



PRACTICAL FARMERS OF IOWA
WORKSHOPS

Sat. - Sun. || March 17-18 || Van Horne, IA

Tues. - Wed. || March 20-21 || Ames, IA

Tractor Operation, Safety & Basic Maintenance for Vegetable Farmers

led by Shane LaBrake

DESCRIPTION:

PFI is offering two, 2-day workshops for vegetable farmers designed to educate and empower current or future users of agricultural tractors and farm equipment. During the class, instructor Shane LaBrake will demystify tractors and improve understanding of how tractors are designed to work; how to operate them safely and effectively; and how to perform regular and basic maintenance tasks.

The class will cover a lot of material – in a classroom setting, on and around the tractor, and “in the workshop.” Attendees will leave with a much greater appreciation for safe tractor use and machinery care, along with new knowledge and resources they can apply to their own situations.

Day 1: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.: The morning will be in the classroom, the afternoon will be outside around the tractors, focused on safety and operation.

Day 2: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.: In the workshop, performing regular and basic maintenance on several models of tractors.

LOCATIONS:

March 17-18 in Van Horne, IA

March 20-21 in Ames, IA

Full details will be shared with registered attendees.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

Attendance is limited to 12 people per workshop.
RSVP to liz@practicalfarmers.org to reserve your place.

COST:

\$60 for PFI Members. This fee includes breakfast, lunch and snacks for both days and a 90-page spiral-bound course book. Dinner and lodging are on-your-own.

QUESTIONS?

Call Liz Kolbe at Practical Farmers of Iowa, (515) 232-5661, or email liz@practicalfarmers.org

About Shane LaBrake:

I grew up in a rural area of northern New York State. In my early teens, my brother and I tended two market gardens for a roadside stand. It is accurate to say we were organic out of ignorance and poverty. We knew of no other way, and couldn't afford chemicals. We had no equipment of our own, and my dad bartered his butchering services with a neighbor who did our tillage work with his machinery.

I spent a lot of time working on nearby farms of all types, but never had the chance to work with tractors or machinery. I grew up with a serious complex, believing that I was incapable of doing anything mechanical.

In my early 30s, I finally got back into farming full time. I first spent a year on a mid-size dairy farm that had 10 different tractors and all kinds of machinery. There I learned all of the things that you should not do, and fortunately, I still have all of my limbs and digits in spite of the experience.

I moved on to manage two different organic vegetable operations, and through those positions, I became very involved with the training of new and beginning farmers, and started to do extensive work and training for myself with machinery and maintenance. It was from these combined experiences that the framework for this class was developed for the apprentices I trained from 1996 – 2006. (Thanks to Accokeek Foundation, the New England Small Farm Institute, and various USDA-funded projects for their early support in the development of this class.)

Since then, I have taught variations on this class over 70 times in MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, MD, VA and VT. I have taught for PASA and the NOFAs of the region (and three times for MOFGA), as well as on many private farms, some of which invite me back every year.

I make my home in Accokeek, MD with my wife, Kirsten Watts, where I tend a large vegetable garden with my BCS 732.

