

# the **Practical Farmer**

A Newsletter of Practical Farmers of Iowa • Vol. 23, #2 • Spring 2008

PFI office has  
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Cover: Miller family boots lined up in a row. Find more pictures taken by Kelli Miller and posted on her farm blog on pages 8-9.

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Visit our website at [www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org)



## PFI, Profits and Policy



As PFI members, you all are particularly good at telling us what you want—perhaps because you care so deeply about

this organization. Your board and staff do consider the feedback we receive through informal conversations and formal surveys, and we're making changes as a result (as well as leaving alone what already works).

For example: We have received 57 member surveys from you since November. We would like to hear from more of you, but there are some clear trends in your comments.

Why do you belong? That one is clear: you want to talk with and learn from each other! Networking, community, and information sharing were commonly mentioned in your feedback. Here are some examples:

*"I belong to be part of a large community with similar values."*

*"I'm interested in connecting with people and learning from one another."*

*"PFI has always given me encouragement to farm in a different way with the details on how to do it."*

Our programming is designed to help

you conduct that networking. Indeed, one of our goals for 2008 is to offer members at least 90 opportunities to learn from each other. Here are just some of the ways we will achieve this goal:

- ❖ **Annual Conference**, including "U-Pick" and round table discussions that leave time for one-on-one or small group interaction.

- ❖ **Field Days**— Stay tuned for more than 30 this summer!

- ❖ **Farmer Cluster Meetings**— Pasture walks are scheduled throughout the summer and fall for those participating in the grazing clusters.

PFI has always given me encouragement to farm in a different way with details on how to do it.

-Member survey response

Many of you mentioned you belong to PFI because you support our mission and our vision for an Iowa with healthy food, diverse farms, and vibrant communities. One response: *"PFI is the best deal for earth-based ethics in Iowa today. Keep it up!"*

A number commented that they would like PFI to participate more in policy work. As part of its strategic planning process, the Board of Directors is reexamining its official position on PFI's policy role. However, I do want to make it clear that PFI is involved in policy work! For example:

- ❖ We just launched a policy web page, which includes our members' opinions on the Conservation Security

Program and other policy issues, plus links to our friends who have the latest updates on sustainable agriculture policy.

- ❖ More than 150 people are on our policy listserv, reading and commenting on news from the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and elsewhere.

- ❖ More than a dozen PFI members have gone to Washington, D.C. over the last two years to educate elected officials on sustainable agriculture. We feature members' policy comments in the press as well.

- ❖ Members are participating in studies designed to improve our existing federal programs, such as a study on how to make the EQIP program more effective and how to ensure that the Conservation Security Program does not penalize organic farmers.

- ❖ PFI sits on the State Technical Committee, an advisory group for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

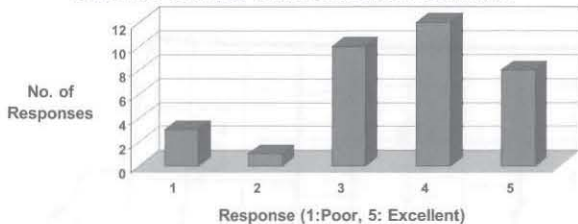
One of PFI's key goals for 2008 is to help farmers improve their profitability and environmental stewardship. A couple questions on our member survey were designed to help us measure how we're doing with that goal. We've included a couple of charts with the results. It's clear we can improve in these areas—and we mean to do so.

If you have not filled out and returned a member survey, please contact Cedar Johnson—she'll send one to you in the mail. If you have feedback on PFI's future directions, your PFI Board of Directors would like to hear from you as they work through the strategic planning process this year. Their contact info is listed on the inside of the front cover.

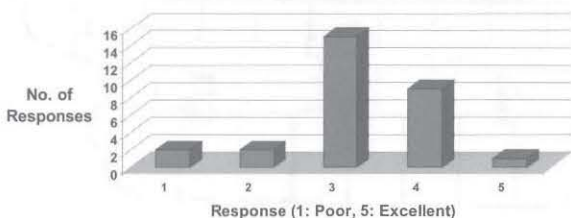
See you at a Field Day this summer—I'm excited by the schedule that is shaping up!

Teresa Opheim  
Executive Director

Has PFI helped you become a better environmental steward?



Has PFI helped you increase profitability?



## Sustain the PFI Legacy

Remember Practical Farmers of Iowa in your will.



Practical Farmers of Iowa has flourished since its initial leaders came together in 1985. With your help, PFI will be around for generations to come.

A planned gift (such as a bequest or gift of stocks, bonds, cash, life insurance, or IRA) will:

- Direct your dollars to sustainable farmers, not taxes
- Simplify your estate plans
- Perhaps even increase your income.

Call Teresa Opheim at (515)232-5661 for more information.

## New PFI Members- Welcome!

### District 2

Jerald Deal, *Jefferson*  
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Drake Larsen and Sarah Hargreaves, *Ames*  
Lisa Schulte and Peter Moore, *Ames*  
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Kevin Nauman, *Panora*  
Kevin and Sophie Ryan, *Davis City*  
Galen B. St. John, *Des Moines*

### District 5

Chris Jensen, *Iowa City*

### District 6 (Outside of Iowa)

Chloe Diegel, *Vergennes, VT*





## Program Evolves to Meet Members' Priorities

More than 100 people attended the Practical Farmers of Iowa Cooperators' Meeting February 7-8 in Ames. Among them were 51 farmers who worked together to set priorities for the PFI Cooperators' Program for 2008 and 2009.

Farmer research has been an important part of PFI since Boone County farmers Dick and Sharon Thompson started the on-farm research network of producers in 1987. PFI farmers have conducted more than 740 research trials since then.

In 2008-09, an exciting influx of new farmers will be working with our experienced cooperators on projects designed to improve their farms and their lives. These projects will include:

- ❖ Randomized and replicated trials, completed in conjunction with researchers
- ❖ On-farm demonstrations
- ❖ Monitoring and data collection projects

### Here's how we developed PFI's top priorities at the Cooperators' Meeting:

1. Long-time PFI cooperator members as well as a variety of new participants were present. On Thursday, February 7th, cooperators met in four separate breakout sessions (Grazing, Field Crops, Horticulture and Niche Pork) to brainstorm ideas and then prioritize those ideas.
2. The top priorities for each session were presented to the entire group and to guests (mainly ISU employees) at the Cooperators' Dinner Thursday evening.
3. On Friday, February 8th, the cooperators attended specific discussion sessions with our partner researchers to hone in on ideas and share conversations.
4. The cooperators reconvened after lunch to finalize the priorities and sign up for particular projects.

