

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Practical Farmers of Iowa Celebrates the Soil and its Caretakers This Earth Day

Earth Day 2008, Practical Farmers of Iowa honors our soil – and two Iowa farmers, Jeff Klinge and Steve Reinart, who keep this precious resource covered throughout the year. “All life depends upon the soil. And we all depend on the farmer to care for that soil,” says Teresa Opheim, Executive Director of Practical Farmers of Iowa.

Jeff Klinge is a fourth-generation farmer near Farmersburg. Jeff, who farms with his wife Deb Tidwell, uses extensive crop rotations and no chemicals because “they are unnecessary and they cost money.” Klinge encourages more farmers to be stewards, because “sustainability is the right way to farm, as well as profitable.”

When Steve Reinart took over his family farm 35 years ago, he had a conservation ethic and an expansive vision. He steadily converted his worn-out cropland on the Raccoon River into grass. He added shelter belts, windbreaks, native grass plantings, and a paddock grazing system. “Every year I have tried to install a new conservation practice,” Steve says.

Both Steve and Jeff raise cattle on pasture. They urge consumers to purchase grass-fed beef not only for its health effects (grass-fed beef is high in omega-3s fatty acids, for example) but also because well-managed “grass farming” keeps our land covered and self-sustaining. Animals spread their manure evenly over the soil, where it becomes a natural source of organic fertilizer.”

Please join me in thanking a conservation farmer today, and speak out for environmental protection in your food choices,” Opheim says.

Practical Farmers of Iowa will host over 30 field days this summer. These field days will highlight conservation practices as well as research and demonstration happening on family farms across the state. The field days will range in topics from feeding cattle on grass, wildlife monitoring, water quality monitoring, tomato enterprises, cover crops, crop rotations and farm-scale energy.

PFI is a non-profit sustainable agriculture group dedicated to farming that is profitable, environmentally sound, and healthy for consumers and communities. For more information, call 515-232-5661 or visit www.practicalfarmers.org.