

TRIED & TRUE

//// //// //// //// //// SINCE 1923

FALL 2021



FRATCO

**5 MEET BRANDON
HERRON**

**6 A SHARED
COMMITMENT**

10 UNDER THE TURF

14 NEXT GEN FARMING

To Tried & True Readers,

As we launch into the fall season, I wish there was a breakthrough—a proverbial light at the end of the tunnel—concerning the materials shortage to share with you. The reality is that what our industry hoped was a blip on the radar remains a real-time issue. This situation will stay with us a while longer, and Fratco is keeping our finger on the pulse of market news and resin supply information. We will continue to update you as information comes our way, and you can always visit Fratco.com to learn more.

From opening day football games to youth soccer tournaments, this is the sports season so many have been waiting for. Unless you're in our line of work, people rarely take a moment to think about what's happening under the grass during sporting events. "Under the Turf" is a great editorial that talks about why water drainage matters, all the way from the Super Bowl to peewee football. You'll also learn how Fratco contributed to Algona High School's much-needed track and football field renovations as part of our ongoing mission to support the communities around us.

Farmers are retiring, and new growers are emerging. The face of ag is changing yet the mission is the same: feed the globe. "Next Gen Farming" dissects what it's like to get up and running in this industry. From recent graduates returning to the family business to on-the-job-training internships for those ready to ditch their day jobs, we're excited about future farmers who are preparing to get their hands dirty and find purpose in agriculture.

You matter to us. Never hesitate to pick up the phone or reach out to your sales rep with questions or concerns. Your loyalty through the generations has allowed us to continue bringing you the best pipe in the business. My gratitude for you—our customers—runs deep and motivates me daily. It's a constant reminder that what we do at Fratco isn't about us. It's all about you.