### Here are the PFI Cooperators' Program top priorities for the next two years:

#### Grazing

1. Native grasses and forbs: Establishing them, improving them, documenting grazing impact
2. Wildlife/ecosystem monitoring: Documenting ecosystem benefits of conservation farming
3. Carbon trading/sequestration: Capturing excess carbon through grazing systems
4. Determining quality grades: Live animal evaluation and other tests
5. Animal health: Focusing especially on parasite control

#### Niche Pork

1. High feed costs: Addressing them through feed substitutes, feed efficiency studies, etc.
2. Indigenous knowledge: Gathering information on pre-modern hog raising methods
3. Help beginning farmers take advantage of niche pork opportunities
4. Using more of the animal carcass: Finding new markets and products
5. Efficient and effective facility design

#### Field Crops

1. Cover crops and weeds: Assessing how cover crops compete with weeds and how to control weeds in cover crops
2. Cover crop comparisons: Which cover crop species work best on individual farms?
3. Scales: Weighing manure, straw, hay, and animals to improve on-farm data collection
4. Seed treatments: Investigating seed treatments available for organic corn to advance spring planting dates and decrease disease pressure
5. Field efficiency: Comparing the amount of labor, energy, time and fuel needed for various cropping systems
6. Manure analysis: Investigating how manure application timing affects crop production, weed stimulation and nutrient conservation

#### Horticulture Crops

1. Season extension: Finding more effective low tunnels; Using low tunnels in combination with high tunnels; Comparing low tunnel vs. high tunnel vs. row cover vs. no row cover; new crops production techniques, cost and revenue numbers
2. Cucurbit pests: Investigating controls in organic/chemical-free systems
3. Cover crops between rows during production: Evaluating weed suppression and soil building properties
4. Handheld data field device: To help growers of multiple crops track field conditions, inputs, cultivation, observations and production
5. Cropping systems as alternative to copper in tomatoes: Evaluate different tomato supports, pruning techniques, and spacing to find out which best reduces disease in tomatoes, especially heirloom varieties

PFI will use available resources to address as many of these priorities as possible over the next two years. In addition, other projects will be conducted based on the priorities set by the PFI Board of Directors and existing grant obligations.

Look for more about PFI on-farm research and demonstration projects in our summer issue. If you would like to participate in PFI's Cooperators' Program, please contact Sarah Carlson at (515)232-5661 or sarah@practicalfarmers.org.

Practical Farmers of Iowa gratefully thanks the **Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture** for its support of the PFI Cooperators' Program. We also thank the following: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Wallace Genetic Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Ceres Foundation, Wallace Center for Sustainable Food Systems at Winrock International, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, USDA SARE (Sustainable Ag Research and Education), USDA National Research Initiative, USDA Agricultural Research Service.



# Cooperators' Plan: Let's Get Started



## Water Monitors Get Started

Autumn Ogden (pictured above taking a water sample on her farm), Bruce Carney, Brian Hayward, Jerry Peckum, Mike and Laura DeCook, Lynn Rinderknecht and Greg Koether are participating in a project to document differences in water quality between different land use practices. They are working with IOWATER (Iowa's volunteer water monitoring network) to measure nitrite, nitrate, phosphate, pH, velocity, turbidity and temperature.



## Providing Habitat for Grassland Birds

ISU professor David Engle (pictured above at Ron Dunphy's Field Day) and other ISU researchers will be working with landowners in Ringgold County and elsewhere to collect grassland bird data and demonstrate the compatibility of grazing and wildlife habitat.

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It was a valuable meeting. There were things that people were doing that I had never thought of. I feel very comfortable with the set priorities. They were what everyone decided upon together.

— Earl Hafner

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## Gathering Grazing Performance Data

Tom German (pictured left speaking to a group), who coordinates PFI's grazing clusters, will work with graziers to gather and share data on animal weight gain, grazing days per acre, pasture management systems used, plant species mixtures of pastures (including natives), rainfall, and other information (no research component).



## Comparing Tomato Support Systems

Sean Skeeahan and Jill Beebout, Jan Libbey and Tim Landgraf (pictured right), and Rob and Tammy Faux are working on a trial to compare different tomato training structures to find the best system for keeping disease pressure in heirloom tomatoes to a minimum.



## Open-Pollinated Corn

Craig and LaVon Griffieon, Barney Bahrenfuse and Suzanne Castello, Mike Natvig, Earl Hafner, John Gilbert, Ron Brunk, and Laura Krouse (pictured above driving her tractor) will be participating in a project on open-pollinated corn. They will test and develop nutritionally dense corn varieties, breed corn with high yield adapted to low-input systems and breed corn varieties that do not accept GMO pollen.



## Resisting Oat Rust

Mike Natvig (pictured above giving a tour of his farm), Dan Wilson, and Verlan Van Wyk are working on a project to generate information on oat varieties that increase crop yield and are resistant to crown rust of oat.



## Helping Vegetable Producers Track Information

Rob Faux (pictured below) will be collaborating with other vegetable producers to create a handheld device to record all data aspects on a vegetable farm, such as planting dates, harvest dates, maps, yields, variety performance, weather, and insect pressure to advance maximum record keeping and efficiency for vegetable growers.





## Virtual Farmers

by Kelli Miller

A “blog” – short for “web log” – is essentially an online journal. It’s usually centered around a particular topic. Some lean towards news and commentary, others are more like personal diaries. Since their inception in the mid-1990s, the number of blogs on the internet now reaches into the millions. Google ‘farm blog’ and you’ll reap over five million results. But what does blogging have to do with farming?

We use our blog at [www.sugarcreekfarm.net](http://www.sugarcreekfarm.net) as a journal, documenting the happenings around our farm. It’s a great way for our customers to keep up to date and feel a part of our farm life. We also use it as one of our advertising tools. If we have an unsold quarter of beef or a last-minute cancellation, we’ll post a notice on the blog and more often than not someone will snatch it up.

Other farm bloggers from across the country are a rich source of advice, encouragement and inspiration. If you want to hear others’ experiences with a certain breed of livestock or find out what kind of fencing works best for pasturing chickens, post a question to your

own blog or to another farm blog. Farm bloggers are generally very generous with their comments and feedback! We recently asked our readers for advice on collecting payment from customers and received over a dozen extremely helpful suggestions.

We get around 700 unique visitors from around the world to our blog each day. A small number compared to many blogs, but having the blog has brought some wonderful opportunities to us. It was through our blog that a Los Angeles public relations firm found us and brought us – and our Silkie chicken – to Hollywood. Quite an adventure, and all because of our blog.

Even if nobody else reads our blog, it’s been a valuable and fun tool for recording the goings-on around here. Each year we can go back to previous years and see what date we got in the garden, or when the first frost hit. In the pictures we can see how our farm’s landscape changes from year to year.

Anyone with web access can blog. The easiest way to get started is with blog websites like Blogger, WordPress or Typepad. Some are free while others charge you for additional features and services. A few short setup steps, and you’ll be farm blogging in no time!

Kelli Miller farms near Osage along with her husband Matt and three children. They direct market naturally-raised pork, beef, and chicken. Photos courtesy of Kelli Miller. These and many more great farm scenes are published on her blog, [www.sugarcreekfarm.net](http://www.sugarcreekfarm.net).





