

the
Practical Farmer

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Helping Iowans become their best.



Cover photo: 2007 PFI campers at Gary Guthrie's farm near Nevada.



www.practicalfarmers.org

Leopold Odyssey

As the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture celebrated its 20th anniversary with a conference gala in July, I was reading a new book called *Aldo Leopold's Odyssey* by Julianne Lutz Newton. Once again, I was impressed with Aldo Leopold's vision. And I was reminded of the dedication the Leopold Center has to implement that vision.

Aldo Leopold looked forward to the day when farmers and others had an "ecological comprehension" that would help them shift from an oversimplified, resource-oriented view of land to seeing the land as an integrated whole. He urged people to improve their knowledge of the land and practice an "ethics of community life." We prohibit certain actions in our dealing with each other. We should apply ethical standards and respect in dealing with soils, waters, plants, and animals as well.

Walking the talk is hard, though, a main reason why I have such deep respect for PFI farmers. Leopold said that to be a practitioner of conservation on a piece of land takes brains, sympathy, forethought, and experience. "Integration is easy on paper, but a lot more important and difficult in the field," he wrote.

Farmer observation and demonstration as well as scientific investigations, including the research initiatives funded by the Leopold Center, provide us with the knowledge to make good ethical decisions. Aldo Leopold lived at a time when the science of ecology was maturing, supplying the chief means for understanding the land's interconnections. It was not technology, but ecology that was "the outstanding discovery of the 20th century," Leopold surmised.

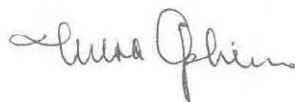
Leopold was also savvy in realizing how policy influences the choices landowners and operators make. "What if landowners were rewarded for good land use? Instead of subsidizing landowners' efforts to restore damaged lands, why not put money into the prevention of land destruction?" Leopold wrote in 1934. The Conservation Security Program is doing just that, as a study of PFI landowners, funded by the Leopold Center, has shown.

Knowledge-based decision-making and policies that support sustainability are major challenges for us in 2007, but it is progress toward the personal land ethic that can seem discouraging. Aldo Leopold recommended patience. After all, it "required 19 centuries to define decent man-to-man conduct and the process is only half done; it may take as long to evolve a code of decency for man-to-land conduct."

We need to make sure we are traveling in the right direction, as so many PFI members and others are. Here's to a field day season when more Iowans hear and act upon your examples!

As Leopold wrote: "Tree roots over time could crack boulders; perhaps then, too, a germ could grow to obstruct a juggernaut."

I hope to see you at one of our remaining PFI Field Days! ✨



"Tree roots over time could crack boulders; perhaps then, too, a germ could grow to obstruct a juggernaut."



Teresa Opheim with her newly planted native prairie (grasses here purchased from Sally Worley at the Homestead). Native prairie was not only beautiful but symbolic to Aldo Leopold of "the greatest mass effort in evolutionary history to create a rich soil for man to live on."

Linda Grice

Agriculture, Art, and More

From Iowa, to Wisconsin and back to Iowa, Practical Farmers of Iowa's new board member, Linda Grice, has long been rooted in agriculture. Linda grew up on a rural Parnell farm, but upon graduation from high school, Linda had little desire to return to the farm. Instead she ventured to Oelwein, Iowa, where she taught English and art before her husband Ron's job moved the family to Humboldt, IA and then to Grant County Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, cattle soon reappeared in Linda's life. The family bought a handful of beef cattle to raise as 4-H projects for Linda's three children. What began as 4-H projects soon grew into much more. "Originally we bought a small farm with just a few cows. Eventually we ran out of room so we rented more land and then bought another farm for more room and to move to a better school for the kids," says Linda.

Even after all of Linda's children

left home the farm remained an important part of her life. In 1993 Linda and Ron moved back to Iowa, cattle and all. "We moved our entire farm from Wisconsin to a farm near South English [Iowa]. We

"Sustainable agricultural practices such as grass pastures and ponds provide clean and healthy foods for us and save our natural resources for the next generation."

moved in full—machinery, feed, cattle, and hay because hay was in short supply that year. It took 14 semis in all plus several other trucks and vehicles," says Linda. "The cows had a difficult time adjusting, but eventually they made it through the stress of a move like that."

Linda and Ron currently farm 800 acres in Keokuk County with 150 head of red Angus cross cows that are rotationally grazed. They also do some custom grazing of dairy heifers. For the last five years the farm has been certified organic. According to Linda, "We grow oats, corn, alfalfa, and hay organically because we believe it's healthier for the cows and the people who eat our wholesome product. We sell our beef to Organic Valley and locally direct-to-consumers."



Besides being a farmer, Linda is a talented artist and well respected art teacher. Linda has been nationally recognized for her hand-painted porcelain. Currently she has a painted porcelain piece in the National Porcelain Art Museum, in Oklahoma City, Okla. She says she has one go nearly every year. As though farming doesn't keep her busy enough, she also finds time to teach others about her passion. "Regionally I teach porcelain art seminars and run an annual art school in Galena, Ill., during the month of June. I teach classes year round in my home-based art studio that overlooks the rolling hills of our pasture," says Linda. In addition to porcelain art, Linda also works with oil paints and watercolor.

When asked why she feels it's important to farm sustainably, Linda commented, "Sustainable agricultural practices such as grass pastures and ponds provide clean and healthy foods for us and save our natural resources for the next generation." ❧

Board Update

June 29, 2007

The PFI Board of Directors met for a regularly scheduled meeting at the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives in Ames. Teresa and the Board reviewed progress on the 2007 organizational work plan. At lunch they dined with new Wallace Chair, Matt Liebman, and discussed his vision for the Wallace Chair. Jerry DeWitt, Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture met with the Board to announce the Leopold Center's new call for proposals. The remainder of the day was spent planning the 2008 PFI Annual Conference and 2008 organizational workplan.

Welcome, new PFI members!

As of January 24

District 1

Chris Parizek, Sioux City
Scott and Martha Sibbel, Carroll
David Weaver, Westside

District 2

Paul Bollmeier, Whitten
Shirley Borud, Mason City
Matt and Nancy Clark, Algona
William Edwards, Ames
David Engle, Ames
Alexis Hooper, Jefferson
David Rosmann, Ames
Ben Saunders, Ames
Adam Sisson, Gilbert
Roger Stewart, Maxwell
Rachel and Scott Thompson, Hubbard
John and Tina Van Dyk, Ames

District 3

Larry Barthel, Waterville
Greg and Bev Bernhard, Monona
Steve and Delphine Deaner, Hazelton
David and Susan Gossman, Zwingle
Kathleen Lane, Cedar Rapids
Caroline and Ron Larson, Cedar Rapids
Tom and Vicki McGee, Cresco
Gerald Riniker, Masonville
Patricia Swenka, Dundee
Nick and Patty Weber, Garrison
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Wickman, Dundee

District 4

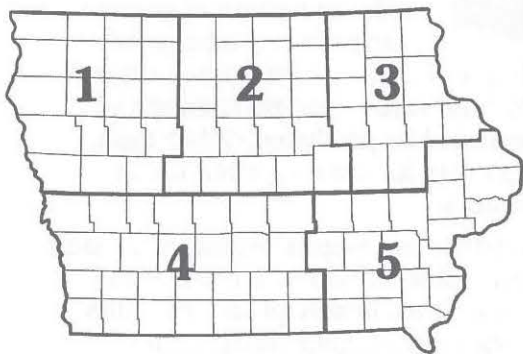
Ronald Bartelt, Grimes
Dwight and Arlene Ensor, Knoxville
Gordon and Barbara Graham, Carlisle
Bob Haug, Ankeny
Jan Hollebrands, Urbandale
Vernon and Patti Kelly, Thayer
National Pork Board, Clive
Joe Sellers, Chariton
Sean Smith, Des Moines

