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PFI field days: Collaboration and farmer research

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PFI field days: Collaboration and farmer research

Abstract
Oilseed flax production, grass-fed beef, and the Conservation Security Program are among the topics featured in Practical Farmers of Iowa’s (PFI) 2005 field day schedule. PFI celebrates 20 years of farmer-driven research and outreach with a special anniversary field day at the farm of Ron and Maria Rosmann, Harlan, on June 30. The Rosmanns, longtime sustainable agriculture leaders in Iowa, will showcase their diversified farming operation and will host Dick Thompson, PFI co-founder, and George DeVault, past editor of New Farm magazine.

Disciplines
Agricultural Education | Agricultural Science | Agriculture | Agronomy and Crop Sciences
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New markets for organic flax and new low-linolenic acid soybean varieties may allow farmers to benefit from consumer demand for healthier vegetable oils. The new markets bring questions about production and economics of these niche crops. PFI farmers are collaborating with the Department of Agronomy, ISU Extension, and the Organic Agriculture Program at Iowa State to provide answers for both organic and conventional systems. Field day hosts include:

- Greg and Norma Wiley, Washington, June 21, flax
- Bob and Dick Gallagher, Washington, June 21, low-lin beans
- Ron and Maria Rosmann, Harlan, June 30, flax
- Jeff Longfellow, Bedford, July 1, flax
- ISU Neely-Kinyon Farm, Greenfield, August 24, flax, low-lin beans
- Paul Mugge, Sutherland, August 27, flax
- Ron Dunphy, Creston, August 29, low-lin beans

With corn breeders from Iowa State, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the Michael Field Ag Institute, PFI is working to improve the feed quality of corn and germplasm availability to producers and small seedhouses. Exotic corn populations are being crossed with elite inbred lines under farm conditions to develop both hybrids and populations with improved amino acid and nutrient profiles and good yield. Farmers and researchers involved will share their progress at five PFI field days this year:

- Laura Krouse, Mount Vernon, July 27
- ISU Neely-Kinyon Farm, Greenfield, August 24
- Don Adams and Nan Bonfils, Madrid, September 11
- Mike Natvig and Amy Miller, Cresco, September 27
- Gary Laydon and Pat Mennenga, Plainfield, October 1

Multiple benefits of grazing systems will be featured at PFI field days this summer. Tom and Kristi German will be joined by industry specialists in discussing genetics, management, and marketing in grass-fed beef production. Conservation Security Program (CSP) participants Vic and Cindy Madsen, in conjunction with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Land Stewardship Project, and local watershed representatives, will discuss how production practices and perennials come together in their CSP contract. Rotational grazing, perennials, and soil quality, concepts central to the new Green Lands, Blue Waters program, will be the focus of a field day presented by Linda and Ron Grice, with assistance from Rick Cruse, ISU Department of Agronomy; Tom Isenhart, Department of Forestry; and John Sellers, coordinator of the Iowa Grassland Agriculture Program of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

- Tom and Kristi German, Holstein, August 3
- Vic and Cindy Madsen, Audubon, September 8
- Linda and Ron Grice, South English, September 24

PFI farmers will offer updates on their efforts to improve knowledge about maintaining herd health in antibiotic-free swine production systems at two field days, and alternative production systems will be demonstrated at two more. ISU Extension Swine Specialist David Stender
and private veterinarian Kurt Van Hulzen will lead a herd health workshop for veterinarians and producers preceding a tour of Dan and Lorna Wilson’s greenhouse and pasture farrowing. Gary Laydon and Pat Mennenga will demonstrate on-farm research on herd health and the wood-burning farrowing barn furnace they constructed with help from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Farmer and Rancher Grant Program. Ron and Maria Rosmann and Vic and Cindy Madsen will showcase their alternative swine production systems as well.

Ron and Maria Rosmann Harlan June 30
Dan and Lorna Wilson Paullina July 26
Vic and Cindy Madsen Audubon September 8
Gary Laydon and Pat Mennenga Plainfield October 1

Other 2005 PFI field day topics include:

**Grape and wine production and marketing**
Richard Black Farnhamville July 23

**Alternative cucumber beetle and apple pest management—Wallace Country Life Center**
Mark Gleason, Department of Plant Pathology Orient July 28

**Local foods**
Wright County Food Festival Clarion July 30

**Weed management field school**
Robert Hartzler, ISU Extension August 22
Matt Liebman, Department of Agronomy Richard and Sharon Thompson Boone August 22

**Direct-marketed meats, cheeses, and vegetables**
Susan Jutz Solon September 10

For detailed descriptions, directions, and times, visit the Farming Systems Program section of the PFI Web site at [www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org), or contact PFI Communications Coordinator Todd Kimm at 515-232-5661 x108 or todd@practicalfarmers.org. For more information about the PFI-ISU Extension Farming Systems Program, contact Rick Exner, 515-294-5486, dnexner@iastate.edu or Fred Iutzi, 515-294-8512, iutzi@iastate.edu.

Fred Iutzi is the associate coordinator and Rick Exner is the coordinator for the PFI/ISU Extension Farming Systems Program.