# Farm Blogging

## Excerpts from Kelli's farm blog:

*Matt looked at me, hitched up his pants, and said, "Now I'm going to go get my @\$\$ kicked by a cow." He went out, grabbed that calf out of the mud, and hauled him inside the shed.*

*The budget is where we start our "number crunching" for the year. There are multiple parts to our budget - a budget for each enterprise (beef, pork and chicken in our case) and an overall budget for the farm as a whole.*

*Ribs are another one of those things that, for a long time, I was intimidated by. I had many rib failures before finally finding a recipe that fits my lazy cooking from scratch lifestyle. Indeed the recipe is not only lazy, it's perfect for a lazy weekend. Low and slow is the key here. Low heat and me cook you long time. I'm starting to drool just thinking about it. (recipe and pictures follow on the website)*





# A Delicacy Comes to Iowa



Jude Becker in one of his hoop houses

A recurring topic of discussion at Pork Niche Market Working Group meetings is how niche pork companies need to continually innovate to maintain their niches. An example of innovation is PNMWG member Jude Becker's effort to create and serve a unique niche with his acorn fed, organic pigs. Acorn feeding of pigs is a tradition in Italy and Spain, and is reputed as making some of the world's finest ham. Jude is selling these acorn nourished pigs to Kathy and Herb Eckhouse, owners of La Quercia Artisan Cured Meats in Norwalk, IA. *Acorn Pork* on the next page is an excerpt from a radio interview featuring Becker's hogs, conducted and aired by Iowa Public Radio's Rick Frederickson last November.

## High Feed Costs and Low Pig Prices: A Challenging Combination for PFI's Niche Pork Farmers

by Gary Huber

At the Practical Farmers of Iowa annual conference, we discussed the situation at a session titled "Feeding Livestock with High Corn Prices." Below are some of the ideas that came from that discussion. But first some numbers:

John Lawrence of Iowa State University recently estimated that with \$4.75/bushel corn and \$375/ton soybean meal, the breakeven for conventional Iowa farrow-to-finish operations would be \$58/cwt on a live weight basis ([www.econ.iastate.edu/faculty/lawrence/IFO122707.pdf](http://www.econ.iastate.edu/faculty/lawrence/IFO122707.pdf)). What would this situation look like for niche pork herds? Using actual 2006 data from 41 farrow-to-finish niche pork farms and plugging in these prices for corn and soybean meal, the breakeven would increase by about \$23/cwt over the 2006 average breakeven.

Given the reality demonstrated by these numbers and the low prices for hogs, it is not surprising that some farmers raising niche hogs are evaluating liquidating or scaling back their herds. And while this is a hard topic to bring up and discuss, not doing so would be like "whistling past the graveyard," as one farmer put it at the PFI conference session.

**What are some of the ideas that came from that session?**

**1. Increase prices for niche pork products to get more money for farmers.** Kelly Biensen of Eden Natural noted how he sent a letter to customers explaining the impact of higher corn prices, plus how he was going to have to increase the prices for pork products or he would not have the hogs and they would not have the product. He said he lost two customers as a result, but that he was able to secure four new customers to take their place.

What kind of retail price increases would be needed to

cover the added costs of current corn and soybean meal prices? Assuming 125 pounds of retail niche pork is sold from each 275 pound niche hog that is processed, the price increase on this pork needed to cover the added \$.23 per pound in farmer production costs is \$.23 x 275 pounds, or about \$63 per head. \$63 over 125 lb of meat is about \$.50 per pound. Thus, it appears that the retail price of niche pork would need to go up about \$.50 per pound to cover the additional feed costs.

**2. A long-term stable pay price is important.** Some companies in the PNMWG have set prices for hogs from their farmers, meaning the price they pay is not tied to open market prices. Having this certainty is very helpful in planning one's hog operation.

**3. Do everything within your power to lower costs and increase productivity.** Tighten down the feeders to make pigs work for their feed. Check for pregnancy and sell any open sows. Don't overfeed gestating sows. Seriously consider getting rid of any lactating sow with fewer than six pigs. Check the particle size of your rations, and carefully formulate these rations so you aren't wasting unneeded nutrients.

**4. Recognize that the cash costs for homegrown feeds are likely less than the market value of the corn.** This means cash breakevens for farmers who grow their corn are likely to be less than the above numbers. This is not to negate the compelling argument that selling corn would be a rational choice from a purely economic standpoint. However, homegrown feeds often have other benefits to the farm, such as crop rotations or assuring high quality feedstuffs.

(Continued on the next page)



## Acorn Pork

Courtesy of Iowa Public Radio, 11-13-07

A critical process in curing meat is underway in Norwalk, Iowa. Hundreds of hams are being carefully trimmed and salted by hand at La Quercia Artisan Cured Meats. Kathy Eckhouse is co-owner of La Quercia.

**Kathy Eckhouse:** "You want to make sure you have salt on the veins, and you want to make sure you have an even distribution of salt."

Husband and business partner Herb Eckhouse pulls carts piled high with hams into a cooling room, beginning the dry-cured magic of turning ham into prosciutto. Herb was working for Pioneer in Parma, Italy when the couple got hooked on prosciutto. Back in Iowa they perfected the tradition curing process and were just crowned "Food Artisans of the Year" by Bon Appetit magazine.

Their new venture is succulent meat from pigs fattened with acorns.

**Jude Becker** (calling his pigs): "Come on pigs, pigs, pigs, pigs."

Dyersville is home to the only acorn pig-feeding project in the United States. Farmer Jude Becker went organic 11 years ago and is finishing 50 Chester-white and Berkshire-cross pigs for La Quercia. When he drops a trail of acorns on the ground, the pigs come running.

**Jude:** "My feed salesman said, 'you know Jude, we don't even have a spot for acorns in our feed computer programs; we don't think

pigs will eat acorns, you're mad,' and we've found out, as you've seen today, that pigs love acorns."

Becker found his own suppliers, most of them in Iowa. The goal is to achieve 50% of their weight gain from organic acorns, which cost \$50-60 a bushel. The pigs consume 4 bushels a day.

**Jude:** "I've tasted all the acorns myself. I've found that Burr Oak acorns are the most palatable for the pigs, so were trying to get exclusively Burr Oak acorns right now."

Back in Norwalk, preparations are underway to receive the first pork in December.

**Herb Eckhouse:** "The flavor develops internally, so because of the protein and fatty acid components of the acorn, it gives it a sweeter, richer, very nutty flavor."

La Quercia is taking reservations. Thirty orders are already in. Buyers include Iron Chef Mario Batali, public TV's Lydia Bastianich, the Embassy Club in Des Moines, and Iowa chef George Formaro.

**George Formaro:** "Its simplicity is just by itself, properly sliced on a platter. I'm guessing it's going to be the tastiest cured meats I've had anywhere in the world; that is going to be my expectation."

For an individual, going whole hog with acorn pork costs \$3,285 a pig.

To hear the complete radio story, and to read more about La Quercia Artisan Cured Meats, visit [www.laquercia.us](http://www.laquercia.us)

(High Feed Prices)

**5. Consider the goals for your overall operation.** If you are looking for a balanced system where crops and livestock work together for the good of the whole farm, consider what the impacts will be of eliminating the hog enterprise. There may be costs to other enterprises.

**6. Every effort possible must be pursued to keep niche markets satisfied.** Many years of work went into developing niche pork markets. Not having the pigs to continue to serve these markets will negate all this hard work and investment.

If these markets are lost will they come back? Customers must also recognize that they will need to pay more to continue to get their niche pork products.