District 5

Alice Atkinson, Iowa City
Clyde Cleveland, Fairfield
Doug and Gwen Coobs, Donahue
Andrea and David Crowe, Iowa City
Ed Kraklio and Joe Dennis, Walcott
Morgan Hoenig, Mt. Pleasant
John Reilly, Solon
Jane and Ron Riggs, Wayland
Erica Wilkinson, Williamsburg

District 6 (Outside of Iowa)

Ryan Galt, Davis, CA
Genetec Enterprises, Cambridge, WI
Lisa and Joel Gruver, Macomb, IL



2007 PFI Campers (see page 13 for photo)

Front row, L-R: Alex Lee, Cole Thompson, Kurt Yaeger, Karly Tomlinson, Allaire Taiber, Will Alert, Gil Taiber, Grace Lee, Helen Garst, Madison Schrieber
 Second row, L-R: Jake Armstrong, Aaron Van Wyk, Dylan Cross, Ana Garst, Spencer Tomlinson, Paul Opheim, Robert Alert, Dani Shaw
 Third row, L-R: Teresa Opheim, Kim Isbell, Miranda Schrieber, Cedar Johnson, Quique Garst, Jon Taiber, Jess Landgraf, Andrew Landgraf
 Fourth row: Dan Isbell, Verlan Van Wyk

PFI Sustainable Agriculture Library

Over the years, several PFI members have made contributions in time and effort to compile a library of resources pertaining to sustainable agriculture. The collection will again be available to PFI members. It is being housed at Small Potatoes Farm in Minburn, IA.

Recent additions to the collection include: *Women and Farming: Changing roles, changing structures*; *Raising Less Corn and More Hell*; and, *Eighty Acres: Elegy for a family farm*.

Books and other literature can be checked out for up to six months by PFI members. Rick Hartmann has put the collection on the web at www.smallpotatoesfarm.com/PFI_Library.html. There will also be a link available from the PFI website. Other instructions can be found there.

Iowa's Local Food Systems: A Place to Grow

By Laura Krouse and Teresa Galluzzo

At the 2006 PFI Annual Conference, Laura Krouse asked for your policy ideas that would help promote local food in Iowa. Many of you had something to say. Laura took your ideas and with her editor, Teresa Galluzzo at the Iowa Policy Project, wrote a paper that they hope can be used by policy people at every level, from school board to state legislature, but with people in state government especially in mind. The paper was released in February of this year. Here is the executive summary of the paper. For the full report visit www.iowapolicyproject.org.

You could easily live your whole life in Iowa without eating an Iowa-grown meal. This may seem surprising, because Iowa is a leading agricultural state. But the majority of fruit and vegetables we buy are travel weary, journeying 1,500 miles to our plates.¹ Think about how produce reaches Iowa: Idaho potatoes summiting the Rockies; New Zealand apples sailing the Pacific; and Chilean grapes voyaging thousands of miles. All these products can be and historically have been grown and processed in Iowa.

Iowans' interest in purchasing food grown closer to home has recently increased. This has led to the germination of local food systems across the state. For example:

- By 2004, the number of farmers' markets had increased 60 percent from the previous decade;
- Iowa boasted 180 farmers' markets, more per capita than any other state.²
- There are at least 38 community support agriculture (CSA) arrangements in Iowa, up from the first three initiated in 1995.
- Several Iowa restaurants and grocery stores feature locally grown food for its freshness and quality. For example, Rudy's Tacos in Waterloo purchases 66 percent of its food locally.³
- Schools, universities, hospitals and nursing

homes have begun to serve locally grown food. For example, Allen Memorial Hospital in Waterloo purchases 30 percent of the food it serves locally.⁴

Iowans' desire for locally grown food could be motivated by a variety of benefits.

- **Environmental:** Locally grown food requires much less transportation, which means fewer global warming emissions. Calculations from a Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture model show if Iowans purchased 10 percent of 28 select fruits and vegetables from local sources, five to 17



Photo by Helen Gunderson

times less carbon dioxide would be emitted than if they were purchased from the global food system.⁵ There is also a decreased need for packaging local food, which reduces the resources and landfill space consumed. Further, production of local food could reduce soil erosion because a diverse mix of crops could be rotated. The reduction of genetic diversity could also be

slowed as varieties of crops and livestock valued for taste, nutritional value, pest resistance and local suitability could be produced rather than those few designed to have a long shelf life or uniform appearance.

- **Health:** Local fruits and vegetables usually reach consumers more quickly and more often at the peak of freshness. Thus, locally produced fruits and vegetables can have higher nutritional values.
- **Social:** Farmers' markets and CSAs create new spaces within commu-

“...Honor the previous state slogan, ‘A Place to Grow,’ and make it apply to the food Iowans eat.”

nities for people to socialize. In fact, sociologists estimate people have 10 times more conversations at farmers' markets than supermarkets.⁶

- **Security:** Most of our food is currently transported long distances leaving us vulnerable to strikes, attack, spikes in fuel prices, food-borne illnesses, and other disruptions.
- **Economic:** Growing and selling more food locally would benefit the state's economy. One study found that if Iowans met 25 percent of their demand for 37 different fruits and vegetables with products grown in Iowa, the net value added to the state's economy would be almost \$140 million in sales, \$54 million in labor incomes and 2,031 jobs.⁷

Iowa producers and consumers are beginning to appreciate these benefits. However, barriers to developing Iowa's local food systems were revealed by surveys conducted by Laura Krouse over the past year. Recommendations to expand Iowa's local food systems include:

- Increasing financing for local producers through targeted loans and cost share for beginning farmers as well as farmers transitioning to local production.
- Supporting state local food programs that provide education, technical assistance, and policy advice in such institutions as the Iowa Department of Land Stewardship, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and the Iowa Food Policy Council.
- Increasing local processing capacity by providing start-up funds for infrastructure in several locations around the state that could handle produce, dairy and meat.
- Increasing marketing networks and fostering links between producers and distributors.
- Increasing Iowa's commitment to local food by encouraging private companies and state organizations to develop a purchase preference for local food, encouraging state employees to become members in CSAs, creating an Iowa grown label, and increasing support for sustainable agriculture education.

To continue the growth of local food systems, Iowa's leaders need to be progressive in implementing policies that encourage profitable local food systems. To get started, lawmakers could recall and honor the previous state slogan, "A Place to Grow," and make it apply to the food Iowans eat. It will require a long-term commitment, creativity, foresight and risk-taking, but as local food systems grow, Iowans will reap the rewards.

⁶Laura Krouse teaches biology at Cornell College, runs a community supported agriculture farm, is District Commissioner of the Linn Soil and Water Conservation District, and serves on the Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development Council.

⁷Teresa Galluzzo has been a Research Associate at the Iowa Policy Project since November 2004. Her work focuses on environmental issues.

