
Beginning Farmer News - Meet farmer Sandro Lopes + Apply for our beneficial insects cost-share

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

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



February 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet Sandro Lopes, a beginning farmer and owner of Naterra Farm

Sandro Lopes, owner and operator of Nattera Farm, in David City, Nebraska, farms with his wife **Michelle Lopes** and their four children. Sandro follows a rainforest food systems model based on permaculture principles and agricultural practices used by his indigenous ancestors in Brazil. With guidance from his mother, he is putting this generational knowledge to work to feed his community.

“My mother is María Mont Serrat, a woman whose name carries the strength of generations who have worked the land with their own hands and the wisdom of those who have protected life with love and determination,” Sandro says.

“The land is calling us! Agriculture is not just a job – it is an act of resistance, love and reconnection with our roots.”

Learn more about Sandro and his farm by visiting www.natterafarms.com.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Increase beneficial insects on your urban farm with our cost-share



PFI and the Xerces Society are seeking urban farmers who want to plant beneficial insect habitat on their urban farm. Farms must serve communities with local produce or products such as fruits, vegetables, herbs or honey.

Through our **beneficial insects cost-share**, PFI funds native plants and costs associated with establishing them so you can create insectary strips or beetle banks. We want to help farmers support beneficial insects that can boost natural predation and pollination on their urban farms. **Apply today.**

Apply for a position with our 2025 Labor4Learning trainers



Our 2025 Labor4Learning trainers are seeking employees across the state to work on their operations while receiving mentorship and support for learning opportunities.

The **Labor4Learning program** is designed to pair beginning farmers seeking employment and additional training in farm management and production skills with experienced farmers seeking extra help on their farm.

[Explore the job postings.](#)

Magazine: "Shifting Gears: Vegetable Farmers Adapt to Their Changing Needs"



Raising vegetables is hard work. It's physically demanding, runs on a rigid schedule and requires endless decisions. These strains lead many farmers to adapt their operations to accommodate changing needs.

In our winter magazine **Rob and Tammy Faux, Donna Warhover** and **Laura Krouse** shared their experience with transitions and adaptations they've made on their farms. [Read the full article.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join a Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up in Knoxville, Iowa



**Tuesday, Feb. 18 | 2-4 p.m. |
Knoxville, IA**

Join host, **Jill Beebout**, at The Coffee Connection at 213 E. Main St, #101 in Knoxville, Iowa, to meet fellow fruit, vegetable and flower farmers and chat about the season ahead.

To RSVP, email **Jacqueline** at jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org.

See the schedule of future Horticulture Farmer Meet-Ups.

Join a Livestock Farmer Meet-Up



**Thursday, Feb. 20 | 10:30 a.m. |
Lamoni, IA**

Join fellow farmer, **Chad Hensley**, at Linden Street Coffee House for good conversation and good food, courtesy of PFI.

The purpose of the **Livestock Farmer Meet-Ups** is to establish networks of local connections and support among livestock farmers within each region of the state.

To RSVP, email **Amos Johnson** at amos.johnson@practicalfarmers.org.

Winter webinar: "Building and Maintaining Fair Lease Agreements"



Tuesday, March 18 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Are you a beginning farmer thinking about entering into a lease agreement? Are you currently in a lease agreement that feels hard to navigate?

Join **Rachel Armstrong**, founder and executive director of Farm Commons, as she introduces materials and resources addressing lease power dynamics. [Register for this webinar.](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed are in Central time.

Feb. 14: [Webinar – Equipment for Planting Small Grains and Frost Seeding](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 18: [Webinar – Soil Studies: Exploring Creative Residue Management and Soil Amendments in a Four-Crop Rotation](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 18: [Meet-Up – Livestock Farmer Meet-Up](#)

Hosted by: Claire Wilson and Susan Young

10 a.m. | Iowa City, IA

Feb. 19: [Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 20: [Meet-Up – Livestock Farmer Meet-Up](#)

Hosted by: Chad Hensley

10:30 a.m. | Lamoni, IA

Feb. 25: [Webinar – Dying to Start Dyeing? Raising, Processing and Marketing Wool](#)

Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 28: [Meet-Up – Livestock Farmer Meet-Up](#)

Hosted by: Steve Riggins

10 a.m. | Nevada, IA

Feb. 28: [Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Ups](#)

3-5 p.m. | Osage, IA

Friends of PFI events

Feb. 18: Symposium – The Portable Cow Symposium
Hosted by: Iowa State University
9 a.m.-Noon | Ames, IA

Feb. 18: Webinar – Lunch and Learn: Regenerative Agriculture
Hosted by: The Center for Environmental Farming Systems
11 a.m.-Noon | **Online**

Feb. 20-22: Conference – Marbleseed Organic Farming Conference
Hosted by: Marbleseed
La Crosse, WI

Feb. 21-22: Retreat – Multigenerational Farm Transition Retreats
Hosted by: Minnesota Department of Ag
Mankato, St. Cloud, Rochester, MN

Feb. 25-27: Virtual Conference – CT NOFA Winter Conference
Hosted by: Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association
8-11 a.m. | Online

Mar. 13: Workshop – Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
Hosted by: Iowa State Extension
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. | Hiawatha, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

[Contact our team](#)

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