**7. Realize that in time prices for hogs will come back.** Those who are able to make it through will likely be in the best position to be rewarded with profits on

the backside of the cycle. How long will it take? Can one last through that time period? These are key questions to consider.

One farmer at the session thanked another participant for saying they wouldn't argue with anyone who wanted to

### New Niche Pork Production Handbook

Pete Lammers, Dave Stender, and Mark Honeyman of Iowa State University have completed the IPIC Niche Pork Production Handbook. The handbook focuses on the practical issues facing niche pork farmers, including bedding management, boar fertility, stockmanship, and improving feed conversion. The complete handbook and individual sections are available at the Iowa Pork Industry Center website ([www.ipic.iastate.edu/publications.html](http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/publications.html)). Support came from the Pork Niche Market Working group using funds from Value Chain Partnerships for Sustainable Agriculture (VCPA) project. Additional support came from the National Research Initiative of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (grant number 2005-55618-15791).

sell sows. Indeed, selling the sows might be the right thing to do for many operations. But there are other options and considerations, like those mentioned above.

There are also various resources available to help with production topics. These include the Niche Pork Production Handbook mentioned on page 3 and a short publication titled *Managing Pig Feed Costs* by Pete Lammers and Mark Honeyman, which is available from the Projects and Reports page of the PNMWG website (<http://valuechains.org/pnmwg>).





# Iowa Launches Farm to School Program

New legislation hopes to jump-start the amount of locally-grown food in children's lunches. The Farm to School program aims to increase the presence of fresh, locally produced food in school cafeterias. Farm to School also plans to provide children with nutrition-based learning opportunities and strengthen the connection between students and the farmers who grow their food. The program is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Department of Education. A seven member advisory council,

made up of farmers, food service directors, and policy makers, has been created. The Leopold Center as well as PFI members Earl Hafner and Denise O'Brien participate on the council.

Farm to School plans to create a manual to help guide schools that participate in the program. Since schools are equipped in different ways and each community is unique, one of the goals is to establish local Farm to School chapters. "What we want to do is work at the community level, where people know the growers and food service directors, and can build strong community-based support for the farm to school program," said Maury Wills, Farm to School Coordinator. This means that the farm to school program will have similarities throughout the state, and each community will have a program that fits best with their resources.

Wills, a PFI member, said the advisory council is working on getting some pilot projects started, with the hope to have operating programs

during the 2008-2009 school session. The first year of the program will focus on getting transaction and preparation processes ironed out. Wills stresses that the program needs to be well designed to have lasting results: "It's one thing to create a program and have passing successes. If we want some real change and want to make a difference, we really need to look strongly at infrastructure issues. There are a lot of people who have wanted to see those changes for the long time, and the farm to school program will give us this ability."

The Farm to School committee is maintaining a database of interested farm to school supporters. The list includes producers, food service coordinators, school administrators, and citizens who are interested in helping this program succeed in their neighborhoods. "The more supporters we have, the more successful the campaign will be," said Wills. If you would like to be added to the list of Farm to School supporters, contact Maury Wills at (515)281-5783 or [maury.wills@ids.state.ia.us](mailto:maury.wills@ids.state.ia.us).



## Golden Fork Award Recognizes Family's Dedication to Eating Local

Paul did his part eating apples and berries from The Berry Patch. Teresa gobbled fresh greens and vegetables from Small Potatoes Farm. And Rich, at 6'4", ate any fruit and vegetable put before him. Together, consumers Rich Schuler and Teresa and Paul Opheim received the Golden Fork Award for buying the most food from Farm to Folk.

"We want to buy as much food as we can from farmers we know," Teresa said. "The food is fresher, it's better quality, and we like supporting these wonderful people." Teresa also finds the online ordering convenient.

Marilyn Anderson, co-coordinator of Farm to Folk, explains, "Farm to Folk impacts farmers by assisting them in marketing their products and impacts consumers by making it easier to access local food." Farm to Folk provides an online ordering system that allows members to buy products from local producers. People have the option of purchasing a seasonal produce or dairy share or participating "a la carte," whereby they place an order each week.

Practical Farmers of Iowa urges Ames-area residents to join Farm to Folk. For more information about joining or to learn more about the farmers who participate, visit [www.farmtofolk.com](http://www.farmtofolk.com). Practical Farmers of Iowa is busy finalizing details for the Iowa Food Cooperative, a similar system, which will soon be active in the Des Moines area (see update on page 18)!



Golden Fork recipients Paul Opheim, Teresa Opheim, and Rich Schuler challenge other families to eat local.



## Grazing Clusters head out of the snow and onto the pastures



Catherine Rawitt and Bill Pardee of Decorah hosted a pasture walk as part of the Northeast Grazing Cluster last fall. The couple, recently migrated from California, purchased land near Decorah and are planning to starting a herd of Dexter cattle. Pasture walk attendees gave the new graziers advice as they discussed different seeding, rotation, and management strategies.

“If we could get better stands of legumes, we could back off on nitrogen fertilizers. And that would help the bottom line,” said one participant at a grazing cluster introductory meeting held by Tom German and Teresa Opheim March 13th in Ringgold County. Other farmers who attended also expressed interest in bird habitat, establishing warm season grasses to make it through the dry summers, and access to water for cattle.

PFI has been funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to form a Ringgold County cluster, as that county is a particularly important area for stressed prairie birds, animals and plants.

Established Grazing Clusters have been meeting in Central, Northeast, Northwest Iowa and the Williamsburg area. These clusters have pasture walks scheduled for the summer and fall and experts hired to do individual consultations on their farms.

In April, grazing clusters began meeting in Southwest (Corning) and Southeast (Centerville) Iowa. PFI will offer a variety of public Field Days this summer, with focuses on: live animal evaluation, production costs, forage quality, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. For extra Field Day guides (which will be mailed soon), contact Cedar Johnson at the PFI office. To join a grazing cluster, contact Tom German at [tagerman@netllc.net](mailto:tagerman@netllc.net) or (712)830-3281.

## Preserve Historic Barns

Historic barns tell many stories. Materials used communicate a timeline of when the barn was built. Architectural style and even the orientation of the building reveal the heritage of the barn builders. A barn is full of tales about the people, animals, and equipment the structure has sheltered over the years.

Some of these accounts are being lost as farms change hands or are bulldozed to make room for a modern farm building, cropland, or housing development. The National Barn Alliance is on a quest to collect as many of these stories as possible. Their goal is to get people to document their historic farmsteads as an initial step to help preserve this vanishing rural heritage.

Iowa leads the nation in the number of registered barns, with 640 of the 2500 total barns that are chronicled. There is estimated to be 60,000 historic barns in Iowa, but accurate numbers are unknown, and an estimated 1000 barns per year are being torn down (Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance). Help make the registry comprehensive for Iowa farm structures. To register your barn, visit [www.barnalliance.org](http://www.barnalliance.org). There you will find a survey form with instructions on how to complete the survey. Completing the survey will help define rural culture and will give you a chance to reminisce in the history of your farm.



Meg Prange Fabric Art of the homestead of PFI member Barb Grabner-Kerns. Barb won a Prange Commission at the 2007 PFI Annual Conference.



