Abstract: Four case studies were developed for Iowa farm operations that have successfully used machinery and labor sharing arrangements for intergenerational transfer of farm assets. Results were shared at workshops and through publication of a resource manual.

What was done and why?
Ownership costs for farm machinery continue to rise as the scale of equipment available increases. Small and medium-size farmers often cannot achieve competitive economies of scale for machinery ownership, but do not wish to outsource their machinery operations to custom operators. Cooperative strategies to purchase and operate farm machinery as well as share labor not only permit producers to access cost-reducing technology and economies of scale without adding significantly more debt or land, but also provide less obvious benefits such as labor flexibility and more diversified management skills. In addition, families who wish to seamlessly transfer the use and ownership of machinery to the next generation of farmers can use sharing arrangements to accomplish their objectives.

Project objectives were to:
1. Complete two new case studies on intergenerational transfer to supplement the 10 cases on cooperative strategies that are already available.
2. Provide three workshops for producers and agribusinesses (e.g., lenders, landlords) on machinery and labor sharing arrangements.

What did we learn?
The team found that producers of horticultural crops were interested in how machinery-sharing arrangements might help them gain access to specialized equipment with a reasonable investment. Several contacts were made to gauge the specific educational needs of horticultural producers, and plans were made for follow-up activities with targeted groups.

The team presented information about machinery and labor sharing to several groups of beginning farmers and horticultural growers, and trained Iowa State University Extension staff members about the use of machinery and labor sharing arrangements for intergenerational transfer of farm assets.