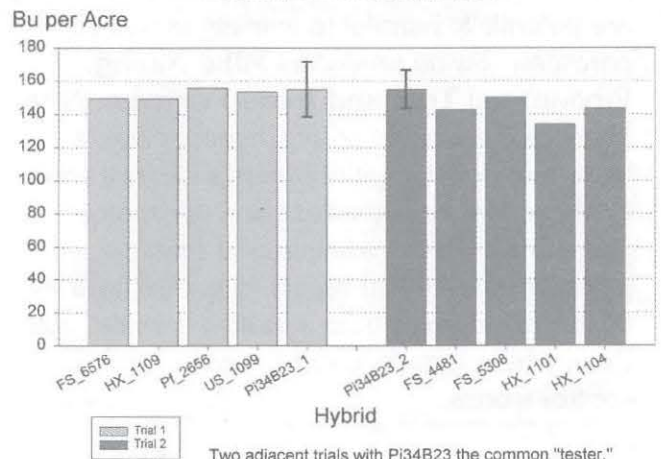


Fig. 3. Brunk trial of hybrid yield and net profit.

Alternative Management of Internal Parasites

With the development of new consumer markets, many sustainable and organic producers are looking for ways to raise livestock that do not rely on conventional medications. Conventional, synthetic wormers (anthelmintics) are effective and convenient. Farmers may have even forgotten the great lengths to which earlier generations of producers went to sterilize buildings, isolate vulnerable young stock, utilize clean pastures, and employ traditional anthelmintics.

Now the search is on for parasite treatments that will be acceptable in the new consumer markets. In recent years, PFI members and scientists have gone back to the old textbooks and considered traditional treatments used in other countries. Past PFI trials have evaluated commercial products, which are generally mixtures of a number of plant-derived ingredients. Those commercial materials tested were gentle on the livestock but evidently not effective on gastrointestinal parasites.

Young animals are most vulnerable because they have not built immunity to parasites.

In 2001, attention turned to treatments consisting of single ingredients. Some of these materials need to be monitored carefully, as they are potentially harmful to animals as well as parasites. Swine producers **Mike Natvig**, Protivin, and **Tom and Irene Frantzen**, New Hampton, evaluated oil of *Chenopodium*, a treatment popular with farmers a century ago. **Frances Zacharakis-Jutz** and her mother Susan, near Solon, administered tobacco and pumpkin seeds to lambs. They got the idea for the pumpkin seeds from a visiting scientist from Peru, where farmers use the seeds of papaya to control worms.



James Frantzen put out the gruel for the two groups of pigs in the *Chenopodium* parasite trial.

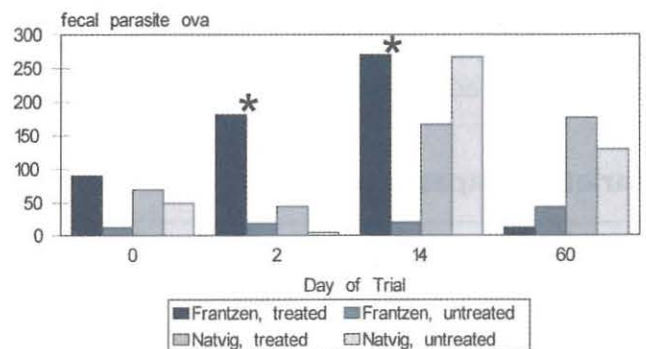
Chenopodium was described as “one of the best” in an 1860 medical text. The genus *Chenopodium* includes the common lambsquarters, but the relative used for treatment of parasites is *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, commonly referred to as Jerusalem oak or Mexican wormseed. It is also the Mexican cooking herb epazote. The plant has naturalized in Iowa.

Mike and Tom used the oil distilled from the plant, mixing it into a slop for pigs between 30 and 40 lbs in weight. Young animals are most vulnerable because they have not built immunity

(Parasite trials, continued on next page.)