## Heather Johnson Joins PFI Board

PFI welcomed Heather Johnson to the Board of Directors in January. She represents the next generation of farmers who are returning to farm the family land. Heather grew up in Clay County, left for Des Moines after college, and then moved back to the family farm in 2002. She works for her dad and uncle's row crop operation, and has her own sheep operation. The acreage and farmhouse where she lives belonged to her great-great-great-grandma from 1885 to 1901 (yes, there are 3 greats there), went out of the family for a generation, then came back to her great-grandpa in 1930. He was a farmhand on the property before he owned the land. Heather likes that her property has a history in her family.

Heather started out with eight ewe lambs, and has grown the herd a bit each year up to 25. The family is looking at improving the genetics and taking sheep more seriously since Heather has returned to the farm and taken an interest in this enterprise. She sells her meat through a livestock buyer.

Heather also works part-time at the county extension office. Heather feels that she is able to promote things that come out from PFI and the Leopold Center when they come across her radar. Heather hosted a session at the 2008 Minding Place Symposium in April that focused on how farmers impact the land and how the land impacts those who farm it.

Heather is energized about her work on the board. "Being



Heather Johnson confers with fellow board members Eric Franzenburg, Tim Landgraf, and Jeff Klinge at the board retreat in February.

on the Board of Directors is going to be a really great experience. Just having gone over the strategic plan at the last meeting, I was really impressed with the way the board works. People are really open to share their opinions, disagree, and come to a consensus. What we're doing is worthwhile. I definitely feel like we have an impact on the operation of PFI. It is always encouraging to know that your time is well spent on a board like that."

## PFI Board Meeting Summaries

Submitted by PFI Board President Eric Franzenburg

### February 7, 2008

The Board of Directors met before the cooperators' meeting to discuss several areas of business. Discussion on an increase in annual membership was considered as a way to help raise unrestricted funds for PFI. The board voted to increase annual membership by \$10.00 for the individual and family/farm categories and \$25.00 for organizations/businesses. The student category will remain the same. Teresa provided the board with a review from the 2008 annual conference. As a whole, the conference was a success with increased attendance and overall satisfaction with programming. A list of potential speakers for 2009 was generated; if you have any suggestions please call the office and let them know.

### March 11, 2008

The 2008 board retreat consisted of strategic planning on March 10 and a board meeting on March 11. The strategic planning process went well with good input from all members of the board. We will now summarize the results and begin to address specific issues for the strategic plan for PFI during the June board meeting. Other exciting news includes the change in location of PFI's offices to 137 Lynn St. in Ames (just south of the Memorial Union). Stop by and say hello to the staff when you are in the neighborhood.



Nina Biensen, John Pesek, and Joyce Lock converse at the board retreat.



## PFI Board Welcomes Ann Cromwell

Ann Cromwell joined the PFI Board of Directors in January. She farms with her brother on their family farm near Williamsburg. Ann and her brother farm 250 acres of conventional row crops, 50 acres certified organic row crops, and raise a crop of spring chickens that she markets locally. The organic row crops have been introduced since Ann's return to the farm.

Ann is a native of Iowa who moved south for 20 years. She returned to Iowa

with her husband and two children in 2001 to be close to her family and spend quality time with her father, who had been diagnosed with cancer. Ann joined PFI in 1997 when she still lived in Alabama. "I can guarantee I was the only Alabama member," she said. When her children were born, Ann reminisced about returning to Iowa and the farm life. She became acquainted with PFI during a trip home, and decided to join to get connected to sustainable agriculture happenings in Iowa.

Ann likes that her children are able to grow on a farm. "I am looking

forward to giving the kids more livestock to care for and more chores to do because it is a wonderful way to bring up children. They learn responsibility as well as a sense of achievement."

Ann looks forward to the companionship with other farmers that she will experience while serving on the board. She is able to look at rural farming systems from a different viewpoint than someone who lived on a farm their entire life. "I have perspective in what high regard city people who are aware of local food systems have for farmers and healthy food," Ann said.



Ann Cromwell deep in conversation with Angela Tedesco at the board retreat.

## Sarah Carlson Jumps on Board

Q&A with PFI's Newest Staff Member

### What led you to PFI?

I'm from Northern Illinois and consider myself one generation removed from the farm. My parents both grew up on farms, and my dad farmed for a little bit in the 80s, but stopped during the farm crisis. I got my first introduction to another type of farming in 2000 when I interned on an organic diversified farm in Vermont. I learned how to raise vegetables, grow crops and take care of animals. More importantly, I learned about the value of local foods.

After college I entered the Peace Corps in Ecuador. I worked with small farmers to add value to their crops, build savings and loan organizations, and increase environmental sustainability in agriculture production.

In Ecuador I learned that I needed a better background in the science of agriculture, and entered the sustainable agriculture and agronomy graduate programs at Iowa State University. This was my first introduction to PFI, where I was lucky enough to work with seven PFI farmer/cooperators on my master's research in flax production:

- ❖ Paul Mugge
- ❖ Ron Rosmann
- ❖ Doug Alert
- ❖ Ken Choquette
- ❖ Art Behrens
- ❖ Dan Parizek
- ❖ John Veith



Last winter Sarah traveled to Washington, DC to educate public officials on plant breeding funding

### What is your role at PFI?

One project I'm working on is breeding corn for sustainable agriculture. I recently attended the Seeds and Breeds summit in DC to educate and to talk to farm bill senators about increasing research funding for classical plant and animal breeding. The number of public breeders has declined rapidly with an increase in private research. To insure access to diverse genetics, public breeders need to have funding opportunities.

Cover crops is another area I focus on. I work with a regional group of stakeholders who want to increase the amount of cover in the Upper Midwest by 30% within 15 years. In Iowa, I'm working to: test cover crops through on-farm research trials, increase awareness of the benefits of cover through field days, and search for potential funding sources to reimburse farmers for using cover crops.

I also support the grazing clusters with field day organization.

### What do you do when you're not working?

When I'm not working for PFI, I raise the most beautiful little girl, Sadie. I also garden in the summer and love to dance the salsa.



## Member News

### Ron Rosmann Runs for State Representative

Ron Rosmann has announced his candidacy for state representative. Ron has been a member of PFI since 1987, and served as board president and board member.

Ron and his wife Maria Rosmann own Rosmann Family Farms near Harlan. They manage 600 acres of crops, a cow-calf enterprise, and a farrow-to-finish hog operation, all certified organic. Ron grew up on his farm and took over the operation after graduating from Iowa State University in 1973.

Ron feels two of the most important issues facing his rural district are the continued loss of family farms as well as the reduced numbers of young people staying in the area. "We all have to work together to find innovative ways to ensure stability, economic growth, and quality of life," Ron said.

Ron has conducted many research trials on his farm in collaboration with Iowa State University and Practical Farmers of Iowa. He has hosted numerous field days and tours over the years. Ron currently sits on the Shelby County Extension Council. He is past president and board member of the Organic Farming Research Foundation, past vice president and board member of the Rural Investment Corporation, and a past member of the Shelby County Farm Board of Directors. The Rosmann family received the 2007 Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture from the Leopold Center.

