
Practical News - Enroll in a nitrogen reduction trial by March 31 + Read PFI's 2024 annual report

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

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March 24, 2025

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Growing our impact together: PFI's 2024 annual report

As we reflect on our work and growth last year, we celebrate the accomplishments of our farmers, staff and supporters. Our **2024 annual report**, now available

online, shows what we did together – and how these groups are the heart of our work equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Here are a few highlights from the report:

- PFI's farmer-led education department stewarded **247 events**.
- During our field day season, 66 farms opened their gates to **2,725 attendees**, where **98% of attendees** say they increased their knowledge.
- Across Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois, 67 farmers completed **100 research trials**.
- Our farm viability team supported **2,387 farmers** who planted **839,484 acres** of cover crops.
- Our membership grew to **9,152**, including 204 lifetime members.

[Access the full report.](#)

NEWS

Deadline extended: Enroll in a nitrogen reduction research trial by March 31



Reducing your reliance on nitrogen fertilizer can help improve water quality, reduce agriculture's carbon footprint and **improve your farm's bottom line**.

For this research trial, you will compare two nitrogen fertilizer rates applied to corn in a replicated strip trial. One rate will be your typical nitrogen rate; the other will be a reduced rate of your choosing.

[The new deadline to enroll in this trial is March 31.](#)

Did you know you can couple participating in this research trial with enrolling in our [N Rate Risk Protection Program](#)?

This program offers support from a PFI agronomist to help you decide how much to reduce your nitrogen rate. It also offers a risk protection payment of \$35 per acre if your yield drops after reducing your typical rate. **[Enroll today.](#)**

Research: "Growing Tomatoes for Sale vs. Seed"

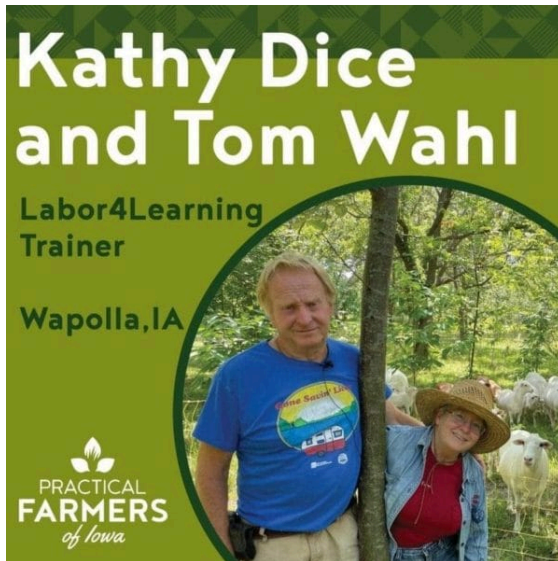


For horticulture farmers, growing crops for their seeds can be a way to diversify enterprises and try something new.

In their 2024 trial, farmers **Hannah Breckbill and Emily Fagan** compared the enterprise budgets of growing tomatoes for food sales verses growing tomatoes to fill a seed contract.

Emily noted that participating in this trial was key for their farm in figuring out the financials of growing tomato seed for contract. [See their results.](#)

Meet Labor4Learning trainers: Kathy Dice and Tom Wahl



With 28 years of experience, **Kathy Dice and Tom Wahl** of Red Fern Farm in Wapello, Iowa, are offering their expertise (and free housing) to the next generation through PFI's Labor4Learning program.

Tom and Kathy raise tree crops, including chestnuts, pawpaws, American persimmons, heartnuts, Asian pears, cornelian cherries, hazels and honeyberries.

[Learn more about this position, and others.](#)

Nominate a farmer for the Iowa Leopold Conservation Award



Nominations are now open for the **2025 Iowa Leopold Conservation Award**. The \$10,000 award honors ranchers, farmers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their land management.

Past winners include PFI members **Wendy Johnson** in 2024, **Loran Steinlage** in 2023 and **Seth, Christy, Spencer** and **Tatum Watkins** of Pinhook Farm in 2022.

Submit a nomination today.

Magazine article: "Bridging the Gap"



Openness, trust and respect have been the key to sustaining thriving multigenerational operations for two PFI farm families.