Sincerely,



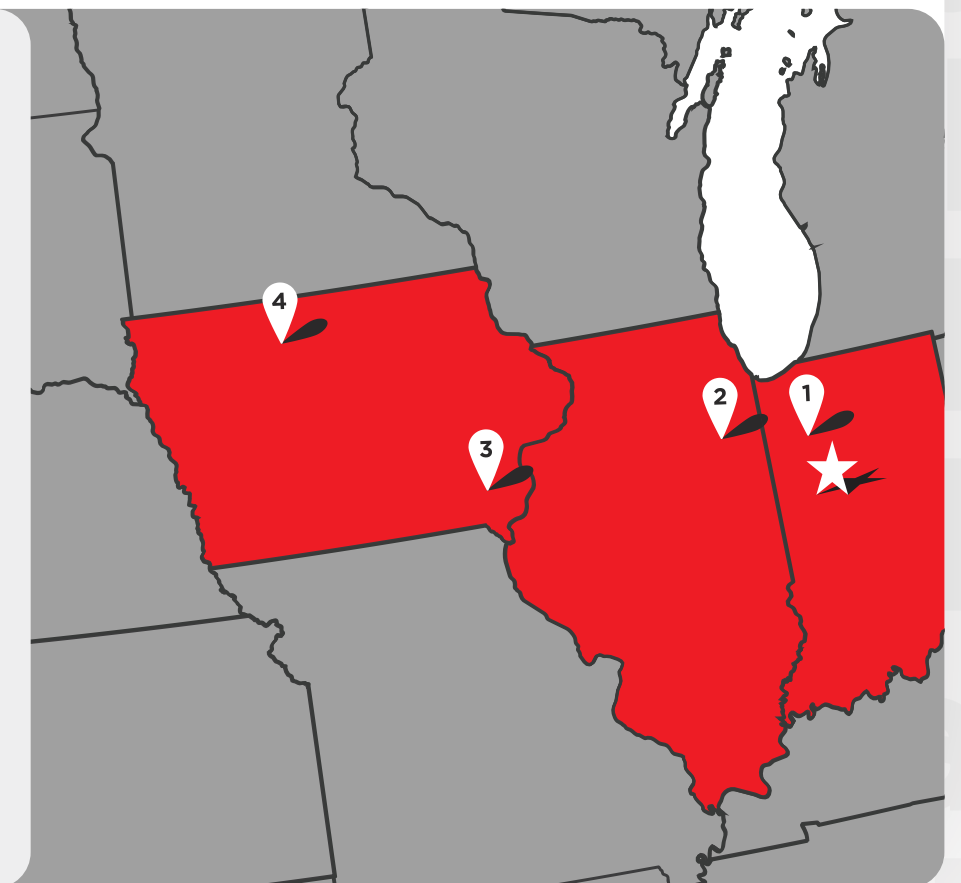
Chris Overmyer
President and CEO

IN THIS ISSUE

- 02** A LETTER FROM CHRIS
- 04** NEWS, EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 05** MEET BRANDON HERRON
- 06** A SHARED COMMITMENT
- 08** PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK
- 09** INDUSTRY NEWS
- 10** UNDER THE TURF
- 13** DID YOU KNOW?
- 14** NEXT GEN FARMING
- 16** LAWN PREP NOW, GREEN GRASS LATER
- 18** APPLE BUTTER RECIPE

Locations

- 1** **Francesville Headquarters**
4385 S. 1450 W.
P.O. Box 368
Francesville, IN 47946
- 2** **St. Anne Location**
499 S. Oak St.
St. Anne, IL 60964
- 3** **Mt. Pleasant Location**
1600 W. Washington St.
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
- 4** **Algona Location**
2502 E. Poplar St.
Algona, IA 50511
- ★** **Corporate Office**
105 W. Broadway St.
Monticello, IN 47960



NEWS, EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HERE WE GROW AGAIN!

Fratco is proud to announce the acquisition of more than 220 acres adjacent to the Mt. Pleasant location. This plant expansion allows for an increase in inventory to better serve our customers.

Store more, produce more—that's growth you can count on.

RESIN UPDATE

Raw material supply and demand has proved challenging in 2021. The Fratco team will continue to update you on the status of resin as more information becomes available.

To learn more, visit fratco.com/2021-resin-shortage or contact your Fratco sales rep.

YOU CAN FIND TRIED & TRUE ONLINE

Our customers are at the forefront of everything we do. That's why we're proud to bring you our quarterly magazine, *Tried & True*. Catch up on the latest issues at fratco.com/tried-true.



MEET BRANDON HERRON

MT. PLEASANT PLANT MANAGER



Coworkers that feel more like family than business associates are common at Fratco. Brandon Herron, who proudly serves as the Mt. Pleasant location's plant manager, embodies that sentiment.

Herron began his career as a yard operator eight years ago, eager to learn and willing to jump in. Although mechanically inclined, Herron realized he had a lot to learn on the job. He quickly discovered it's not your resume that determines your future but your passion and drive to succeed. "I came in with hardly any management experience, couldn't drive a forklift and had all these machines I had to learn how to operate. Fratco is a company you can grow with and learn more than just job skills. They invest in people because they care," Herron shares.

One of the things Herron most appreciates about Fratco is the company's ability to meet customer needs and fill orders even in the most volatile times, especially in light of the challenges of this past year. **"We were able to adapt to market demands and customer needs. No matter what, we won't say, 'no.' Instead, we'll find a way to make it happen."**

Fratco's forward-focused vision means the sky's the limit for future endeavors, and Herron is proud to be a part of the effort. "No one has ever said that we need to

stop producing so much pipe or stop being innovators in the industry. That tells me there's always going to be a market, we'll continue growing and customers will still value our products," he boasts.

When Herron speaks with friends about what his day is like at the plant, they're surprised by the company's ability to produce so much pipe. "When you roll out the coils and measure what our plant cranks out, it's close to 30,000 feet of pipe—in one day," he says with a laugh. That's no small feat, yet it's not really about the quantity for Herron, but the quality. "Our customers partner with us not because of the amount of pipe we produce, but because we stand behind our work. Our motto is clear: If it's not right, it doesn't ship—period. Our goal is never to have an issue, yet when customers do, they can count on us to make it right."

And customers do count on Brandon. Dedication and hard work have given the Fratco team a reputation for being the first in service and quality, and it's a reputation people like Brandon work each day to uphold.