"If elected, I pledge to work for fairness and justice for all of our communities."

— Ron Rosmann



Ron Rosmann, Mike Duffy, and Bill Northey speak during a field day at the Rosmann Family Farm in 2007.

### Enshayan Chosen to Lead UNI Center

Kamyar Enshayan is the new director of the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) at the University of Northern Iowa. Kamyar comes to the position with a PhD in agricultural engineering, and an impressive list of accomplishments in the environmental and agricultural fields.

Practical Farmers of Iowa granted Kamyar the 2008 Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award. Kamyar currently is program manager for the UNI Local Food Project which

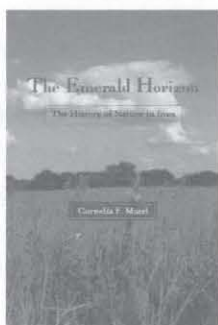
focuses on strengthening the local food economy in Iowa; coordinates Yards for Kids, a community health education program aiming to significantly reduce the use of lawn pesticides in Iowa; teaches environmental education classes at UNI; and serves on the Cedar Falls City Council. Kamyar helped launch the Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign in Iowa and consulted with other BFBL programs to help launch them across the state. Congratulations, Kamyar!



Kamyar accepts his Sustainable Agriculture Achievement Award at the PFI Annual Conference.

### PFI Member Mutel Publishes Book

PFI member Connie Mutel has published *The Emerald Horizon*, a portrayal of the environmental past, present, and future of Iowa. The book includes a detailed and lyrical account of our land as well as a call to reverse



today's erosion, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

"We transformed one of the major biological systems on earth into a working landscape within a single human generation. Now with all of the dedication and hard work that Iowans brought to the former task, we apply those to restoring the land," Connie says.

Connie is the historian and archivist

at the University of Iowa College of Engineering. She is the author of *Fragile Giants: A Natural History of the Loess Hills* (Iowa, 1989), coeditor of *Land of the Fragile Giants: Landscapes, Environments, and Peoples of the Loess Hills* (Iowa, 1994) and *The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for Prairies, Savannas, and Woodlands*.

To order *The Emerald Horizon*, visit [www.uiopress.uiowa.edu](http://www.uiopress.uiowa.edu).



## Application Open for Food and Society Fellows

The Thomas Jefferson Agricultural Institute is taking applications for the 2009-2010 class of Food and Society Policy Fellows. The program provides fellowships to professionals in food and agriculture from across North America. Together appointed fellows work to impact local, regional, and national policy through communication efforts. The goal of the Food and Society program is to catalyze a healthier, diverse, just and sustainable U.S. food and agricultural system through cultural shifts and policy changes. To learn more about the fellowship and application process, visit <http://www.foodandsocietyfellows.org>.



Curt Ellis (picture here at the PFI Annual Conference) and Angie Tagtow, both PFI members, are part of the class of 2008-2009 fellows. They are advocating for sustainable food and farming systems.

## Spencer Award Call for Nominations

The Spencer Award to recognize people who have made significant contributions to the advancement of ecological and economic practices that will make agriculture sustainable and the family farm secure for the future, and to serve as a lasting memorial to Norman and Margaretha Spencer. The award was established in 2001 by an endowment from the Spencer family, and is administered by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. The award includes a \$1,000 cash prize. Nominations for the 2008 award are **due May 15**.



PFI member Laura Krouse was the recipient of the 2007 Spencer Award.

## Harvest Award Call for Nominations

Do you know visionary farmers who raise amazing food and have also developed innovations in growing, marketing, and collaborating with their community in new and exciting ways? Are there inventive individuals, organizations or businesses in your area who are developing cutting-edge models to connect people and sustainable, regionally-produced food? The Glynwood Center's 6th Annual Harvest Awards recognize those who do an exceptional job of supporting sustainable, regional agriculture.

Help us recognize outstanding work from around the country by nominating someone whose work you admire. This year's categories include:

- ❖ Farmer Award
- ❖ Connecting Communities, Farmers, and Food Award
- ❖ Wave of the Future Award
- ❖ Good Food for Health Award

Visit [www.glynwood.org](http://www.glynwood.org) for details and an application. To receive nomination forms via snail mail, contact Kim Vargo at (845)265-3338. Information about Glynwood Center and past Harvest Award winners can also be found on the Glynwood Center's website. Nominations must be sent no later than July 21, 2008.



The Frantzen Family Farm (pictured here are Jolene, Jessie, and Tom) is part of the 1,200 plus farmers who comprise the Organic Valley Family of Farms, a farmer-owned cooperative. Organic Valley received the 2007 Glynwood Harvest Farmers award, awarded to farmers who have developed a sustainable farming operation and effective relationships within their home community and other communities where food they produce is consumed.



# The Iowa Food Cooperative— An Enthusiastic Update

The launch date approaches! The Iowa Food Cooperative will have its very own storefront at the Merle Hay Mall, thanks to a gracious donation from Liz Holland, CEO, and Linda Johnson, general manager of the mall. Thank you LaVon Griffieon for uniting the Iowa Food Cooperative and Merle Hay Mall! The location is better than the steering committee ever imagined. The Merle Hay Mall is a high profile and accessible location in the Des Moines metro, the store has ample space and is conveniently located near an exit for easy pickup and delivery. Other good news: the Blooming Prairie Foundation has granted \$25,000 additional funding to get the cooperative active. This grant supplements start up funding from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

The Iowa Food Cooperative will jointly provide consumers access to more Iowa-grown foods and farmers a market for their products. Customers will buy directly from farmers through a web-based ordering system. The cooperative is being modeled after the successful Oklahoma and Nebraska Food Cooperatives.

A transition team has been formed to lead the effort in its final

steps to fruition. This team will include members of the future founding board for the Iowa Food Cooperative. Public interest is strong for this program. Over 70 farmers have expressed interest in marketing their products through the Cooperative, and almost 200 consumers responded to a survey saying they want this type of venture in the Des Moines area.

If you want to be involved in the Iowa Food Cooperative, either as a producer or customer, and you have not yet expressed your interest, please contact Gary Huber at (515)232-5661 or [gary@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:gary@practicalfarmers.org).



Iowa Food Cooperative supporters and organizers pose outside the new storefront at the Merle Hay Mall.

## PFI Library Continues to Grow

Over the winter the PFI library received two generous donations that really 'modernized' the collection. Kathy Roth Eastman donated *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, by Barbara Kingsolver. As the dust cover describes, "... [it] makes a passionate case for putting the kitchen back at the center of family life and diversified farms at the center of the American diet." Our second donation was quite grand, about 80 books, reports and videos from the former Henry Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture library. Hats off to Andrew Hug for getting the process started and the new chair, Matt Liebman, for getting it finished. Some of the titles you might find interesting are:

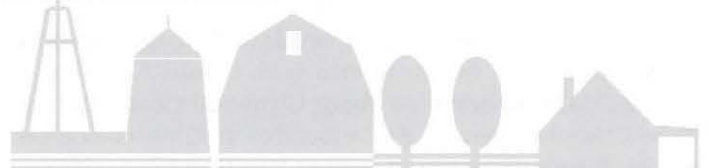
- ❖ *Integrated Pest Management: Current and future strategies, Council for Agriculture and Technology, 2003*
- ❖ *Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the barriers and opportunities for farm-to-school programs, 2001*
- ❖ *Mainstreaming Renewable Energy in the 21st Century, 2004*
- ❖ *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting food systems with ecosystems, 2002*

To learn more about what is available in PFI's library and how to check resources out, visit [www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org) and click on the library link on the resources page.