Footnotes:

- 1 Pirog, Rich, Timothy Van Pelt, Kamyar Enshayan, and Ellen Cook. 2001. Food, Fuel, and Freeways: An Iowa Perspective on How Far Food Travels, Fuel Usage, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, June. Available at http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ppp/food_mil.pdf.
- 2 Otto, Daniel and Theresa Varner. 2005. Consumers, Vendors, and the Economic Importance of Iowa Farms' Markets: An Economic Impact Survey Analysis. Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, March. Available at <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/pdfs/FarmMarketReportMarch2005.pdf>.
- 3 Gomes, Jason and Kamyar Enshayan. 2005. Documenting the Costs and Benefits of Whole Animal Local Meat Purchases by Three Northeast Iowa Institutions. University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project and Center for Energy & Environmental Education, March. Available at <http://www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject/report.pdf>.
- 4 Practical Framers of Iowa. 2001. Expanding Local Food Systems Marketing to Iowa Institutions: Descriptions of Five Local Projects, Key Issues and Suggestions for Success. December. Available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/FSMIP/FY2000/IA0288casestudy.pdf>.
- 5 Pirog et al. 2001.
- 6 Halweil, Brian. 2003. "The Argument for Local Food." World Watch. May/June, Vol 16, Issue 3.
- 7 Swenson, Dave. 2005. The Economic Impacts of Increased Fruit and Vegetable Production in Iowa. Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, September.

**For the full report, see
www.iowapolicyproject.org**

New Wallace Chair Announced

Q & A with Matt Liebman

Why did you want the position of the Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University?

I have been active in sustainable agriculture for the past 30 years and at Iowa State University for the last nine years. In that time I've seen positive things happen in research, teaching, student activities, and outreach and extension, occurring on parallel tracks. I hope to bring various groups together and lead Iowa State University to be a leader in sustainable agriculture.

What are your priorities for the Wallace Chair?

I would like to find more opportunities for more students to join sustainable agriculture. I plan to do this by developing more opportunities for graduate assistantships, which should also draw in more faculty at Iowa State University. I also plan to work with department chairs to develop better ways to weave sustainable agriculture research and education into departmental activities.

One particular interest of mine is providing producers and policy makers with sound science that allows the emerging bioeconomy, including biofuel production, to proceed sustainably. And I want to continue to catalyze groups of people in and out of ISU to examine how ecological processes can be developed into sustainable farming practices.

Why is it important to have the Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture?

Henry A. Wallace was one of Iowa's most influential citizens. He

made direct contributions to agriculture through the commercialization of high-yielding, hybrid corn, and he exemplified public service in the posts of Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce, and Vice President. He was strongly committed to rural development and sustainable use of natural resources. As Iowans, we recognize his contributions to Iowa and the country through the Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University.

The Wallace Chair calls attention to sustainable agriculture and indicates that sustainability is a priority of Iowa State University. The position serves as a catalyst to bring people together and develop strategies to improve agriculture. The position also serves as a point within a national network of sustainable agriculture professorships at other universities. This network

“PFI is an inspirational example for anyone interested in sustainable agriculture.”

assures that no individual university or state has to go it alone. By working locally and connecting nationally, the work of the Wallace Chair can be done with a high degree of consistency.

You've been a member of PFI for several years. Why do you support PFI and what drew you to the organization?

I lived in Maine for nearly 12 years before coming to Iowa, and I



Matt Liebman

knew about Practical Farmers of Iowa before moving here. Iowa is a national leader in sustainable agriculture through organizations like PFI and people like Dick Thompson and Ron Rosmann. By attending field days and visiting with farmers, I gained better knowledge of what was happening in Iowa. On-farm research is an important way for farmers to solve their problems related to various issues, and PFI has been a leader in developing on-farm work and information exchange among farmers about the results of on-farm investigations.

When I moved to Iowa I knew PFI was one of the first organizations I wanted to work with. Since that time I have worked with several PFI farmers in research projects and I have used PFI farmers as clients for student projects. PFI is an inspirational example for anyone interested in sustainable agriculture.

Where do you think sustainable agriculture must head in the future to be sustainable?

I think we must recognize the importance of place. Each geographic area will have different objectives. Iowa will have different

PFI Member Develops Strip Tillage Tool

objectives than the Northeast, California, or India. Solutions that work here may not work elsewhere.

I have a vision of what the landscape will look like to be sustainable. It includes food systems, rural communities, industrial agriculture, and more. Each one needs to be in the picture. We must live in harmony with each other and the environment. We need to ask, "What does this piece of land, this watershed, and this community need to be more sustainable?"

In your opinion, what has been one of the greatest challenges facing sustainable agriculture and what has been one of its greatest accomplishments?

One of the greatest challenges is helping people to understand what sustainable agriculture means in practical terms. Practical Farmers of Iowa offers solutions to problems, in which sustainable agriculture has been embedded; PFI has done it without getting caught up in the jargon. I think we need to understand how to make the solutions that PFI farmers have been involved in accessible for others, in a practical and tangible way.

Sustainable agriculture brings people and rural communities into the picture. We want to increase opportunities for young farmers, and allow small-scale farms to succeed among big operations, while maintaining a focus on environmental quality.

✻

Grundy County PFI members, Fred and Vicki Abels, farm no-till corn and soybeans. Fred wanted to apply fertilizer without tearing up the field, while at the same time open the row to allow the soil to warm up before corn planting. He could hire strip-tillage application of P, K, and anhydrous-N for about \$13 per acre (plus fertilizer). Purchasing an applicator himself would run \$20-25,000. Fred decided to make his own.

Fred Abels learned about the Iowa State University On-Farm Research and Demonstration Program, which provides small grants for sustainable agriculture projects involving the teamwork of farmers and ISU scientists and students. PFI was able to put Fred in touch with Dr. Mark Hanna in the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering. Together they submitted a proposal to the ISU program that was accepted for funding. The grant helped Fred document his costs and shared some materials expenses.

What does it take to make your own strip-till fertilizer applicator? Fred's original calculation of \$5,000 turned out to be low. Now he estimates \$5,500-\$6,000. (He was actually able to do the job for less because he got "deals" and already owned some components.) Using the applicator on 150-acres a year, the device will pay for itself in three years.

The photo below shows the homemade strip-tillage applicator at work in the spring before planting corn. Dry fertilizer knives place P and K from one set of boxes 4 inches to the side of the future corn row, while 4 inches on the other side of the row, an anhydrous knife applies ammonia nitrogen and incorporates P and K dropped on the surface from the other set of boxes. The fertilizer boxes are filled by a cross auger in the white PVC pipe suspended over the applicator. Between the fertilizer knives, a coulter clears residue from the intended row zone. Abels says the applicator disturbs about a one-foot strip; he plants corn in 30-inch rows.

✻



Photo by Greg Lamp/The Corn and Soybean Digest

DOMESTIC FAIR TRADE

Craig A Chase, PFI member and Farm and Agricultural Business Management Field Specialist, Iowa State University Extension

In our economics classes we are taught that in a capitalistic or free market society, two parties voluntarily exchange or trade commodities or services. For example, when we buy a cup of coffee we receive the cup of coffee for a set price. We don't often think about what happens to the money we gave to the retailer and how that money goes back to the original provider of the commodity; in this case the coffee grower. When people become more aware of how profits are divided, they begin to think about things such as "fair trade" and "fair wages" to those providing the original commodity and the processes that occur between the original production and the final consumption.

"Fair trade" coffee has been around for awhile and the concept of domestic fair trade is beginning to become more noticed and talked about. So what is needed to have domestic fair trade? First and foremost, the agreed upon exchange price has to cover not only the cost of production and marketing to the original grower, but also a "fair" return to his/her land, labor, and management. It is up to each individual grower to determine what "fair" means based on their particular monetary and non-monetary goals. Regardless of goals, transparency is critical to the "fair" pricing dialogue that needs to take place between the buyer and seller.

How do we achieve transparency? The first thing that needs to be done is the grower has to know how much it costs him/her to produce and market the product for sale. Secondly, all parties need to be transparent in the dialogue. The grower has to share production and marketing costs with the

buyer when discussing price. The informed grower will be able to state a price that covers not only costs, but includes the economic returns needed to reach the established goals.