Earl Hafner of Early Morning Harvest has spent 30 years transitioning farm responsibilities to his son, **Jeff Hafner**. **John and Bev Gilbert** operate Gibraltar Farms with their son and daughter-in-law, **John C. and Sarah Gilbert**, alongside one of John's brothers, **Greg**, and his wife, **Barb**. **Read about how both families manage generational transition.**

Navigating farm transfer can be challenging. PFI's senior farmland viability coordinator, **Martha McFarland**, offers **one-on-one consultation** to land seekers and landowners looking for support with land access and farm transition.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar: "Getting Going With Grazing"



Tuesday, April 8 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

It can be overwhelming to start rotationally grazing. **Olivia Pacha** has just reached the end of her "first full-blown year" rotationally grazing cattle, sheep and goats. She's also a participant in PFI's [grazing cost-share](#) and [Savings Incentive Program](#).

In this webinar, Olivia will share what she's learned, from what to invest more in and buy less of, to navigating rental agreements and contract grazing. [Register today.](#)

Shared learning call: "Preventing and Managing Disease in Oats"



Friday, April 11 | Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

As oats begin their next season of growth, being aware how Fusarium functions in other small grains can help farmers assess and manage disease risk.

During this shared learning call, University of Minnesota Extension Small Grain Specialist **Jochum Wiersma** will offer tips to help farmers plan ahead to try to prevent disease prevalence. He'll also share approaches for handling the crop when diseases do appear. [Register today.](#)

More upcoming events

All events listed are in Central time.

March 25: Webinar – [The Advantages of Cover Crops](#)

Hosted by: Kristin and Pat Duncanson

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

April 1: Webinar – [Watering Systems for Graziers](#)

Hosted by: Dave Schmidt

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

[View our events calendar](#)

IN THE NEWS

Members in the News

Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.

Ashley and Zachary Wenke of Montezuma, IA, **Jason Grimm** of Williamsburg, IA, and **Emma and Marcus Johnson** of Central City, IA, were featured in [Des Moines Register](#): **Foods program was lifeline for small Iowa farmers. Can they survive without it?**

Catherine Schut of Prairie City, IA, **Ryan Madison** of Gladbrook, IA, and **Savanah Laur**, PFI's business viability manager, were featured in [Newton Daily News](#): **PFI welcomes new cohort of beginning farmers to Savings Incentive Program**

Doug Adams of Humboldt, IA, and **Dave Struthers** of Collins, IA, were featured on the [Iowa Farm Bureau webpage](#): **Iowa farmers are committed to their communities, animals and land**

Greg Fynboh of Donnelly, MN, and **Andrew and Josh VanDerPol** of Kerkhoven, MN, were featured in [Tri-State Neighbor](#): **Western MN farmers say consolidation 'devastating' their communities**

James Hepp of Rockwell City, IA, was featured on the [Cover Crop Strategies Podcast](#): **Young Farmers Pave the Way with Cover Crop Usage**

John Gilbert of Iowa Falls, IA, and **Aaron Lehman** of Polk City, IA, were featured in [Public News Service](#): **Iowa farmers push back on agriculture checkoff cuts**

Landon and Anne Plagge of Latimer, IA, and **Martin Larsen** of Rochester, MN, were featured in [Farm News](#): **Bringing oats back**

Maria Rosmann of Harlan, IA, and **David Rosmann** of Avoca, IA, were featured on [KETV](#): **It's a big question mark': Iowa farmers concerned about cancelled federal food program**

Ryan Marquardt of Van Meter, IA, was featured in [Progressive Farmer](#): **Pushback Over Cutting Local Food Grants**

Seth Watkins of Clarinda, IA, was featured in [The Hawk Eye](#): **Iowa farmer works to reverse damage done to Iowa landscape by corporate farming practices**

Shae and Anna Pesek of Coggon, IA, and **Emma and Marcus Johnson** of Central City, IA, were featured in [Corridor Business Journal](#): **Iowa farmers urge USDA to reinstate local food programs in open letter**

Tricia Engelbrecht of Waverly, IA, and **Grace Yi**, PFI's habitat viability manager, were featured on [Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network: Urban farmers can apply for cost-share to boost beneficial insects](#)

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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