## PFI receives support from Wallace Genetic Foundation

Practical Farmers of Iowa is pleased to announce receipt of a \$25,000 general support donation from the Wallace Genetic Foundation. Henry A. Wallace, founder of the Pioneer Hi-Bred Corn Company, and his wife, Ilo, established the Wallace Genetic Foundation in 1959. The Foundation "is particularly interested in far-sighted groups and individuals with innovative ideas."

Said PFI Executive Director Teresa Opheim: "It is a thrill to get this much-needed general support. It also is a thrill to talk with Henry Wallace's daughter, Jean, about PFI. When she called recently, she particularly asked for updates about a couple of our members, Dick Thompson and Ron Rosmann. I told her they both continue to be leaders in the effort for an Iowa of healthy food, diverse farms, and vibrant communities."





## PFI Office on the Move!

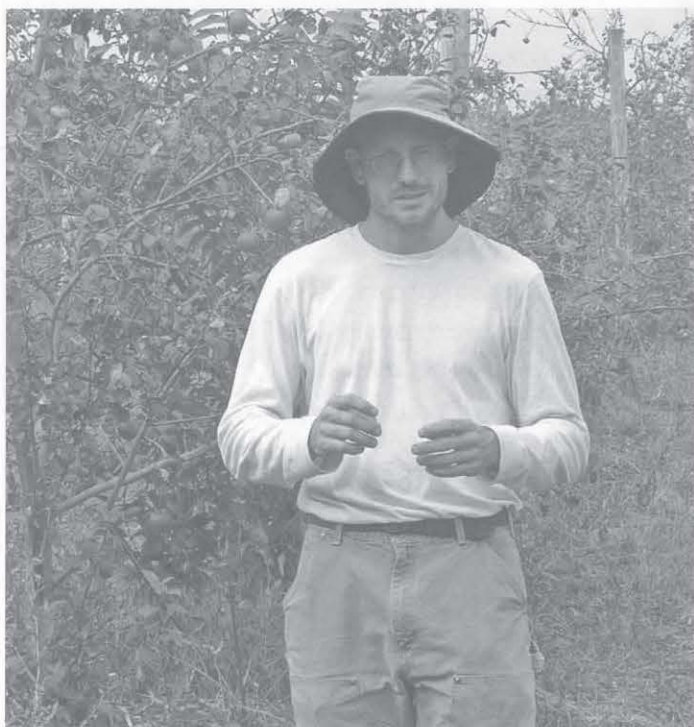
On April 15th, the staff of Practical Farmers of Iowa moved offices: to 137 Lynn Avenue in Ames. Our new offices are a block south of the Iowa State University Union in Campustown. The new offices are well maintained, bright, and include a conference room that is handicapped-accessible. Please stop by and visit! The phone, fax numbers, and email addresses will stay the same. Please make note of our new address:

**Practical Farmers of Iowa**  
**137 Lynn Avenue, Suite 200**  
**Ames, IA 50014**



New PFI office in Campustown

## PFI Establishes Gift of the Month Club



Jason Jones became the first member of the Gift of the Month Club. Thanks, Jason!

I wanted to give back to PFI because I have gained so much from them over the years.

-Jason Jones

Practical Farmers of Iowa recently launched a Gift of the Month Club. This enables advocates of Practical Farmers of Iowa to support the organization on a monthly basis. Donating to PFI on a continual basis gives the organization needed program support all year long. It allows people who want to support the programming PFI carries out a chance to give a little at a time and make a big difference. To join the Gift of the Month Club, fill out and send in the membership form on page 23.

## Financial Support Available for Organic and Sustainable Farmers

New Spirit Ventures, LLC is launching a new program for organic and sustainable farmers who need additional land or need help maintaining their existing land base. Farmers will be linked up with a socially motivated investor who will purchase the farmland needed and lease it to the farmer on a long-term (up to fifteen-year), renewable lease. The lease will include an option to buy at a fair market value if the investor ever wants to sell the land. A conservation easement may also be put on the land to prevent non-farm development. Farmers may apply who: demonstrate a commitment to the core principles of organic/sustainable agriculture, have stable

markets, and have been in business at least five years. Farmers should be able to offer, at minimum, a starting rental rate that is 4% of the land cost. The program is being managed by Robert Karp, former Executive Director of Practical Farmers of Iowa. A Call for Pre-Applications from interested farmers is being widely distributed in Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The pre-application deadline is June 15, 2008. To receive a copy or for more information contact Robert Karp at [orgfarminvest@centurytel.net](mailto:orgfarminvest@centurytel.net)



## Field Day Season Approaches

Spring is here, and the PFI office is a flurry of activity as final plans are put in place for over 30 field days! This year's lineup is diverse in topics and regions across the state. PFI staff planned the field days based on member requests and interests. Look for the field day guide soon in the mailbox. Find the field day schedule on the PFI website, [www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org).



### A Sneak Peek at This Year's Topics

- ❖ Niche pork facilities analysis
- ❖ Wildlife monitoring
- ❖ Oat rust
- ❖ Essential oil organic seed treatment
- ❖ Water quality monitoring
- ❖ Wildlife and grazing
- ❖ Tomato, flower, and herb Enterprises
- ❖ Transition to organic crops
- ❖ ISU meat lab carcass evaluation of a grass-fed animal
- ❖ Energy: on-farm biodiesel from oilseed crops
- ❖ Raspberries and weeds
- ❖ Sorghum sudan for finishing cattle, summer and fall annuals for grazing systems
- ❖ Examination of deworming cattle with copper sulfate, natural vaccination programs
- ❖ Wood lot establishment and management
- ❖ Marketing grass-fed beef
- ❖ Tomato support demonstration
- ❖ Vegetable farm efficiencies
- ❖ Fescue pasture renovation
- ❖ The pigs are in the corn
- ❖ Breeding corn for sustainable agriculture

## PFI Receives Bioenergy Grant

Practical Farmers of Iowa has received a grant to bring sustainable agriculture further into the public discussion of energy options by demonstrating a basic, practical cropping system that uses a fraction of the energy inputs as continuous corn. The three-year grant from SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) will include on-farm field days and research conducted with Dordt College and Marshalltown Community College and additional demonstrations and field days on the farms of other PFI members. Field days this year will cover farm-scale ethanol and biodiesel as well as perennial biomass.

The colleges will implement, side-by-side, a continuous-corn system and a three-year "gateway to sustainability" rotation of corn, soybeans, and a winter-or-spring small grain/forage with legume underseeding. Interns at each school will document the environmental impact, energetics, and economics of these systems and be communicators to their classmates and to external audiences such as Future Farmers of America.