FEATURE STORY

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO SERVICE AND QUALITY

BRYAN & DAVID JOHNSTON

Johnston Land Improvement

In the mid-1980s, two brothers invested \$2,700 in a tile machine and a dream. By 1990, they officially incorporated Johnston Land Improvement, which over the past three decades has grown into a booming business in Victoria, Illinois. Specializing in drainage systems for construction sites, the company is well-known in their community and region for providing an incredible level of service. Bryan Johnston, one of the brothers and current president of the company, says, "We have good customers. Business has been good. It's been fun."

Like so many small businesses, diligence and hard work helped Johnston Land Improvement grow into a successful enterprise. The first machine they purchased had been shredded by its previous owner when it didn't clear an overpass. But the

brothers knew their welding skills and determination could piece it back together, and today, they have expanded their fleet and installation capacity.

This family-run operation continues to forge ahead, with Bryan's son, John, and brother, David, whose sons work on the tile crew with him. In fact, the entire organization is like a family, something that really resonates with Fratco. As a fourth-generation family-owned business, **Fratco has done some of its best work when aligned with companies that share similar values, including a deep commitment to customers and staff**, which is one of the reasons the relationship between these two companies continues to thrive.

Over the years, Johnston Land Improvement has steadily upgraded

their equipment to top-of-the-line machinery that plays a large role in their efficiency and incredible productivity. As Bryan explains, "Even if the workers didn't start laying tile until noon, they'd still install 30,000 feet by the end of the day."

Johnston Land Improvement has repeatedly counted on Fratco for their extensive demand. Over the years, this business relationship has continued and flourished because working together has been a positive experience for both parties.

That's not to say things have been perfect, but they've always improved over time. For example, in the beginning, Johnston Land Improvement was getting their tile from Fratco's St. Anne location. As Bryan recalls, "The trip to St. Anne was about three and a half



Bryan Johnston



David Johnston

hours each way, so it would take a full day for one truck to bring me just one load of tile." The quality of the product and the commitment of Fratco was always strong, though, so they didn't look for a closer supplier. They simply made do.

However, when Fratco established a plant in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, the new location conveniently cut the time it took to get back and forth to Victoria in half and helped Johnston Land Improvement increase their already impressive productivity. As Bryan reports, "They usually bring me the first load at seven in the morning, and they get the second load to us about 11 or 12 o'clock. And if we forget something on the first load, we can always get it on the second. They make it easy for us."

When you're managing a small business, you want things to be easy whenever they can. That means knowing you have reliable, supportive customer service, which Bryan appreciates. "Fratco does a great job running the office at Mt. Pleasant. They run things like clockwork. They must have people watching things pretty closely over there."

Johnston Land Improvement is also very happy with the pipe they receive, which makes a huge impact on how the company operates. **"Fratco gives us a very consistent product, a product you can count on. We've been very happy with their pipe,"** Bryan says. He's also happy to recommend Fratco pipe to others, based on both the quality of the product and his experience working with Fratco. "When we get pipe from Fratco, we know it's good material. That makes it pretty easy to tell others that it's a good place to do business."

"When we get pipe from Fratco, we know it's good material. That makes it pretty easy to tell others that it's a good place to do business."

