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## Beginning Farmer News - Meet a SIP participant + Emergency support available

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From Rachel Burke <rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org>

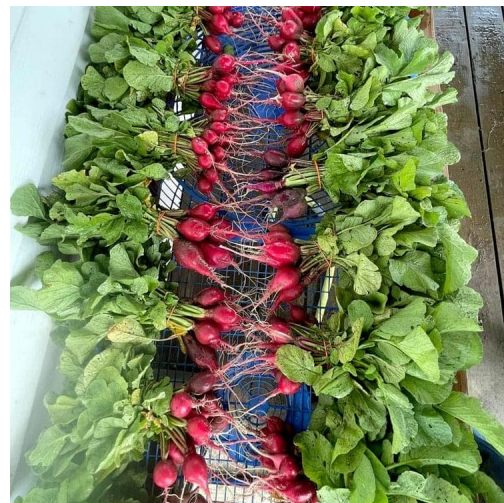
Date Thu 4/10/2025 3:49 PM

To Anna Pesek <anna.pesek@practicalfarmers.org>



**April 2025**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



### **Meet a SIP 2026 participant: Shad Swanson**

**Shad Swanson** is the owner-operator of Garden of Paradise, a vegetable, spice and herb farm in Essex, Iowa.

**PFI asked:** Why did you want to participate in PFI's Savings Incentive Program?

**Shad:** "I want to take my business plan from my head to paper. I also look forward to using the savings to help expand my business."

The Savings Incentive Program is PFI's two-year business development program. SIP pairs beginning and aspiring farmers with experienced farmer mentors. It also offers targeted learning, peer networking opportunities and business planning support.

Meet the rest of the [2026 SIP class](#) and learn more about the [Savings Incentive Program](#).

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Reach out to PFI's senior beginning farmer engagement coordinator



**Rachel Burke** is PFI's senior beginning farmer engagement coordinator. In her role, Rachel plans beginning farmer field days and conference sessions, does farmer outreach, and connects farmers to resources and technical assistance.

Would you like to have a conversation about PFI's beginning farmer resources?

Reach out to Rachel at [rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org).

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### Join fellow PFI members on email discussion groups



PFI's greatest asset is the knowledge and ideas generously shared among our community of members.

Our email discussion groups are a [members-only](#) email platform. Signing up lets you easily connect with that network from anywhere you can access your email.

Stay informed, get advice, share events and get the support you need to make practical decisions for your farm.

[Access this member benefit.](#)

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**Watch: "Building and Maintaining Fair Lease Agreements"**



Are you a beginning farmer thinking about entering into a lease agreement?

Watch our recorded webinar, "Building and Maintaining Fair Lease Agreements" with **Rachel Armstrong**, founder and executive director of Farm Commons. She shares effective strategies you can use to build strong leasing relationships and offers tips for preventing your lease relationships from going awry.

[Watch this webinar.](#)

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## Improve your grazing plan with a PFI consultation



PFI's livestock viability manager, **Margaret Chamas**, offers free grazing consultations for established or aspiring livestock farmers.

Consults will vary depending on the situation; participants can expect one to two phone calls of 30 minutes or more and possibly a site visit. Margaret will work with you to identify some goals and outcomes to achieve.

[Schedule your grazing consultation.](#)

## BEGINNING FARMER RESOURCES

**Emergency funding available for regenerative farmers**





Healing Soils Foundation is launching the **Regenerative Farmer Assurance Fund** to provide critical financial relief to organic and regenerative farmers facing delays in public funding.

Farmers are eligible for up to \$50,000. Funds are distributed as available in a rolling application format and farmers reimburse the fund if and when their delayed public funding is received.

**Check your eligibility and apply.**

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## Brighter Future Fund's Emergency Resilience Grant



The American Farmland Trust Brighter Future Fund's Emergency Resilience Grant is to offset financial disruptions farmers and ranchers are experiencing due to natural disasters, such as flooding, wildfires or avian flu; the loss or delay of funding due to the government funding freeze; or a loss of markets.

Funding will be prioritized for small to mid-size farms facing challenges accessing funding opportunities.

**Apply for this emergency grant.**

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## Root and Bloom Fellowship applications due May 14



The Root and Bloom Fellowship is an advocacy and power-building educational opportunity for farmers from Young Farmers Coalition.

Fellows will explore how challenges young and BIPOC farmers face nationwide are rooted in federal agriculture policy and how those policies and power dynamics play out in their communities. They'll also learn about how to make change at home.

[Learn more about this fellowship.](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Keep an eye out for PFI's field day guide



At PFI field days, you'll find a welcoming atmosphere, a spirit of curiosity, a culture of mutual respect and farmers openly sharing their knowledge and experience.

Our field days are led by our farmer members sharing their expertise.

**All PFI field days are free for anyone to attend.**

[Dates for 2025 field days will be announced in May.](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

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### Upcoming PFI events

*All events listed are in Central time.*

**April 11: Shared Learning Call –  
[Preventing and Managing  
Disease in Oats](#)**

*Hosted by: Jochum Wiersma  
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)*

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## Friends of PFI events

### **April 10, 17, 24: Workshop – Farm Dreams**

*Hosted by: Kansas Rural Center*  
6-8 p.m. | [Online](#)

### **April 12: Workshop – EWE Got This: Lambing Basics**

*Hosted by: ISU Extension & Outreach*  
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. | Ames, IA

### **April 14: Webinar – Crop Insurance**

*Hosted by: MVEG*  
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | [Online](#)

### **April 17: Webinar – Mushroom Cultivation: Shitake, Oysters and Beyond**

*Hosted by: Michael Del Rio, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire*  
5:30-6:45 p.m. | [Online](#)

### **May 9: Field Day – Sweet Tooth Farm Field Day**

*Hosted by: Monica Owczarski*  
10 a.m.-Noon | Des Moines, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

## Contact our team

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