For more information, contact Rick Exner, Project Coordinator, at (515)232-5661 or [dnexner@iastate.edu](mailto:dnexner@iastate.edu).

## New and Improved Website

Members have recommended that PFI update their website, so we have been working hard to make changes you have suggested. Updates to the PFI website include:

- ❖ Program areas updated to reflect the current focus of PFI programs
- ❖ Farmer profiles for each program area
- ❖ Members in the News page
- ❖ Updated photos
- ❖ Updated links and resources

The website renovation is a work in progress. The old program areas will remain until all pertinent information is transferred. Links will be added on a continual basis. Please visit the website and offer feedback on how you like the changes and what else you would like to find there to Sally Worley, [sally@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:sally@practicalfarmers.org).



## May

**Permaculture Design Certification Course**, May 3-10, Custer, WI. Midwest Renewable Energy Association presents Wayne Weiseman and Mark Shepard to lead this eight day permaculture design course. For more information visit <http://www.midwestpermaculture.com> or contact Bill Willson at (815)256-2215.

**The Homestead Plant Sale**, May 9-11, Pleasant Hill. Buck Roses, native perennials, ornamental grasses, shade perennials, vegetable starts, and herbs. All plants grown naturally without the use of chemicals. For more information contact Eric Ambrecht, (515)957-3361, [eambrecht@thehomestead.org](mailto:eambrecht@thehomestead.org)

**Towards Saving the Honeybee**, May 10, Angelic Organics Learning Center, Rockton, IL. Learn beekeeping methods from holistic beekeeper Gunther Hauk to increase honeybee's health and vitality. For more information visit <http://www.learn-grow-connect.org> or call Deb at (815)289-8455.

**2008 Product Costing Workshops for Iowa Meat Producers**, May 15, 8:30am to 4 pm, 98 Durham Center, ISU, Ames. Receive individual, hands-on instruction to evaluate cash flow and product profitability. Learn to use software to determine costs and custom processing rates for maximum profitability. Contact: Matt Wenger, ISU Meat Lab, (515)294-9279, [mwenger@iastate.edu](mailto:mwenger@iastate.edu).

**Loess Hills Prairie Seminar**, May 30-June 1, Loess Hills Wildlife Area, Onawa. Sessions and programs for all ages. Featured speakers include Tom Rosburg, Dan Mays, and Connie Mutel. Activities include field sessions, activities for children, Douglas Wood family concert, a campfire program, and a star party. For more information contact Dianne Blankenship at [bennaid@hotmail.com](mailto:bennaid@hotmail.com) or (712)222-6080.

**Introduction to Biodynamic Agriculture**, May 31, Angelic Organics Learning Center, Rockton, IL. Workshop introduces participants to ecological methods behind the biodynamic farming movement. The process of viewing your farm as a living organism will be discussed. For more information visit <http://www.learn-grow-connect.org> or call Deb at (815)289-8455.

## June

**2008 Product Costing Workshops for Iowa Meat Producers**, June 11, 8:30am to 4 pm, Hawkeye Tech Center, Cedar Falls. Receive individual, hands-on instruction to evaluate cash flow and product profitability. Learn to use software to determine costs and custom processing rates for maximum profitability. Contact: Matt Wenger, ISU Meat Lab, (515)294-9279, [mwenger@iastate.edu](mailto:mwenger@iastate.edu).

## July

**Kickapoo Country Fair**, July 26-27, Organic Valley, La Farge, WI. Festival celebrating organic agriculture features music, children's activities, farm and garden exhibits, arts, natural and organic foods and cooking, green housing, renewable energy, community health, environmental responsibility, and eco-development. Key-note speaker is Frances Moore Lappé. For more information visit [www.organicvalley.coop/kickapoo](http://www.organicvalley.coop/kickapoo).

# The Wonder Under Us

## PFI Youth Leadership Program

June 16-18 ❖ Ages 14-18

- ❖ Camp under the stars at Ledges State Park
- ❖ Compete in a cookout challenge
- ❖ Solve the ropes challenge course
- ❖ Zip down the zip line



## Summer Camp

June 18-21 ❖ All ages

- ❖ Explore Iowa's wild places
- ❖ Drink from a natural spring
- ❖ Canoe across a pond
- ❖ Visit a working farm
- ❖ Play in the creek
- ❖ Climb the wall
- ❖ Go swimming and slide down the waterslide
- ❖ Take early bird hikes

To receive a camp brochure or register for camp, contact Cedar Johnson at (515)232-5661, [cedar@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:cedar@practicalfarmers.org).



# PFI Merchandise

Be a proud PFI member!  
Wear a PFI shirt, cap yourself with a PFI hat,  
shop with a PFI tote bag...



**Casual Cap**—\$12  
Khaki, Velcro closure, “Healthy Food, Diverse Farms, Vibrant Communities” tagline printed on back.



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**Farmer Cap**—\$8  
Summer style farmer cap with light denim cotton front and mesh back.



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**T-shirt**—\$10  
Heavyweight, 6.1 oz  
100% cotton jersey in S, L–2XL.  
White with full-color Buy Fresh, Buy Local logo on front.



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ SIZE \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**Grocery Tote**—\$10  
Natural color 100% cotton canvas tote with full color Buy Fresh, Buy Local logo. Perfect for grocery shopping, or taking to the farmers market.



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**Notecards**—\$6 for set of 8  
Colorful, picturesque photos of Iowa’s agricultural landscape by Jerry Dewitt



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**White PFI T-shirt, Size S-XL**—\$15  
PFI logo on front with tagline on back



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**Colored PFI T-shirt, available in gray, orange, and safety green, Size S-XL**—\$15  
Scenic landscape with Practical Farmers of Iowa caption on front of shirt



\_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ \$

**Subtotal:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**S & H:\*** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Shipping and Handling: \$3 for the first item, \$1 for each additional item**

## Payment

- Check Payable to:  
Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Credit Card
  - Mastercard
  - Visa

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Practical Farmers of Iowa  
137 Lynn Ave., Suite 200  
Ames, IA 50014  
(515)232-5661  
www.practicalfarmers.org



# Support Our Efforts ~ Sustain Our Work

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 vote and one subscription to *The Practical Farmer*.

## Sustain PFI

For the sake of 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©3 organization Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you!

Individual or Farm or Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone (with area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone (with area code): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\* For Farm/Household membership, please list names of persons included.

\* For Organization membership, please list one or two contact persons.

### Payment:

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ membership + \$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation + \$ \_\_\_\_\_ merchandise (from opposite page)

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

Credit Card     Visa     MasterCard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_





# Our Vision for Iowa



Food that is celebrated  
for its freshness  
and flavor  
and connection  
to local farmers  
to seasons  
to hard work  
and good stewardship



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



Communities that are alive  
with diverse connections  
between farmers and non-farmers;  
places where commerce, cooperation, creativity  
and spirituality are thriving;  
places where the working landscape, the fresh air  
and the clear water remind us of all that is good about Iowa



**Practical Farmers of Iowa**

137 Lynn Avenue, Suite 200

Ames, IA. 50014

Non-Profit  
Organization  
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Waterloo, IA  
Permit No. 901

**Healthy Food, Diverse Farms, Vibrant Communities**