In a SARE funded project, four Iowa community supported agriculture businesses tracked what they provided in their weekly share boxes and "valued" those products by using local grocery store prices. The weekly valuations occurred for 20 weeks and a final evaluation was determined for the share box subscription. This information can be used to develop a competition-based price comparison. The next step for the growers would be to add premiums to the base price for attributes such as product quality, organically-produced, home-delivery, and any other product differentiation between the grocery store and share box products (the publication detailing the study will be out later this year).

But how high do the premiums need to be? Again, the growers need to determine the cost of producing and marketing their share boxes and then add a "fair" return. Once costs are known, then the growers can share information with their share box membership. If the consumers of the share boxes value the local food (i.e., their receipt of the exchange), then they will be willing to trade their dollars for local food at a "fair" price. ❧

"When people become more aware of how profits are divided, they begin to think about things such as 'fair trade' and 'fair wages' to those providing the original commodity..."



Photo by Jerry DeWitt

What is your CSA Worth? Two farmers weigh in

Angela Tedesco

As a grower, I'm interested in knowing if I'm on target with my prices. Prices can be all over the place, and in the summer, we're so busy, it's hard to do thorough checks. When I have checked, I've only been able to find prices on a third of my items anyway, because I'm organic. That's what is unique about CSAs—we offer items no one else does.

I found out through this study that prices for the items included in my \$400 share would cost roughly \$540 in the grocery store. Only a third of those grocery store items were organic, so the 'grocery store price' would have been even higher. Based on that, I reexamined the amount I was giving of certain items, because the labor costs were so high (like potatoes, which we hand dig). Berries are also high in labor costs, but they are my customers' favorite, so I didn't reduce the amount of these.

In a CSA, customers pay a certain amount at the beginning of the year, and get what we're able to offer. So they join for the bounty or the bust. I want the years to balance out.

I didn't raise my share price last year, which was after Craig did the analysis, because I already was adding a delivery cost. But this year, I'll examine the share price at the end of the year. The CSA is nice, because we set our own prices. But we have to examine questions like: What is reasonable hourly payment for a farmer? How much is your farmer worth? I have more potential customers than I can handle, and one reason may be that I'm underpriced. ❁

"At some point, local could have a cost advantage, because less energy goes into growing food that is sold nearby."

--Gary Guthrie



Gary Guthrie with PFI campers.

"I have more potential customers than I can handle, and one reason may be that I'm underpriced."

--Angela Tedesco



Angela Tedesco speaks at her 2007 field day.

Gary Guthrie

A lot of people think organics and local is more expensive to buy. The project Craig Chase worked on [see other article] is valuable to me, because I would check prices at the grocery store for comparison, but not routinely. We discovered with the study that the price of my CSA is slightly less expensive than Hy-Vee (not including my delivery fee and the annual membership fee to join).

Knowing that, did I raise my prices? I did for some vegetables, like kohlrabi and onions. With items like garlic, it's hard to compare, because the quality of my product is so much better. However I have other goals. I don't have land rental and a lot of overhead and other expenses. Nancy [his wife] has family health insurance, so I have a safety net. One of my goals is to make sure my CSA is affordable for most people. So overall I didn't raise my price much.

At some point, local could have a cost advantage, because less energy goes into growing food that is sold nearby.

I keep pretty good records and know my production costs on certain vegetables, like carrots and garlic. I could figure out production costs on others. I make \$15-17 an hour for my labor, and I'm satisfied with that. ❁

What's in Your Backyard Grocery Store?

--By Cedar Johnson

“**W**hat's in *Your Backyard Grocery Store*?” was the clever question put back to me by counselors and campers alike. I laughed heartily then, but now, as I reflect, my smile is sly; it is a sign that they were both having fun and soaking in some learning at the same time. Between all the laughs and splashing—in the creek, pool, and canoes, we learned about the abundance available in Iowa: *Your Backyard Grocery Store*. We enjoyed local food from 10 central Iowa farms, including fresh strawberries at every meal! One of the farmers, Gary Guthrie, even had us out to his farm so the campers could decipher what was growing in his fields on a scavenger hunt.

There was plenty to do, apart from the regular programming, with watercolor painting lessons, a night hike, and interactive astronomy presentations, complete with star-gazing through a high-powered telescope. In fact, the kids would likely agree that the only thing lacking was more sleep! But somewhere in the soccer games, ultimate frisbee, and morning runs, strangers became friends, and I experienced for the first time, the magic bonding of PFI camp.

It started around the fire at Ledges State Park with the counselors, as big red roaches swarmed us late into the night and we didn't even care. This strengthened us for the challenge course we met head on the next day, and the 19 new campers who followed close behind. It grew subtly with mulberries out of reach and piggy back rides for tired legs. And of course, when the canoe with 4 adults, including board member Verlan Van Wyk, tipped coming to shore, that was a magical moment! It culminated on the last day as the kids wanted to lead each other around blindfolded. And who could forget performing heart surgery on an eggplant! By the end I don't think any of us really wanted to part; maybe take a nap, but not go home. As for me, I'd love to do it all again next week. Thanks to all of you who made the week possible, especially volunteer staffers Kim and Dan Isbell, and thanks to the kids and counselors for the magic. ❁

PFI supported the following farmers by purchasing their food for camp:

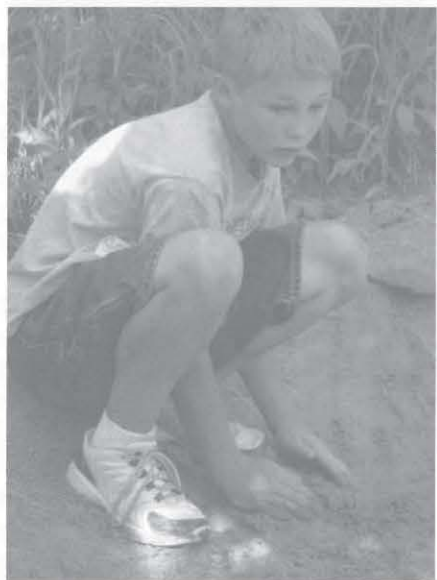
- **Don Adams and Nan Bonfils**, *Full-Circle Farm, Madrid*—ground beef
- **Vic and Cindy Madsen**, *Audubon*—chickens, pork roast, bacon, breakfast sausage patties, pork patties
- **Angela Tedesco**, *Turtle Farm, Johnston*—salad greens and pansies (*donated*)
- **Gary Guthrie**, *Growing Harmony Farms, Nevada*—greens (plus farm tour/Scavenger Hunt)
- **Sondra Feldstein**, *SalAmander Farms, Bondurant*—eggs, herbs
- **Dean and Judy Henry**, *Berry Patch, Nevada*—strawberries
- **Jeff and Jill Burkhart**, *Picket Fence Creamery, Woodward*—ice cream, milk
- **Bill and Mary Beth Lindsey**, *Grains of Wisdom, Ames*—rolls, buns, Italian loaves, multi-grain loaf
- **Steve and Teresa Paul**, *Paul's Grains, Laurel*—wheat for baking
- **Rick Hartmann and Stacy Bastian**, *Small Potatoes Farm, Minburn*—radishes, asparagus



Cole Thompson



Kurt Yeager, Alex Lee, Cole Thompson, and Robert Alert



Aaron Van Wyk

We'd love to invite you all to our Fall Retreat October 26-28th at Shivers Fair Acres and Spring Valley B&B in Knoxville, Iowa. Come for one or both nights; bring the whole family. Watch your mailbox for a brochure soon.

