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Small-grains conference will explore marketing, integrating livestock – Aug. 15-16, in Wisconsin Dells

WISCONSIN DELLS, WI — Registration is open for Practical Farmers of Iowa's third annual small-grains conference, "Rotationally Raised: Making Small Grains Work," which will take place Aug. 15-16 at the Wintergreen Resort and Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin (60 North Gasser Road).

The two-day conference starts at noon on Thursday, Aug. 15, and will feature twelve breakout sessions on topics ranging from integrating animals into a small-grains operation to marketing small grains to breweries, rebuilding the small-grains economy in the Midwest, the agronomy behind successfully raising small grains and more.

Attendees will hear from a mix of farmers, industry representatives and university scientists who will share practical insights and strategies for working with small grains in a variety of contexts.

Practical Farmers is expanding its work to several states throughout the Midwest, including Wisconsin, due to a Conservation Innovation Grant awarded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2016. The grant funds programming to help farmers add small grains and green-manure legume cover crops to their farming systems.

Registration and lodging: Registration is required by Monday, Aug. 12, and is free for Practical Farmers of Iowa members or \$40 for non-members. The cost includes lunch on Thursday and Friday and appetizers at the buyers reception on Thursday. Register online at practicalfarmers.org/small-grains-conference, or call (515) 232-5661.

A block of rooms is being held at a significantly discounted rate for Practical Farmers of Iowa at the Wintergreen Resort and Conference Center for the nights of Aug. 14-15. **To reserve a room at this rate, you must book by July 20.** Call (800) 648-4765 and press 1 for reservations. Hotel rooms come with passes to Noah's Ark, America's largest water park.

Conference schedule: The conference starts at noon on Thursday with lunch and a plenary by University of Wisconsin-Madison grassland ecologist Randy Jackson, who will speak on "The Case for Diversity: Extending the Crop Rotation."

Using almost 30 years of data from the Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trial, Randy will describe how many ecosystem services – including profitability, climate stabilization and clean water – respond to diversification of crop rotations typical of north-central U.S. landscapes.

Two blocks of breakout sessions will follow, from 1:20-4 p.m., followed by a networking reception from 4-5:30 p.m. Sessions resume at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 16, and the conference will conclude with lunch and a closing plenary by farmers John and Halee Wepking, of Meadowlark Organics, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

John and Halee's talk, "Bringing the Next Generation to the Farm With Small Grains," will highlight how they are using small grains and local, community-based markets to start farming – and to provide a viable way to continue the farming legacy of Paul Bickford, their farming partner and mentor.

Full conference details – including the complete list of session titles and speakers – are available on Practical Farmers' [small grains conference webpage](#). For questions, contact Alisha Bower, alisha@practicalfarmers.org or (515) 232-5661.

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Practical Farmers of Iowa works to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities. Our values include: welcoming everyone; farmers leading the exchange of experience and knowledge; curiosity, creativity, collaboration and community; resilient farms now and for future generations; and stewardship of land and resources. To learn more, visit <http://practicalfarmers.org>.