Parasite Trials with Oil of *Chenopodium*

Frantzen and Natvig Farms, 2001



Oil of *Chenopodium ambrosioides* administered in feed with cod liver oil to 30-40-lb pigs. * Significant differences between treated and untreated on days 2 & 14 at Frantzen. Parasite ova not comparable across dates because of differing sample size.

Figure 4. Frantzen and Natvig trials with Che

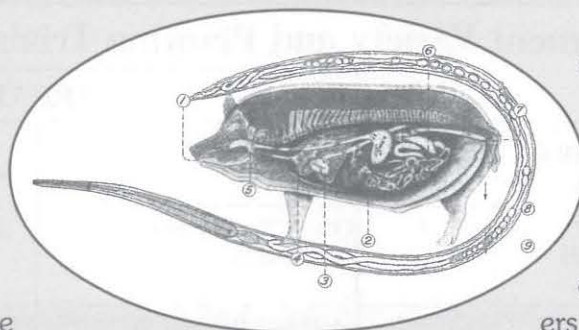
corn was the most profitable, at a net of \$75.14 more than the open-pollinated variety. However, one of the varietal crosses produced a net profit of \$56.61 per acre, only \$18.53 behind the leader. Kendall Lamkey feels this approach may hold promise, at least in places where the corn suitability rating is not high.

...this approach may hold promise, at least in places where the corn suitability rating is not high.

(Trials, continued on next page.)

to parasites. Chenopodium is said to paralyze those parasites in the gut, but it does not necessarily kill them. So a dose of castor oil was added along with the Chenopodium to clear the gastrointestinal tract of the tranquilized worms.

Did it work? Tom and Mike saw worms in the feces of the treated pigs a day or two after the Chenopodium was administered. Consistent with this would be the elevated counts of parasite ova (eggs) in feces two days after treatment at the Frantzen farm (Figure 4). But at 14 days after treatment, this group still showed significantly more fecal parasite eggs than the untreated group. And at the Natvig farm, there was no relationship evident between the treatment and parasite ova.



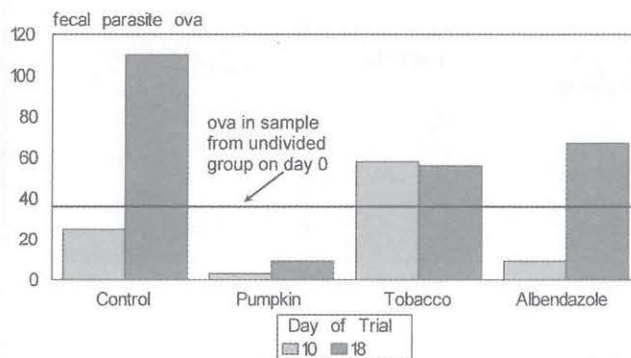
It is too early to say that oil of Chenopodium is ineffective. There was, after all, an effect in the Frantzen trial – though not the one expected. Did the treated group of pigs at Frantzen's just go into the trial more wormy? Did the sampling methods miss the real effects? Additional trials may answer these questions.

In 2001, Frances Zacharakis-Jutz continued her studies of parasites in the family goat and sheep herds. She separated 20 16-18-week-old Suffolk lambs into four groups. The control group of lambs received their usual daily grain ration. Into the feed of the second group was mixed whole pumpkin seeds at 6 oz per 75 lbs of body weight. The third group's feed contained ground tobacco at 1 oz per 75 lbs body weight. The fourth group of lambs was given the synthetic wormer albendazole at 3 cc per 75 lbs.

The bars in Figure 5 are based on an unreplicated composite fecal sample from each of the four groups at 10 and 18 days into the trial. They can be compared to the horizontal line representing a composite sample taken before the 20 animals were separated. That initial sample may or may not represent the starting level for the four groups individually.