Camp Coverage



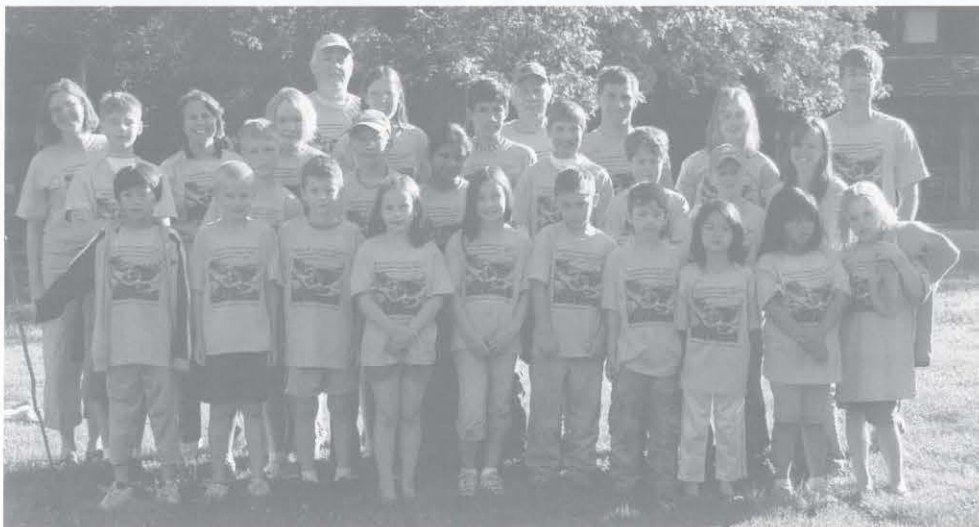
Ana Garst and Paul Opheim



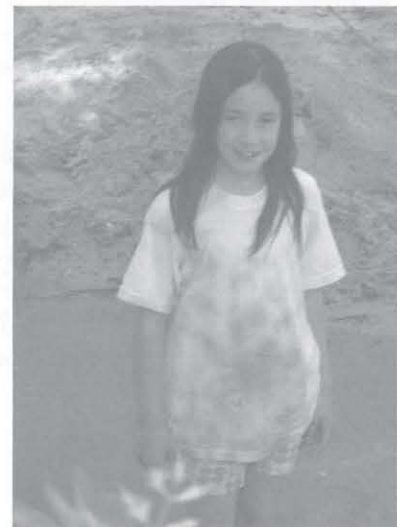
Building a dam



Gil Taiber and Robert Alert



2007 PFI Campers (see page 5 for caption)



Allaire Taiber



Roasting marshmallows around the campfire



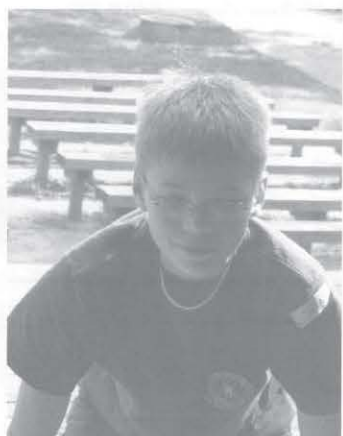
Jess Landgraf and Quique Garst



Dan Isbell and Helen Garst



Andrew Landgraf



Jake Armstrong



Kim Isbell reads a garden story



Will Alert

Managing for Herd Health in Alternative Swine Systems: A Guide

—Rick Exner, PFI Farming Systems Program Coordinator

Consumers are looking for healthful, tasty meats from sustainable and organic farms, and companies are scrambling to serve those growing markets. At the same time on the farm, the producers who are serving these markets face challenges. That was the message swine producers gave the Pork Niche Market Working Group, an entity co-directed by PFI and the Leopold Center. Specifically, these farmers said that their greatest challenges come with keeping young pigs healthy. That concern gave birth to a project called the Research Alliance for Farrowing, funded by the North-Central SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program) of the USDA. Now the Research Alliance has published a herd health “toolbox” for swine farmers using alternative production systems.

Managing for Herd Health in Alternative Swine Systems: A Guide represents the input of farmers and veterinarians over the past four years. It includes the big “take-home” lessons from this period, a time in which many production systems have evolved and matured. The guide balances veterinary science and practical management tips. Real-world examples and producer profiles are spread throughout, as are “words of wisdom” from experienced hog farmers. The guide includes: Principles and Strategies; Biosecurity, Pig Flow & Introduction of Stock; Breeding Herd; Farrowing; Nursery and Grower Pigs; Diagnostics & Veterinary Services; Vaccinations & Testing; Table of Significant Diseases; and Additional References. A companion resource from Iowa

State University, the *Niche Pork Production Handbook*, will deal with managing specifically for production topics not covered in detail in the herd health guide.

So, what are those take-home lessons? Probably hundreds of little ones, but the big lessons boil down to 1) good husbandry and 2) biosecurity. Husbandry is both practices and a way of thinking, and some say it is a lost art. But in systems without antibiotics, the connection between herd health and herd stress is unavoidable. The guide shows how farmers in

“Husbandry is both practices and a way of thinking, and some say it is a lost art.”

these systems are creating healthy environments that allow pigs to thrive.

Biosecurity here, is taken to mean managing exposure of pigs to disease already on the farm as much as protecting those pigs from infection from outside the system. If there has been an evolution in our thinking about pigs in the last several years, it is a new understanding of how production systems on sustainable farms can apply basic principles of herd health. There was probably a time when pigs on diversified farms seemed to be the last place where a concept like pig flow could be applied. Experience is now leading farmers to adapt to their own systems some “conventional” practices like separation of units and ages, all-in-

all-out, and closed herd. Experience is also drawing farmers and veterinarians closer together. Independent vets need independent producers, and sustainable farmers need a long-term relationship with a vet to conquer complex herd health issues.

The guide was mailed to 500 hog farmers and vets in June. Contact me at (515) 294-5486 or dnexner@iastate.edu if you did not receive a copy printed on cardstock, or go to www.pfi.iastate.edu/pigs.htm for the current version. There you can also leave your sugges-

tions and comments on the guide. That feedback is very important to us, and the more specific the better. There will be corrections and updates, so the guide is designed for 3-hole notebooks. As revised chapters appear, you can print them off and replace those sections in the guide. ✍

For related sidebar please see page 17.

Managing for Herd Health

in Alternative Swine Systems: A Guide



Practical Farmers of Iowa and Iowa State University Extension
With support from the USDA Sustainable Research and Education (SARE) Program and the Value Chain Partnership for a Sustainable Agriculture project of the Leopold Center, Practical Farmers of Iowa, and Iowa State University



Progress Being Made with Farm to ISU Program

--Jim Clark, PFI Food and Environmental Program Specialist

As we reported in our last newsletter, Iowa State University Dining has committed to an ambitious ten-fold increase in their purchase of local, sustainable and organic food over the next five years. A steering committee comprised of staff members from PFI, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa Network for Community Agriculture and Food Alliance have been meeting over the past four months to enable ISU Dining to reach its goal. In fiscal year 2006, ISU Dining purchased \$153,000 worth of food from local growers and specialty producers in Iowa and neighboring states. By 2012, ISU Dining intends for that figure to grow to

\$1.7 million of local, sustainable, and organic food, out of an annual total food purchase budget of \$6 million. For their purposes, ISU Dining has defined *local* as “grown

and processed within approximately 200 miles,” *sustainable* as “Food Alliance certified,” and *organic* as “certified USDA Organic.”

Blieck, who graduated from ISU in May 2007, to help prepare the infrastructure to begin buying locally this summer. Thus far, at least 40 Iowa producers—including many PFI farmer members—are signed up as vendors.

