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## **Field day will explore goat grazing from pasture to market – Aug. 17, Walker**

**WALKER, Iowa** — For Cheryl and Mike Hopkins, of Frog Hollow Farm, rotationally grazing their herd of Boer and Kiko meat goats has made their operation more profitable while improving the health of their animals.

“With managed rotational grazing, we have reduced our use of chemical dewormers by almost 25 percent,” says Cheryl, who farms about 30 acres near Walker. “Goats are rotated to a new paddock every few days, depending on forage height, which significantly reduces that goats’ exposure to parasites.”

Because internal parasites can sap nutrients from the goats and cause malnutrition, she adds that reducing the parasite load on their pastures not only improves goat health, it also improves their productivity.

Cheryl and Mike will discuss their pasture management practices at a Practical Farmers of Iowa field day they are hosting on **Thursday, Aug. 17, from 9 a.m. to noon, near Walker** (4758 Spencers Grove Road, about 3 miles west of town). The event – “Grazing Goats: From Pasture to Market” – is free to attend and open to anyone.

The field day is sponsored by Linn Soil and Water Conservation District, Premier 1 Supplies and Sustainable Iowa Land Trust.

Attendees will learn about raising Boer and Kiko meat goats in a rotational grazing system without the use of synthetic herbicides and pesticides, from kidding to marketing. The Hopkins’ goats are primarily sold through a local sale barn to growing niche markets for goat meat in the Midwest. Guests will learn about these alternative markets and how, according to Cheryl, “there is an established, viable market for meat goats.”

Cheryl and Mike will also discuss their pasture management practices including fencing, watering and pasture mixes. Staff from the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field office will talk about Cheryl and Mike’s conservation plan and funding from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) that helped with adding paddocks to their pasture. Throughout the day, the Hopkins will also discuss their research projects with PFI’s Cooperators’ Program, including using free-choice minerals, and grazing to reduce parasite loads.

**From Walker:** Take IA Hwy 920 / County Road D62 / Spencers Grove Road west for 2 miles; the farm is on the left.

**Heading north on IA Hwy 150:** Go 2.5 miles and turn right onto IA Hwy 920 / Co Rd D62 / 51st Street / Spencers Grove Road. Go 3 miles; the farm is on the right.

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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