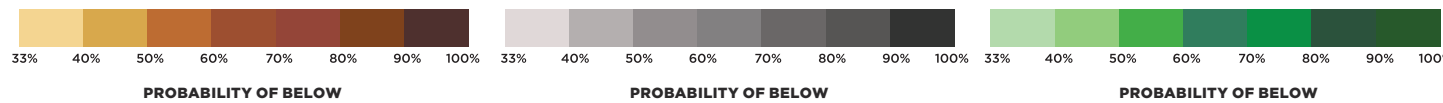
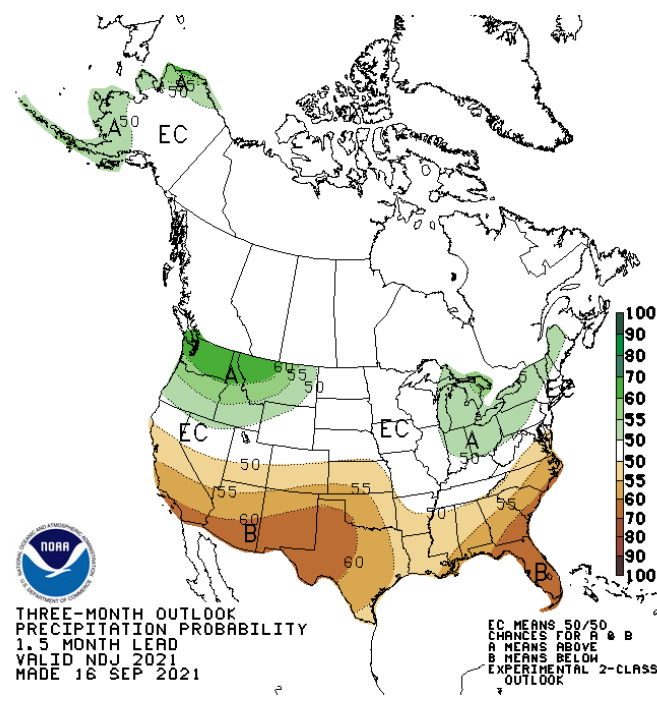
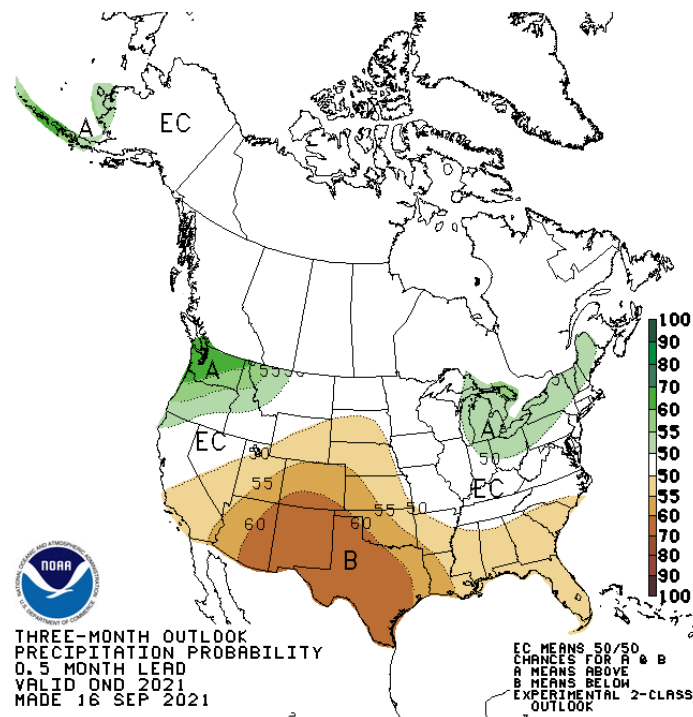
Quality product, quality service: two core business values Johnston Land Improvement and Fratco share that will no doubt enrich and enhance their working relationship for decades to come.

PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

2021-2022

OCT-DEC

NOV-JAN



Nothing about the future is set in stone, and weather predictions are no exception. But in an industry where thorough preparation is fundamental, having an idea of what lies ahead can be the difference between business as usual and battling rain delays. Always keep an eye on daily and weekly weather outlooks, but also set yourself up for success by planning ahead through seasonal forecasts.

For the latest weather information, visit the National Weather Service's website.

www.noaa.gov

Industry News

Having access to up-to-date information is crucial for understanding how the industry evolves.

Here are a few key news items and recent developments to help you stay informed.

DOUGLAS KELLER APPOINTED PPI BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR

Congratulations to Douglas Keller, who recently began his two-year term as the PPI board of directors chair. Keller, who has been a PPI member for 12 years, moves to the chair position after recently serving as vice-chair. In the past, he has also served as treasurer.



Read more about Douglas Keller and his new role at trenchlesstechnology.com/douglas-keller-appointed-ppi-board-of-directors-chair.

