
Practical News - Welcome our four new board members + Explore biochar research

From Practical Farmers of Iowa <info@practicalfarmers.org>

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



Are you ready to put your soil health to the test? March 15 is the enrollment deadline for two field crop trials! One trial is about reducing nitrogen in corn. The other explores if cover crops increase the number of days suitable for field work. **Enroll today.**

March 10, 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Get to know the four new members of PFI's board of directors

In January, **Alec Amundson, Wade Dooley, Brice Hundling and Natasha Wilson** became the newest additions to Practical Farmers of Iowa's board of directors.

PFI's 12-member, majority-farmer board of directors serves in many capacities, including ensuring PFI is fiscally sound and programs remain effective and farmer-

focused. The board also provides leadership, advice and direction to staff.

All new board members bring a wealth of knowledge, including Natasha and Brice's experience with diverse livestock and Wade and Alec's expertise in cover crops and grains. [Read more about our newly elected board members.](#)

NEWS

Research report: "Biochar Seed Treatment for Corn"



Biochar, a fine-grain charcoal material produced by heating organic materials to a high temperature in the absence of oxygen, has been gaining popularity over the last decade as a soil amendment and seed inoculant.

Jack Boyer, Robert Harvey and Rob Stout decided to test how using EarthBrew, a biochar product, as a seed coat affected corn yields.

[See what these farmers learned from their research trial.](#)

Video: "Establishing On-Farm Habitat for Beneficial Insects"

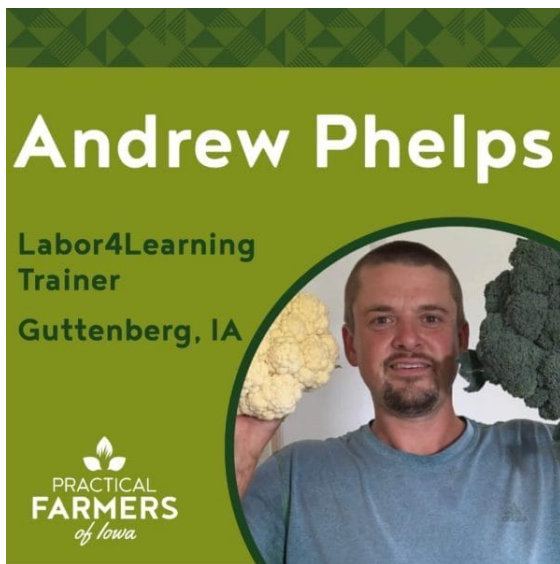


In our video, **Emmaly Renshaw**, formerly of Feed Iowa First; **Mari Hunt Wassink** of Black Earth Gardens; **Grace Yi** of PFI; and **Sarah Nizzi** of Xerces Society share their experience establishing pollinator habitat to support beneficial insects at Feed Iowa First's Wanatee Farm in Marion, Iowa.

[Watch the video.](#)

If you are an urban farmer curious about establishing your own habitat, [apply to our beneficial insects cost-share today.](#)

Meet a Labor4Learning trainer: Andrew Phelps



Andrew Phelps

Labor4Learning
Trainer

Guttenberg, IA



In Guttenberg, Iowa, **Andrew Phelps** is focused on building healthy soil to grow quality vegetables.

Andrew is looking for a farm crew member this season to support various aspects of vegetable production such as bed preparation, transplanting, pruning and trellising, weed management, harvesting, packing vegetables and assisting at a farmers market. [Learn how to contact Andrew and explore all the Labor4Learning positions.](#)

Magazine: "A Practice in Faith"



Arlyn and Sue Kauffman own Green Ridge Family Farm near Weldon, Iowa. As practicing Mennonites, their faith interweaves with how they show up in the world and approach farming – which includes managing their 20,000-hen layer barn.

[Learn more](#) in this story from our Winter 2024 magazine issue.

Revisit PFI's feature length-film, ["Livestock on the Land,"](#) to hear more about the Kauffmans' experience.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar: "The Advantages of Cover Crops"



Tuesday, March 25 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Kristin and Pat Duncanson, of Highland Family Farms, have a goal of making sure future generations have productive soil to farm.

When they first considered planting covers, they weren't sure if it was going to work for them. In this webinar, Kristin and Pat will discuss the challenges and successes they've had adding cover crops to their rotation.

[Register for this webinar.](#)

More upcoming events

All events listed are in Central time.

March 11: Winter Webinar – [Optimal Nitrogen Fertilizer Rates for Corn](#)

Hosted by: Sotirios Archontoulis
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

March 18: Winter Webinar – [Building and Maintaining Fair Lease Agreements](#)

Hosted by: Rachel Armstrong
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

Jason Grimm of Williamsburg, IA, and **Brian Depew** of Lyons, NE, were featured on [Iowa Public Radio: **A Midwest farmer was promised money for a new delivery truck. Then Trump froze the funds**](#)

Juli and Chris McGuire of Belmont, WI, were featured in [Story Corps: **Blue Roof Orchard: Family recalls working \(and laughing\) side by side**](#)

Kate Edwards of Solon, IA, and **Shae and Anna Pesek** of Coggon, IA, were featured in [The Gazette: **'They feel that connection to the land': Iowa farmers balance motherhood and agriculture**](#)

Monika Ozwarski of Des Moines, IA, was featured in [Allrecipes: Meet the Midwestern Mom Who Grew Her Backyard Garden Into a Community Farm](#)

Paul Mugge of Sutherland, IA, was featured in [Triple Pundit: How U.S. Soybean Farmers Are Making Their Fields More Sustainable](#)

PFI in the News

PFI was mentioned in [The Daily Nonpareil: Council Bluffs schools work to offer meals cooked from scratch with local produce](#)

Sally Worley, PFI's executive director, was featured on [Iowa Public Radio: Nonprofits supporting farmers and climate solutions look for backup plans in case federal funds fall short](#)

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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