“ISU Dining plans to grow its purchases of local, sustainable, and organic foods to \$1.7 million by 2012.”

and processed within approximately 200 miles,” *sustainable* as “Food Alliance certified,” and *organic* as “certified USDA Organic.”

Using a \$4,000 grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, ISU Dining Director, Nancy Levandowski, hired Sue De-

Food can travel thousands of miles to reach its campus destination. Not only does transportation create environmental stress, it also means millions of dollars are not invested in Iowa. By using Iowa products, food will travel fewer miles and more money will stay local. “Buying local is great because many students that go to Iowa State have parents who farm in Iowa,” said DeBlieck. “When their kids are paying to go to school here, it just makes sense to buy locally.”

Interest High in the Iowa Food Cooperative?

--Jim Clark, PFI Food and Environmental Program Specialist

As most of you know, PFI is working on the establishment of a project that will enable Iowa consumers to order a diverse selection of fresh Iowa foods and other products from the convenience of their home computer. Earlier this spring all PFI members were mailed a cover letter describing the project, along with a post card survey. An impressive 162 surveys were returned, demonstrating the strong interest in participation as a consumer and/or a farmer. Recent progress with the project has also included convening a steering committee, attending a three-day workshop to learn about the Oklahoma Food Cooperative, writing proposals and building upon PFI’s relationships with dozens of people involved in

related farmer-to-consumer projects in Iowa.

In general, the Iowa Food Cooperative will work in the following manner:

- Farmers will list their products—and how those products are raised—on the Iowa Food Cooperative website.
- Consumers can get on line and place an order each month.
- A few days later, deliveries will be made to central locations to be determined.
- To start, products sold will include frozen meat, eggs, dairy products, and less perishable produce (such as potatoes, squash, onions, and apples).
- Anyone may join. There will

be a membership fee, which is used to help make the Cooperative self-sustaining.

“The Iowa Food Cooperative will save food miles, make shopping among the many choices easier for the customer, and keep our food dollars with Iowa farmers,” said Angela Tedesco, Johnston farmer and PFI board member.

During the remainder of this year PFI staff members will gather more detailed information about the consumer demand and potential farmer supply for the project, determine the logistical aspects and calculate all associated costs, culminating in the writing of a thorough business plan. The Iowa Food Cooperative will be launched in early 2008.

PFI to Offer Support for its Grazier Members

New grant will allow farmers to work together on marketing and production issues

Practical Farmers of Iowa will form four groups, or “clusters”, of farmers this fall to help its members take advantage of opportunities in grass-based animal production. The farmers will work together to identify mutual challenges and then receive limited seed money to help address those challenges.

PFI members have been asking for more programming on grass-based production. Grass-fed food and free-range meat are among today’s hottest menu trends, according to the National Restaurant Association’s survey of more than 1,000 chefs. (Organic and locally grown produce are the other two hot trends.) Consumers are drawn by the health benefits of grass-fed food. Over the past decade, numerous scientific studies have shown that meat and milk from pasture-raised animals are higher in fats that may confer health benefits on humans, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Yet graziers say they face major challenges, especially in forage quality, animal genetics, and marketing. During the cluster meetings, graziers will offer moral and technical support, share production methods, resource leads, and other issues. They will form a workplan and then use PFI seed money to implement that workplan.

The grazing cluster approach has been successfully used in many states and countries, including our neighbors Nebraska, Wisconsin and Missouri. New Zealand dairy farmers have been using the cluster approach for 40-plus years. Iowa also has some farmer-led clusters, including PFI farmers Steve Reinart, Tom German, Leo Benjamin, and Dan and Torrey Wilson in Western Iowa.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to make sure PFI graziers can get a fair price while responding to the demand for grass-fed food. Certainly grass-based production systems help meet the other two legs of sustainability: vibrant communities and healthy lands.

As PFI co-founder Dick Thompson puts it simply: “The animals go, the people go. When you don’t have the cows, you don’t have any use for oats and hay. You plant it all to corn and beans. Farms expand, trying to make it work, and the people leave.”

Grazing systems also solve a critical environmental need for our state: keeping more of our soil covered. Iowa has a dubious distinction of supplying almost 25




PFI members (like Dan Specht, pictured here) who want to work together in clusters to solve production and marketing issues with grass-based animal production. If interested, please contact Teresa Opheim, teresa@practicalfarmers.org or 515/232-5661.

percent of the nitrate-N that the Mississippi River delivers to the Gulf of Mexico, while occupying less than 5 percent of its drainage basin. That excess nitrate-N is causing the now-famous Dead Zone in the Gulf.

Grazing systems are necessary for reducing those nitrate loadings. Research indicates that soil and nitrogen loss rates from perennial, or permanent, systems are *less than 5 percent* than those in annual crops, according to the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*.

If you're interested in working in a grazing cluster, please contact Teresa Opheim by August 31 at teresa@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661.

PFI thanks The McKnight Foundation for supporting its work with grazing clusters. 



Farmer-to-farmer networking on the Koether Ranch, at a 2006 PFI Field Day.

Quick Facts:

- Four new clusters to work on challenges of grass-based production systems.
- Clusters will meet quarterly for the next year
- PFI will provide seed money to each cluster
- Clusters will report to all PFI members about what they're learning

Herd Health sidebar continued from page 14.

Case Study Examples:

- *First, Close the Herd* (Tom and Irene Frantzen, Alta Vista)
- *All-in-All-Out – Making it Work* (John and Bernie Kenyon, Mallard)
- *Off-Site Farrowing* (Tom and Irene Frantzen, Jerry and Judy Eichenberger, Alta Vista)
- *Managing PRRS in Alternative Systems* (Kurt Van Hulzen, D.V.M.)
- *Depop – or Stepping Back?* (Dick & Sharon Thompson, Rex & Lisa Thompson, Boone)
- *A Tip from a Neighbor – Acidification of Creep Feed* (Vic and Cindy Madson Farm, Audubon)
- *Communication Yields Happy Ending* (Dan and Lorna Wilson & family, Paullina, Dr. Kurt Van Hulzen)
- “When you take out the antibiotics, the management has to come up.”
- “Your chore boots should never leave the farm.”
- “Whitewash with hydrated lime.”
- “Lots of bedding is one of the cheapest medicines.”

Printing Errors in *Managing for Herd Health*

Fractions did not print correctly in the guide. If you received a hard copy, you will want to pencil in the following missing fractions. The online version of the guide should print correctly.

III. Breeding Herd, page 7

“Once pigs of any age ingest infectious eggs, a minimum of 1½-2½ months will be required for the eggs to hatch, the larvae to migrate through many tissues of the body, and newly mature roundworms to inhabit the intestines and produce millions of fertile eggs.”

IV. Farrowing, page 1

“Even a ½-mph draft on a newborn pig reduces its Effective Environmental Temperature (EET) by nearly ten degrees.”

VI. Diagnostics and Veterinary Services, page 2, sidebar

“Clinical Ileitis (Lawsonia) has been identified in ¼ of the herds so far.”

VIII. Pathologies Table, page 2

Disease: PRRS (first row in table). Transmission mode: “Infected swine shed to ½ year.”

Iowa City Celebrates Iowa Foods and Farms September 6-9



Field to Family is organized by the Johnson County Local Food Alliance and is sponsored by New Pioneer Food Co-op in addition to Earth Expo, Edible Iowa River Valley, Rockwell Collins, The Iowa Children's Museum and many other fine sponsors.