The suggestion is that pumpkin seeds were highly effective in suppressing parasites, at least for the term represented by this trial. And Frances Zacharakis-Jutz points out that the seeds "are a very cost-effective alternative since farmers could easily grow their own pumpkins." Frances would like to see more research with more sites and different doses to determine if these results are repeatable and to optimize the treatments.

Parasite Trials with Pumpkin Seeds & Tobacco
Zacharakis-Jutz Farm, 2001



16-18-week-old lambs. Pumpkin seeds and tobacco administered in feed; albendazole administered orally.

Figure 5. Zacharakis-Jutz trial with pumpkin seeds and tobacco.

Assorted Questions

One of the strengths of PFI on-farm research is that the program has enabled cooperators to pursue their own questions. Of course this means that trials are often one-of-a-kind, and PFI trial designs allow each experiment to stand on its own. It also means that some very good on-farm trials are best categorized as "miscellaneous." Here are a few.

The **Dordt College Agricultural Stewardship Center** prepared for a 2002 corn trial by raising oats with-and-without an underseeding of Cherokee red clover (Table 2). The clover had no effect on yield of the oat crop. The cost of clover seed is charged to the treatment, making the prac-

One of the strengths of PFI on-farm research is that the program has enabled cooperators to pursue their own questions.

tice appear entirely uneconomical. Some of the value will likely be recovered in the 2002 corn crop. Other benefits of the red clover may include weed suppression, reduced soil erosion, livestock feed, and winter habitat for wildlife.

Dieter Geest, Bluegrass, collaborated with Dr. Charlie Martinson, ISU plant pathologist, to evalu-

Table 2. Multiple-Treatment Variety and Planting Trials

COOPERATOR	CROP	PREVIOUS CROP	YIELD SIGNIFICANCE	TREATMENT "A"				
				DESCRIPTION	YIELD (bu. or T)	STAT.	TRT COSTS	\$ BENEFIT
TEDESCO, 2 YEARS RESULTS	SUMMER SQUASH	OATS/VETCH	*	DIRECT-SEEDED, COVERED	133.3	a	\$16.25	\$1.45
H.A. WALLACE CTR.	BELL PEPPER		*	HOMEGROWN STARTS	28.3	a	19.84	\$29.85
BRUNK	CORN	SOYBEANS	*	Pi34B23 (USED IN BOTH TRIALS)	155.0	a	\$41.43	\$0.00
				HX_1109	149.2	a	\$26.54	\$14.89
				FS_5308	150.1	ab	\$40.10	\$1.33
NEELY-KINYON	CORN	SOYBEANS	*	PIONEER 34W67 HYBRID	108.1	a	\$30.25	\$75.14
DORDT	OATS		N.S.	OATS + RED CLOVER	94.7	a	\$22.55	\$0.00
GEEST	SOY-BEAN		N.S.	WHITE MOLD BIO-CONTROLS	51.7	a		
LUBBEN	SOY-BEAN		N.S.	INOCULATED SOYBEANS	45.1	a	\$2.40	\$0.00



BITS OF SUSTENANCE

The Bits of Sustenance pages are a place where PFI members can share their writing – stories, poems, letters, book reviews, experiences. Hopefully, Bits of Sustenance will give every reader something to ponder.

BOOK REVIEW: The Farm as Natural Habitat, Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems

