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## Practical News - Growing your business with value-added production + New onion research

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

Date Fri 4/11/2025 8:35 AM

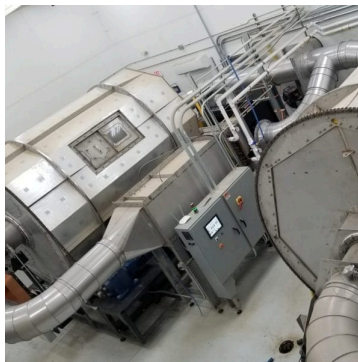
To Anna Pesek <anna.pesek@practicalfarmers.org>



**TODAY is the final day to enroll in two row crop research trials.** One trial explores nitrogen reduction. The other trial explores cover crops and fieldwork potential. **Enroll today.**

**March 31, 2025**

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*



## Using value-added production to grow a farm business

A farm can diversify by identifying products they're already growing and adding value to them through extra processing or marketing avenues.

That's what **Adam Wagner** and his father did when they started Vertical Malt, a craft malting operation in Crookston, Minnesota, that uses grains grown on their family farm. By adding value to their barley through malting, Vertical Malt grew from a father-son brewing hobby to a business. Now, they plan to build a new mill

to help them expand into the flour industry. [Learn more about Adam's experience growing a value-added business.](#)

And if you're a farmer interested in diversifying with value-added production, consider taking this [self-assessment survey](#) to determine if the **USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant** could support your goals.

## NEWS

### Research: Finding the best onion varieties for your farm



Farmers must consider many factors when deciding which variety of onions to plant. Growth, yield, taste, storage, hardiness and resistance to pests are a few features commonly prioritized.

**Kathy Dice, Alice McGary, Roxane Mitten and Mark Quee** conducted a trial to assess the overall performance of six onion varieties, as well as the varieties' resistance to thrips, damage and storage stability.

[Explore their research.](#)

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### Magazine: "Neighbors in Conservation"



**Steve Robisky** and **Chuck Hesse** have been neighbors in eastern Iowa for nearly 20 years. The two met when Chuck rented 59 acres from Steve in 2016.

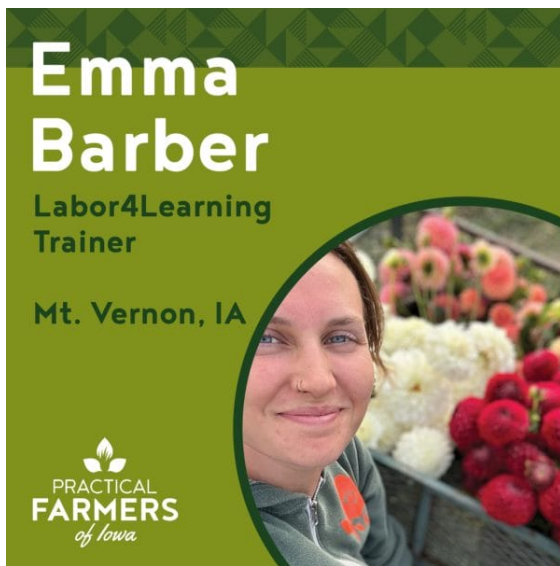
Through their connection, Steve and Chuck were able to share knowledge about conservation practices that benefit both of their farms.

[Read how these farmers balance conservation with economics.](#)

**Did you know PFI can support prairie strips and precision conservation analysis on your farm through our Habitat Incentives Program? [Submit an interest form to get started.](#)** Our staff will then reach out to discuss program options for your farm's specific needs.

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## Meet a Labor4Learning trainer: Emma Barber



Are you interested in learning the ins and outs of cut flower and herb production at a thriving horticulture farm? **Emma Barber** of Rhubarb Botanicals is seeking a farm crew member to join her operation.

Employees will learn components of running a horticultural farm. Job responsibilities may include greenhouse and nursery production, field preparation, weeding techniques, irrigation maintenance and more.

**[Explore this position and other Labor4Learning opportunities.](#)**

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## Update your listing in PFI's Local Foods Directory



**PFI's Local Foods Directory** exists to help connect consumers with member farms and their products. **As spring approaches, it's time to make sure your listing is up to date with your farm's offerings.**

If you aren't already, now is a great time to **become a PFI member** to take advantage of this benefit and others.

**Update your farm's information.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tune in to the remaining winter webinars**





Register for our final winter webinars of the year:

- **[April 1: Watering Systems for Graziers](#)** | Noon-1 p.m.
- **[April 8: Getting Going With Grazing](#)** | Noon-1 p.m.

Have you missed a winter webinar you wanted to see this year?

**[Watch all the recordings on our YouTube playlist.](#)**

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## More upcoming events

*All events listed are in Central time.*

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

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

[View our events calendar](#)

## IN THE NEWS

### Members in the News

*Showcasing member voices and their diverse, independent viewpoints.*

**Andy Linder** of Easton, MN, and **Ryan Gibbs** of Hopkinton, IA, were featured in [Marshall Independent](#): **[Networking for better soil health](#)**

**Anna Pesek** of Coggon, IA, was featured in [USA TODAY](#): **[Trump cuts hit struggling food banks, risking hunger for low-income Americans](#)**

**Anna and Shae Pesek** of Coggon, IA, were featured in [Telegraph-Herald](#): **[Ag-related nonprofit to hold free farm marketing workshop in Delaware County](#)**

**Emma Johnson** of Central City, IA, and **Anna Pesek** of Coggon, IA, were featured in [Iowa News Now](#): **[Iowa farmers reeling from sudden \\$11 million USDA program ax](#)**

**Jason Grimm** of Williamsburg, IA, was featured on [Iowa News Now: Local farmers express concerns over USDA funding cuts](#)

**Jill Beebout** of Chariton, IA, was featured in [Nebraska Public Media: An alternative to the USDA organic label could be more accessible for farmers. Can it stick?](#)

**Kevin Butt** of Iowa Falls, IA, was featured in [The Gazette: Agriculture innovations are pushing boundaries to make Iowa crops healthier, more resilient](#)

**Lee Tesdell** of Slater, IA, was featured in [Iowa Farmer Today: 'Farming the sun': Alternative energy provides more electrical options on farm](#)

**Tricia Engelbrecht** of Waverly, IA, was featured in [Public News Service: Iowa farmers 'plant good insects' to fight pests](#)

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**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](mailto:elizabeth.wilhelm@practicalfarmers.org)

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