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## **Frantzen Farm field day will showcase benefits, uses of hybrid rye and Kernza grain crops – June 29, New Hampton**

**NEW HAMPTON, Iowa** — Adding a third crop to a traditional corn-soybean rotation offers many benefits, from reduced input costs to increased yields, improved soil and water quality and better overall farm resiliency. New Hampton farmers Tom and Irene Frantzen extend their farm's crop rotation for all these reasons – and others, such as improving weed control and gaining a potential source of livestock feed and bedding.

Tom and Irene own and operate Frantzen Farm, a 320-acre organic farm where they raise finished beef and farrow-to-finish hogs, marketed through Organic Valley / Organic Prairie, as well as corn, soybeans, hay, pasture and small grains. In the past few years, they have added two new grain crops to their farm: Brasetto, a hybrid rye with disease resistance and the potential for higher yields; and Kernza, a perennial grain developed by The Land Institute, which the Frantzens established in autumn 2014. The Frantzens hope both crops will help them combat giant ragweed on the farm by smothering and disrupting the life cycle of the weed.

"The hybrid rye could also become a very significant improvement as it covers the soil and can follow either corn silage or soybeans if seeded at leaf-yellow stage," Tom says. "The rye crop is planted in September and is not disturbed in the spring, and it produces both a grain crop and a bedding crop. There is no tillage involved and it has a head-start on weeds as it grows in the fall. This rye has the ergot problem bred out, so it is also safe to feed."

Tom and Irene, along with James Frantzen and Amanda Luna, will share their experiences with these two new crops at a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day they are hosting on **Thursday, June 29, from 2 to 5 p.m., near New Hampton** (1155 Jasper Ave., about 12 miles north of town). The event – "Two New Grains and Their Uses: Hybrid Rye and Kernza" – is free to attend and will feature a light supper following the field day, including food provided by Organic Valley / Organic Prairie.

The field day is sponsored by Albert Lea Seed, Cascadian Farm, Chickasaw County Soil and Water Conservation District, Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa Organic Association, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) and MOSA Certified Organic.

The Frantzens will discuss how they are integrating Brasetto hybrid rye and Kernza into their operation. They will discuss using both crops for grain production, and how the hybrid rye could play a prominent role in their organic hog operation by providing feed and bedding. They will also discuss their grow-to-finish organic pigs, which are raised on corn-free diets, and they will show on-farm research they are conducting on pelleting high-fiber feed grains – such as rye, barley and oats – and how that affects their value as pig feed.

"This field day will hopefully show a method of diversifying the Iowa crop rotation with a third grain crop that can be seeded into standing soybeans," Tom says. "The land is covered and the soil will have the benefit of a grass crop to build structure. Our livestock trial should show the performance of pelleting a high-fiber swine diet that produces a high-omega-3 pork."

**Directions from the east:** From U.S. 63, go 3 miles west on County Road B22 / 110th Street, turn left (south) onto Jasper Avenue and continue for another half-mile. The farm is on the west side of the road.

**From the west:** Go 3 miles east of Alta Vista on Co Rd B22 / 110th Street; turn right (south) onto Jasper Avenue and continue for another half-mile. The farm is on the west side of the road.

Practical Farmers' 2017 field days are supported by several sustaining and major sponsors, including: Ag Ventures Alliance; Albert Lea Seed; Center for Rural Affairs; Fertrell; Gandy Cover Crop Seeders; Grain Millers, Inc.; Iowa Beef Center; Iowa Environmental Council; Iowa State University Department of Agronomy; Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE); ISU Extension and Outreach; La Crosse Forage and Turf Seed; Lemken; Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; MOSA Organic Certification; Natural Resources Defense Council; Organic Valley / Organic Prairie; Riverside Feeds, LLC; The Scoular Company; Trees Forever; Unilever; University of Iowa College of Public Health (I-CASH); Upper Iowa Audubon Society; USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service; Wallace Chair for Sustainable Agriculture; and Welter Seed & Honey Co.

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