Edited by Dana L. Jackson & Laura L. Jackson

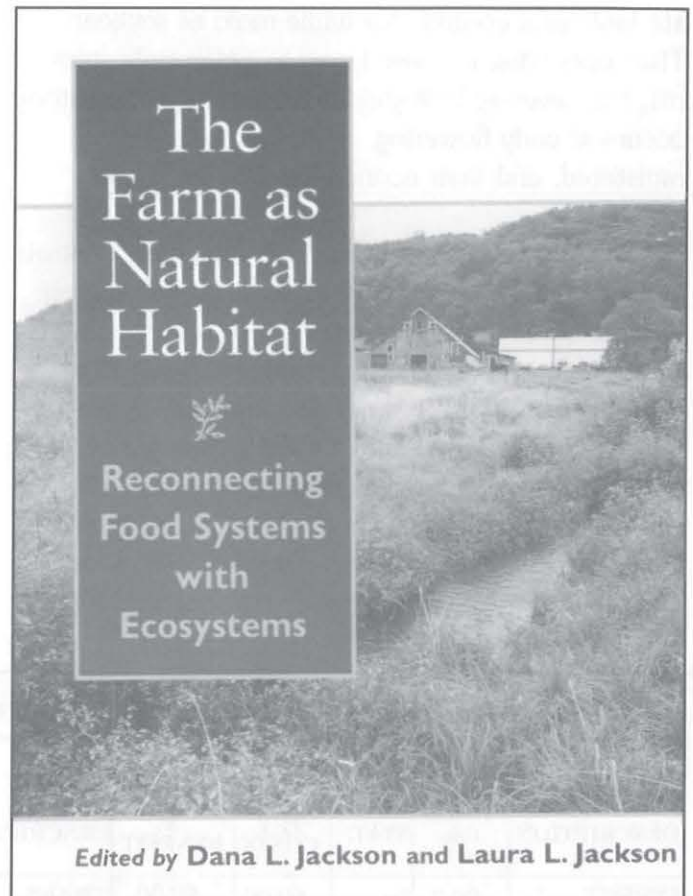
Reviewed by Nan Bonfils

Lucky me! A fresh copy of this marvelous new book, sent to PFI by the publisher, made it into my hands ahead of any other staff person here. And I have had to guard it with vigor from my associates. Taking it home is no safer; Don globbed right on to it. Why is everyone so keen to get their hands on this book?

The very title speaks to what so many of us are trying to live. Seeing your farm as a living organism demands an ecological view of the business of farming. It's no surprise the foreword's written by Nina Leopold Bradley.

Then there's the instant recognition of PFI member and staunch supporter, editor Laura Jackson. It's mutual admiration, as even a quick skim of the text brings PFI names to the fore – names like Frantzen, Specht, Krouse, Natvig.

[Page 1] "Laura's research and interests took her to field days held by farmers belonging to a group called the Practical Farmers of Iowa...We began to see that there were other farming patterns on the land and that there were farmers increasing biological diversity and improving water quality while staying economically viable. Why should people accept factory farms as the model of the future when there were farms like these that offered benefits to society rather than costs?"



Edited by Dana L. Jackson and Laura L. Jackson

[Page 6] "The book is divided into four parts. Part I lays out the problem as we see it: modern industrialized agriculture has become an ecological sacrifice zone impacting not just agricultural regions but also the Gulf of Mexico. ...Part II introduces the readers to some of the farmers who have inspired us to reject our prejudices...Part III explores some concepts that may someday amount to ecosystem management of agricultural landscapes...Part IV outlines steps that we need to take to begin meaningful ecological restoration of our agricultural landscapes. "

There are a dozen or more different contributors to the book, besides the editors themselves. Their professions range from academics to agency personnel to staff members of sustainable ag non-profits. The book, 250 pages in length, presents eighteen chapters. It's published by Island Press. ISBN 1-55963-847-8.

In its own press release, the publisher declares, " The Farm as Natural Habitat is both hopeful and visionary, grounded in real examples, and guided by a commitment to healthy land and thriving communities...essential reading for anyone concerned with issues of land or biodiversity conserva-

tion, farming and agriculture, ecological restoration, or the health of rural communities and landscapes.”

Furthermore, the notice advises readers to contact Island Press to arrange an interview with Laura Jackson. But I think PFI can claim her as one of the tribe.

Autographs, Laura? See Notes and Notices, p. 7, under Women Food and Agriculture Network for two opportunities to connect with these women.

Congratulations to both the Jackson women. Dana L. Jackson is associate director of the Land Stewardship Project in White Bear, Minnesota. Laura L. Jackson is associate professor of biology at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa.



