

Practical News - Enroll in our habitat incentives program + PFI staff take a field trip

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



PFI staff hit the road to learn about the diversity of farming in central Iowa

Last Tuesday, PFI staff put work on pause and boarded a bus to spend a day learning about diverse approaches to farming with three PFI member farms in central Iowa. The field trip was the capstone to a professional development series exploring the history of Iowa agriculture, its current challenges and opportunities.

The tour started at Uncle G's Farm south of Ogden, where staff learned how **Garin and Kristten Buttermore** raise pastured poultry, heritage pigs and a few cows on their small-scale farm. Next, at Iowa Cover Crop's new warehouse south of Jefferson, staff learned how **Bill Frederick and James Holz** are building community connections while getting more cover crops, small grains and conservation on the landscape.

Finally, at Deal's Orchard, also near Jefferson, staff learned how **Jerald and Cindy Deal**, along with sons **Benji and Chris Deal** and their families, have created a unique agritourism destination that integrates apples, pumpkins (pictured above), row crops, sweet corn, hard cider and an on-farm store. The field trip ended with a staff party at the orchard.

NEWS

New research report: "Effects of Johnson-Su Compost Extract on Pasture"



Rory Van Wyk of Winterset, Iowa, wondered if applying Johnson-Su compost extract on his pasture would affect pasture production and quality as measured by Brix values.

Johnson-Su is a method of creating compost from wood chips or leaves in large, passively aerated and watered piles.

[Read more about his findings here.](#)

Enroll in PFI's habitat incentives program



Enrollment is open in PFI's habitat incentives program!

Are you interested in planting prairie strips or engaging in precision conservation analysis? This program provides technical and financial incentives to help you reach your farm conservation goals.

[Enroll here.](#)

Welcome Graham Giesting to PFI staff



Graham Giesting joins Practical Farmers of Iowa as our senior research coordinator for the Cooperators' Program.

In this role, Graham works with farmers to co-design on-farm research trials, and to analyze and interpret trial results.

[Learn more about Graham here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us at our first farm family meet-up of the year



July 18 | 2-4 p.m. | Dyersville, IA

Are you looking for an opportunity to connect with other farm families in a fun and casual way?

Our new farm family meet-ups are for you! These gatherings connect row crop farmers with each other and PFI members, staff and other organizations. **RSVP.**

Featured field days



July 24: Field Day – Improving Soil Through Nitrogen Reduction and Conservation Practices

Hosts: Alec & Rachel Amundson

2-4 p.m. | Osage, IA

Join Alec and Rachel for a lively discussion and tour of their cropping and edge-of-field conservation practices.

Alec and Rachel Amundson operate a 100% cover cropped, no-till corn and soybean farm spanning 2,400 acres in Mitchell County. Since beginning with cover crops in 2018, they have found new rotation options that work for them, including diversified rotations, alternative crops and managing inputs such as variable-rate fertilizer and seed.



July 28: Field Day – Growing Opportunity: Season Extension, Organic Production and Scaling Up at Bridgewater Farm

Host: Dale Raasch

4-7 p.m. | Bridgewater, IA

Bridgewater Farm is one of Iowa's largest certified organic vegetable farms, with 25 acres in production, four high tunnels operating for the past 10 years and eight more high tunnels newly built in spring 2024. Dale and his crew grow a wide variety of produce, including tomatoes, melons, sweet corn, spinach, peppers, carrots, squash and more.



July 30: Field Day – Establishing and Growing a Cover Crop Seeding and Service Business

Hosts: Dan & Jessica Bahe

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Stanley, IA

Dan Bahe and his father, Don, first dabbled in cover crops 10 years ago with rye spread by their local co-op on an 80-acre seed corn field. The following year, they bought their own 15-foot drill and some cover crop seed and never looked back, seeding for neighbors in addition to their own acres. Dan took over the operation in 2015 and has gradually grown the business to about 5,000 acres that he seeds today.

[View the full field day schedule](#)

More upcoming events

All events listed are in Central time.

July 15: Meet-up – Spanish Community Social

4-6 p.m. | Storm Lake, IA

July 16: Field Day – Setting Up a Multi-Species Grazing Operation

Host: Michael & Courtney Gutschenritter

3-5:30 p.m. | Oconomowoc, WI

July 18: Field Day – Grundy County Workshop: Biologicals, the Hot Topic

Host: Fred Abels, Courtney Myers & Grundy County SWCD

9 a.m.-Noon | Grundy Center, IA

July 19: Field Day – Going With the Grain: Diversified, Small-Scale Grain Farming With On-Farm Processing

Host: Andrea Hazzard

4-6:30 p.m. | Pecatonica, IL

July 20: Field Day – Growing Food for Habitat: Supporting Pollinators and Beneficial Insects in a Community Garden

Host: Kamyar Enshayan

10 a.m.-Noon | Waterloo, IA

July 25: Meet-up – Field Crop Farmer Meet-Up

Host: Chris Von Holten

7:30-8:30 a.m. | Walnut, IL

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

Ashley Wenke of Montezuma, IA, **J.D. Hollingsworth** of Packwood, IA, and **James Hepp** of Rockwell City, IA, were featured on the [Iowa Farm Bureau website](#): [I met a farmer today](#).

Bill Frederick of Jefferson, IA, **James Holz** of Grand Junction, IA, and **Tom Wind** of Jamaica, IA, were featured on [Raccoon Valley Radio](#): [History Chats to take place at the Green County Fair this week](#)

Brian Corkill of Galva, IL, was featured in [FarmWeekNow](#): [Famers share experiences with edge of field practices](#)

Molly Schintler of Iowa City, IA, **Tommy Hexter** of Grinnell, IA, and **Aaron Lehman** of Polk City, IA, were featured in [Little Village](#): [Iowa Food Systems Coalition sees future of state's agriculture in food diversity, not ethanol and animal feed](#)

Jon Bakehouse of Hastings, IA, was featured on the [AgEmerge Podcast](#): [139 AgEmerge Podcast with Jon Bakehouse](#)

John Hogeland and **Beth Hoffman** of Lovilia, IA, were featured in [dsm Magazine](#): [Go ahead: Watch the sausage being made](#)

Larry Neppi of Marion, IA, wrote a letter to the editor that was featured in [The Gazette](#): [Where does Jones get his facts on tile drainage as water quality culprit?](#)

Loran Steinlage of West Union, IA, was featured on the [Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance website](#): [NE Iowa farmer leads the way in profitable conservation](#)

Ross McCaw of Marengo, IA, was featured on [Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network](#): [Cover Crop Business Accelerator from PFI and ISA celebrates 5 years](#)

Have you been featured in the media? If you're a PFI member, tell us when and where to find a link to the article, and we'll feature you in a future issue of Practical News.

Contact: elizabeth.wilhelm@practicalfarmers.org

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