Field to Family Culinary Walk • Thursday, Sept. 6, 5:30-8:00 p.m., Downtown Iowa City \$25/person, tickets at New Pioneer Food Co-op stores

Come see the magic wrought by chefs from local ingredients at the F2F 07 Culinary Walk Sept 6 in downtown Iowa City. Savor creative new approaches to hors d'oeuvres from Atlas, Devotay, Motley cow, The Red Avocado, New Pioneer and more. Your \$25 ticket is a donation to the good work of the Johnson County Local Foods Alliance. Age 6 and under free.

Field to Family, Earth Expo, and Edible Iowa River Valley host Food on Film at the Englert Theatre 221 E. Washington Street, Iowa City • Friday, Sept. 7

Join us for a showing of films and photographs on local food and agriculture. In addition to a feature film on the topic, we will put the spotlight on winning short-documentaries and photographs. Visit www.jclfa.org for all the details.

Field to Family and New Pioneer Food Co-op present Iowa City Farmers' Market Local Ingredients Cooking Demonstration • Saturday, Sept. 8, 9:00 -11:00 a.m. Washington and Van Buren St., Iowa City • FREE

Never a dull moment with local salsa king Tim Palmer of Clover Hill Creations! Join Tim as he whips up vibrant entrées, salads, and condiments using food from the day's market. No doubt Tim will be putting the grill to work making fabulous samples. Free and open to all.

Field to Family presents Earth Expo at ZJ Farm • Saturday, Sept. 8, 3:00 -10:00 p.m. \$5 suggested donation

Field to Family and Earth Expo invite you to ZJ Farm! Tour the farm with organic grower, Susan Jutz. Then learn how to apply green principles in your yard, garden and home at educational displays, and see demos of vermi-composting (Yes, real worms!), environmentally-friendly architecture by Rockwell Collins and more. Potluck at 5:30 pm, and at 6:30pm live music by the Broke-out Steppers. University of Iowa football fans can watch the Hawks thump Syracuse on the big screen and chow down on some tailgate treats. Please bring a main dish as well as a beverage and place settings.

Field to Family and Earth Expo present Know it? Grow it! (part of the Iowa Children's Museum event, Move it! Dig it! Do it!) • Sunday, September 9, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. • Johnson County Fairgrounds

Grab your kids and some sunblock and make your way to the Johnson County Fairgrounds for Move it! Dig it! Do it! This event, put on by the Iowa Children's Museum will keep your family occupied for hours with activities like digging for buried treasure, making your own garden stone, riding in a buggy pulled by Clydesdale horses and more. As part of this event, Field to Family hosts Know It? Grow It! Here's a chance for kids to learn about weird and wonderful heirloom veggies and use them to make their own taste-of-summer salsa! We'll even demonstrate how food scraps can be transformed into valuable garden compost with the help of slimy, squirming earthworms! Don't miss out!

Cedar the Weeder hits Genuine Faux Farm



Cedar Johnson and Tammy Faux after a long day of weeding.

Many of you might remember the raffle prize of 3 days with “Cedar the Weeder” at the 2007 Annual Conference. Rob and Tammy Faux, Tripoli, were the winners. In their fourth CSA growing season at Genuine Faux Farm, Rob and Tammy have added a few acres every year. Now, with 5 acres in organic vegetable production, they were thankful for some help with the weeding. I spent one day in May helping the Faux’s get their irises under control for their opening season event, the Iris Fes-

tival. The other two days in June were spent weeding summer squash, peppers, and tomatoes, among other things, as well as planting the last 1500 onions that were staring them down. The experience was very educational to say the least. I witnessed Tammy saving a hen from the clutches of a raccoon in the middle of the day, and the heartache of lettuce lost to the deer. I learned too many things to name, and gained an even deeper respect for all of you who grow food for the rest of us. I wear the dirt under my fingernails with pride as a reminder of the wonderful experience that confirmed the dream in me. Thanks to Rob and Tammy for great conversation, food, and insightful adventures on the farm. ☘

Summer Intern Joins PFI

Ellen Walsh has joined the PFI staff this summer as an intern helping with field day media. Walsh is studying Public Service and Administration and International Agriculture at Iowa State University and will be entering her senior year. Ellen hales from rural Elgin in northeast Iowa where her family raised milk goats. After graduation she hopes to join the Peace Corps and then go to graduate school for Environmental Policy. ☘



PFI intern Ellen Walsh with a pair of llamas.

Development of Intern Database

If you are interested in having an intern work at your farm or business please contact PFI with the following information:

- Length of internship (3 months, 6 months, or 1 year)
- What season or time of year (summer, fall, winter, spring)
- Benefits (room and board, stipend, pay, etc.)
- Location
- Brief description of duties

We will be developing this database and have it available for college students all over the country and world.

Please send your information to cedar@practicalfarmers.org or call (515) 232-5661.

Lindsey Byers Continues her Trek for PFI

Cedar Rapids native Lindsey Byers is now hiking solo on the Appalachian Trail. Lindsey has collected more than \$1,500 in checks to support Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI), supporting healthy food, diverse farms, and vibrant communities as she makes her trek.



Lindsey Byers

Beginning the trail in Georgia she has now made it to Connecticut, continuing on to her final destination of Mt. Katahdin in Maine. “I hope to finish the trail by mid-August,” according to Lindsey. Lindsey has seen bears and hiked through a hail storm. To follow Lindsey on the trail, visit www.poppanddot.blogspot.com.

Lindsey is asking for pledges from as little as half a cent to one dollar per mile. All of the money will go to Practical Farmers of Iowa. You can make a pledge on the website, or contact Cedar Johnson at cedar@practicalfarmers.org for a pledge form. ☘

Listserv Successful

PFI's email distribution list is nearly 250 members strong and has been a useful tool to help disseminate information, link students and volunteers with farmers, and help farmers find specialty grains, seed, equipment, and more. The listserv also provides a unique medium for dialogue on pressing issues such as the 2007 Farm Bill, the bioeconomy, and energy concerns.

If you're missing out and would like to become a member of our listserv please send an email to cedar@practicalfarmers.org to request being added to the listserv.

New Policy Listserv

PFI members you've made it clear, you'd like us to be more active in pertinent policy issues, particularly as debate on the next Farm Bill rapidly heats up. One way we can better communicate with you about these issues is through a listserv dedicated to policy-centered issues.

We will utilize this listserv to send out action alerts, give periodic updates of Congress's action on the Farm Bill, and would allow for dialogue among listserv members.

To join, please email cedar@practicalfarmers.org and ask to be added to the policy listserv.

PFI Members in the Media

PFI members have been featured in a variety of media outlets recently. Members in the media promote the importance and vitality of sustainable agriculture. They also draw attention to PFI and the programs we offer. Thanks to all our members who have helped spread the word! Below are a few members who have recently been in the media. If you have a story run, please share it with us by emailing cedar@practicalfarmers.org or calling (515) 232-5661.

Farmer won't change his crop rotation

By Jean Caspers-Simmel

NASHUA, Iowa — Delbert Pratt, who farms near Nashua, has no plans to change his rotation. Pratt, a certified organic farmer, has a corn, soybean, oats and hay rotation, and he intends to stick with that. He also has stock cows and calves.



The farmer being in the conventional market arena.

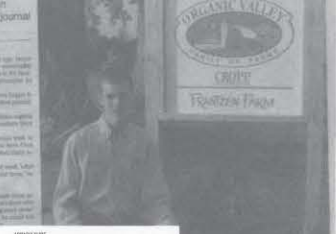
Delbert Pratt (left), a PFI organic farmer near Nashua, appeared in *AgriNews* Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Sustainable at a young age

His ag advocacy began in eighth grade with online journal

By Hannah Pritchard
New Farmer 2007

Nashua, Iowa — From a young age, James Frantzen has been passionate about sustainable agriculture and has been advocating for it since he was in eighth grade. Frantzen, now 18, has been featured in several media outlets for his early advocacy. He is currently a student at Iowa State University and plans to continue his education in agriculture.



