

# 2026 Commercial Apple Growers Workshop

Thursday, Feb. 19 | The Courtyard, Jefferson, Iowa  
214 E. State Street, Jefferson, IA 50129

Time	Activity
8 a.m.	Registration (Coffee + pastries)
8:30 a.m.	Welcome & Introductions
9:15 a.m.	<b>Mark Westbrook</b> <i>Paha Cider Co. &amp; Solstice Farm</i>
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	<b>Apple Grower Roundtable</b>
Noon	Lunch
1 p.m.	<b>Marcus &amp; Emma Johnson</b> <i>Buffalo Ridge Orchard</i>
2:15 a.m.	<b>Drive / Caravan to Deal's Orchard</b> 1102 244th St., Jefferson, Iowa 50129
2:30 p.m.	<b>Chris Deal – Tour of Deal's Orchard's packhouse and cider processing</b> <i>Deal's Orchard</i>
3:50 p.m.	Cider tasting, evaluations
4 p.m.	Close

## Questions

If you have additional questions about this event or the PFI horticulture program, please contact Ashly Senske at [ashly.senske@practicalfarmers.org](mailto:ashly.senske@practicalfarmers.org) or (515) 232-5661.

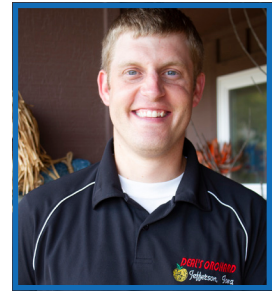
## Connect With Us

PFI's mission is to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities. We welcome everyone, and our community extends far beyond our membership and Iowa's borders. We encourage you to explore the many ways to connect with PFI, and to be part of our community. Stay in touch with our events and programs by signing up for our email newsletters at [practicalfarmers.org/email-newsletters](https://practicalfarmers.org/email-newsletters).

### Chris Deal, *Deal's Orchard*

Chris Deal farms with his family at Deal's Orchard, an apple orchard, cidery, tree farm and agritourism center near Jefferson, Iowa. Deal's Orchard has been operating since 1917, through five generations of Deal family. They currently have over 40 acres of apple trees with more than 25 different varieties. Alongside their you-pick offerings, they produce a variety of products from their apples including baked goods, cider, and an extensive line-up of hard cider flavors. They most recently expanded their hard cider operation, adding an on-site canning facility.

**Deal's Orchard:** [dealsorchard.com](http://dealsorchard.com)



### Mark Westbrook, *Solstice Farm & Paha Cider Co.*

Mark Westbrook and his family have run Solstice Farm near Waverly, Iowa since 2018, raising pastured poultry, layer hens and mushrooms to sell at area farmers markets and through a CSA. The family has planted hundreds of trees and shrubs, including apples, pears, cherries, aronia berries, elderberries and honeyberries. In 2023, Mark added Paha Cider Co. to the operation and currently has a line-up of four core cider flavors alongside seasonal and limited addition options. They currently have 275 trees for cider apple production and are looking to expand.

**Solstice Farm:** [solsticefarm.net](http://solsticefarm.net) | **Paha Cider:** [pahacider.com](http://pahacider.com)



### Marcus and Emma Johnson, *Buffalo Ridge Orchard*

Marcus and Emma Johnson operate Buffalo Ridge Orchard near Central City, Iowa, with Emma's parents, Mary and Vernon Zahradnik. The 80-acre farm has 5 acres of diversified vegetables in the field and high tunnels, and 13 acres of orchard, including 3,600 apple trees consisting of 50 new and classic varieties. Their packhouse, completed in 2019, includes a farm store and a processing and packaging area for dried apples, apple and pear turnovers, and other value-added products.

**Buffalo Ridge Orchard:** [buffaloridgeorchard.com](http://buffaloridgeorchard.com)