Laura Jackson, in the straw hat, shares her passion for native grasses with guests at a PFI field day.

Please make note of our new phone number. It's 515-232-5661.

We have a new mailing address, too. It's P.O. BOX 349, Ames, IA 50010-0349. (See pages 3 and 4 for explanation.)

Beginning this June, most PFI staff will be working downtown at 300 Main Street. That's where you'll find **Robert Karp**, Executive Director, with his own phone line at **515-233-3622**.

The Food Systems Program office is also located downtown. You can reach **Gary Huber** there. His phone number will remain **515-232-5649**.

For **Rick Hartmann**, also of the Food Systems Program, and all other downtown staff use **515-232-5661**. This will also be the main number for: **Shelly Gradwell**, Youth Education; **Katherine Porter**, Intern; **Nancy Dundatscheck**, Membership Services; and **Nan Bonfils**, plus the **Communications Specialist**, to be announced soon.

Rick Exner, Farming Systems Coordinator, will continue to work out of 2104 Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, IA 50011. That's the mailing address to use for Rick; his phone remains **515-294-5486**; dnexner@iastate.edu

There will be **email address changes** for the downtown staff. However, older email addresses should roll over to the new versions. Stand by!

PFI Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
County _____
State _____
Zip Code _____
Phone # (_____) _____

new membership
or
 renewal

Do you derive a significant part of your income directly from farming in Iowa?
 yes no

Individual or family membership: \$25 for one year, \$75 for three years plus a PFI cap.

Please enclose check or money order payable to "Practical Farmers of Iowa" and mail to:

**Practical Farmers of Iowa
P.O. Box 349
Ames, IA 50010-0349**

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence to the PFI directors' addresses is always welcome. Member contributions to *the Practical Farmer* are also welcome and will be reviewed by the editor and executive director.

District 1 (Northwest): Ken Wise, 2820 Wadsley Ave., Sac City, IA 50583-7637. (712) 662-7716.

Leo Benjamin, 17636 Birch Avenue, Whiting, IA 51063 (712) 458-2001

District 2 (North Central): Mark Tjelmeland, PFI Vice President, 12461 650th Ave. McCallsburg, IA. 50154-8026 (515) 434-2440 ctjelmeland@midiaowa.net

Nina Biensen, 2454 Binford Avenue, State Center, IA 50247. (641) 483-2292. biensen@marshallnet.com

District 3 (Northeast): Walt Ebert, 1273 120th St., Plainfield, IA 50666-9647. (319) 276-4444. wngebert@netins.net

Michael Nash, 776 Old Stage Road, Postville, IA 52162-8577. (563) 864-3847 -3837 fax. sunspot@netins.net

District 4 (Southwest): Donna Bauer, 1667 Hwy. 71, Audubon, IA 50025-7529 (712) 563-4084 phone and fax, dbauer@metc.net
Verlan Van Wyk 15844 S. 88th Ave. E, Searsboro, IA 50242. (641) 527-2927

District 5 (Southeast): Susan Zacharakis-Jutz, PFI President, 5025 120th St. NE, Solon, IA 52333-9155. (319) 624-3052. zjfarm@ia.net
Tom Wahl, 13882 I Ave., Wapello IA 52653-9449. (319) 729-5905 redfernfarm@lisco.com

PFI Executive Vice President & Treasurer: Dick Thompson, 2035 190th St., Boone, IA 50036-7423. (515) 432-1560.

For general information and staff connections, call (515) 232-5661; write P.O. Box 349, Ames, IA 50010. Executive Director Robert Karp, (515) 233-3622. Gary Huber (515) 232-5649.

Rick Exner, (515) 294-5486, dnexner@iastate.edu, Room 2104, Agronomy Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa, 50011.

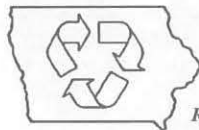
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