James Frantzen (left), son of Tom and Irene Frantzen, was featured in an *Iowa Farmer Today* article on April 28, 2007, highlighting his early advocacy for organic practices.



Sharing garden's bounty

Local farmers and gardeners share their bounty with the community.

Below clockwise from top left, Carolyn Raffensperger, Lonna Nachtigal, Emma Runquist, Jeri Neal, Sue DeBlicke, and Donna Prizgintas were all featured for leading environmentally friendly lives in the July issue of *Facets for Women*.

Left, Laura Krouse and her family were featured in a story about her 120-member community supported agriculture farm in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*.



Teenager makes an impression in Washington

By Jean Caspers-Simmel

GIARD, Iowa — Kayla Koether is just 17, but she's been lobbying members of Congress on sustainable agriculture issues since she was 12. Kayla and her father, Greg, made their fifth trip to Washington, D.C., earlier this month to talk about sustainable agriculture.

The Koethers have a certified organic farm where they raise grass-fed cattle, sheep and goats at Giard, a small town near McGregor. The farm is enrolled in the Conservation Security Program at Dec 11.



Kayla Koether and her father, Greg, recently lobbied members of Congress on beginning farmer and sustainable agriculture issues. Read more about the Koethers at www.agrinews.com.

Above, Kayla Koether and her father Greg Koether were featured in *AgriNews* after lobbying members of Congress on beginning farmer and sustainable agriculture issues.

August

Nature Mapping - PFI Field Day, **August 7** • Hampton—CANCELLED!

Swine Herd Health, Conservation Security Program, and Grazing - PFI Field Day, **August 9, 1:30 - 5:00 p.m.** • 1155 Jasper Ave., New Hampton—Discussion includes: organic pigs: take-home examples for herd health, closing the herd, backing off the pressure, A.I. for the small herd, a herd health guide for alternative swine systems, hoop house gestation facility, the Conservation Security Program—benefits and prospects, update on grazing in northeast Iowa, pasture shelterbelts and watering system. **Contact:** Tom and Irene Frantzen (641) 364-6426

Organic No-till Tomatoes - PFI Field Day, **August 11, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.** • 1607 320th Way, Earlham—Discussion includes: organic no-till system for tomatoes, high tunnel greenhouse production, processing of walnuts and other nuts, and woody plantings with Trees Forever. **Contact:** Cleve Pulley (515) 833-2212

High Tunnel Fruit and Vegetable Production Workshop and Tour - PFI Field Day, **August 13, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.** • 53020 Hitchcock Ave., Lewis—High tunnel tour, dinner, and a visit to Milton Amos' farm near Griswold (51969 Dogwood Rd., Griswold). **Contact:** Linda Naeve (515) 294-8946, lnaeve@iastate.edu or Milton and Laura Amos (712) 778-2246

Feed Costs, Grazing, and Grains - PFI Field Day, **August 16, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.** • 4375 Pierce Ave., Paullina—Discussion will include: alternative swine feeds, rotational grazing of sheep, goats, and sows, growing field peas as a soybean substitute, making field windbreaks through the REAP program, and oat crown rust research. **Contact:** Dan, Lorna, Torray, or Faye Wilson (712) 448-3870 or dlwilson@iowatelecom.net

Breeding Corn for Quality, Cover Crops - PFI Field Day, **August 18, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.** • 303 Oak Ridge Dr., Panora—Discussion will include: performance of variety crosses, testing performance of lines selected for elevated amino acid levels, experimental hybrids of lines with native corn rootworm tolerance, testing elite Corn Belt synthetic populations, and experimental seed varieties. **Contact:** Earl and Ronda Hafner (641) 755-2391 or hafnerin@netins.net

Sustainable Row Crops, Livestock, and Gardens - Field Day, **August 22, 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.** • Neely Kinyon Research Farm - 2557 Norfolk Ave., Greenfield—Discussion will include: low-linolenic soybeans, organic seed treatment in corn, breeding corn for sustainability, blue corn demonstration, corn varieties for organic systems and more! **Contact:** Katherine Rohrig, Adair County Extension (515) 743-8412 or krohrig@iastate.edu

Leopold Center Recognition, Flax, Triticale, and Natural History - PFI Field Day, **August 25, 9:00 a.m - 3:30 p.m.** • 6190 470th St., Sutherland—Discussion will include: flax planting dates trial, winter triticale with a red clover overseeding, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture: 20 years making a difference in northwest Iowa, natural history of northwest Iowa at the Prairie Heritage Center following the field day discussion **Contact:** Paul and Karen Mugge (712) 446-2414 or pmugge@midlands.net

A Discussion on Farm Policy, Organic Weed Management, and Tree Plantings - PFI Field Day, **August 29, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.** • 1222 Ironwood Rd., Harlan—Policy discussion including beginning farmer incentives and the Conservation Security Program with Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, organic weed management: ridge till, and tree plantings with Trees Forever. **Contact:** Rosmann Family (712) 627-4653 or ronrosmann@fmctc.com

September

Goat Browsing for Weed Management - PFI Field Day, **September 9, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.** • 11395 NE Hubbell Way, Maxwell—Discussion will include: vegetable farming, Illinois bundleflower research, and goat browsing for weed control research. **Contact:** McCoy Farm (515) 967-2006

Hybrids, Flame Cultivation, and Grazing for Wildlife - PFI Field Day, **September 15, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** • 11395 NE Hubbell Way, Maxwell—Discussion will include: corn hybrid comparison, weed management trial: flaming vs. rotary hoe, and grazing for wildlife. **Contact:** Ron and Dottie Dunphy (641) 782-4327 or dunphyron@iowatelecom.net

Community-based Agriculture - PFI Field Day, **September 22, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.** • 1465 120th St., Kanawha—Visit a community supported agriculture farm, learn about community-based agriculture, and meet organizations able to help strengthen the growth of local food. **Contact:** One Step at a Time Gardens (641) 495-6367

October

Heirloom Garlic Tasting, Farm Tour and Dinner - PFI Field Day, **October 6, 5:00 p.m (tour) 7:30 p.m. (dinner)** • 24629 180th St., Minburn—A special evening that includes a farm tour, garlic judging, dinner, and premiums from Small potatoes Farm and Kitchen Collage. **Contact:** Cedar Johnson at PFI (515) 232-5661 or cedar@practicalfarmers.org

Farm Crawl, **October 7, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.** • Marion and Lucas Counties—Six independent family farm operations, all within a six-mile radius in south-central Iowa, are jointly hosting open houses at each farm. Enjoy a leisurely autumn day, crawling from farm-to-farm. **Contact:** Cedar Johnson at PFI (515) 232-5661 or cedar@practicalfarmers.org

Save the dates, January 11 & 12, for the 2008 Annual Conference at the Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines.

PFI Merchandise



Practical Farmers of Iowa
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 Ames, IA 50010
 Phone: 515-232-5661
 Fax: 515-232-5649
www.practicalfarmers.org

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02



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06



07

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01	Buy Fresh, Buy Local T-shirt (only L and XXL remain)	\$10 each		
02	Buy Fresh, Buy Local Tote Bag	\$10 each		
03	PFI Casual Cap	\$12 each		
04	PFI Structured Cap	\$8 each		
05	Notecards	\$6 for set of 8		
06	PFI T-shirt White (sizes S-XL)	\$15		
07	PFI T-shirt Colored (gray, orange, and safety green) (sizes S-XL)	\$15		

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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



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