CROSSLINKED POLYETHYLENE (PEX) PIPE AND TUBING SYSTEMS TECHNICAL NOTE AVAILABLE

The new PPI TN-17 PEX Pipe and Tubing technical note is now available online. Its purpose is to provide general information on crosslinked polyethylene pipe and tubing, how it is manufactured and in which applications it can be used.



To download the document, visit: plasticpipe.org/BuildingConstruction/Shared_Content/Publications/General-Litature/Technical-Notes/TN-17-Main.aspx.

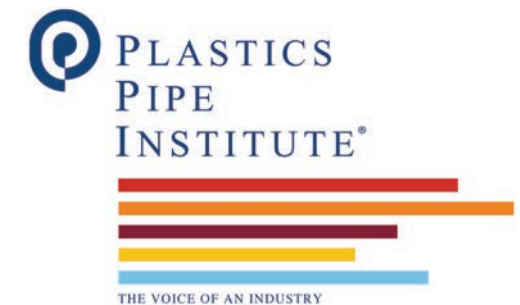
PPI RELEASES SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

Plastic piping systems are a sustainable and environmentally responsible choice that will serve generations to come. They are energy efficient during manufacturing and provide peak protection from contamination during service.



To learn more about PPI's green sustainability and carbon footprint assessments, visit plasticpipe.org/Drainage/Sustainability.aspx.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Under the Turf

HOW PIPE PLAYS A ROLE IN SPORTS

From youth athletics to big-league events, game day is the best day for participants and fans. Not every weekend in the stands is filled with sunshine, though. Rain delays happen, but canceled events due to water-logged fields don't have to. From iconic soccer stadiums to Little League baseball diamonds, having the right pipe in place means standing water, torn turf and Mother Nature won't dominate on the field.

Poor drainage is a problem that stretches beyond fanfare and rivalry. Field operations is a business. Filling stadium seats, merchandise sales and concession lines are part of the bottom line. From college football championship games to the World Cup, sporting events generate revenue beyond the ticket office. Canceled game days mean fewer fans in seats and unhappy vendors with products not moving off shelves. That's never a win, no matter how you play the game.

Protecting turf also means protecting players. Unplayable, uneven surfaces affect the quality of play and can lead to injury. According to *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, playing on well-drained turf results in fewer

stressors to the body, meaning fewer injuries occur on dry, well-drained fields. Concussions, muscle strains, tears, ligament sprains and broken bones see a sharp decrease. Soil and sports turf need sound footing and traction to keep athletes healthy and competing at their best.

When it comes to athletic field performance, there are three key components to successful drainage: surface drainage, internal drainage and the system installed subsurface.

Surface drainage is the water that runs off onto the field. Internal drainage is the water moving through the levels of soil. The subsurface drainage system is the pipe installed under the field that directs excess moisture away from the root system and towards a designated drainage area, leaving engineers and groundskeepers to create spaces for water retention.

Not all facilities can tap into natural waterway systems to assist pipe in that last drainage step. That's why maximizing surface and internal drainage ensures turf health and safety on the field. No matter the level of play, no one wants to see players sidelined by preventable injuries due

to compacted soil, ruts, vehicular or foot traffic that leaves more than a mark—they can end careers, something facilities do not want to be liable for, nor do coaches or athletic directors want to happen on their watch.

Boyd Montgomery is the regional business manager of sports fields and grounds for one of the largest professional sports grounds companies in North America. He lends his expertise and skills to the stadiums and greens where dreams are made. The World Series, the Super Bowl, a

plethora of pro golf tournaments—he and his coworkers have tended to the carpeted greens and rugged turfs of these hallowed tournaments for decades. When Montgomery tends to Division 1 and NFL fields, the grounds are typically outfitted with soil specifically engineered to work with drainage. Modified to whisk water away rather than flood the area, high-end soil and turf pair with drainage that's scaled for the task at hand. "Roots are always looking for water and nutrients, and their total brute strength translates into a force within the turf that holds

together, doesn't rip apart and the water content is managed in such a way that grass never reaches a wilting point from being waterlogged," Montgomery shares. He elaborates on what turf should look like from the spectators' vantage point. **"There is a science behind professional sports turf management that folks sitting in the stands cheering on a touchdown or quieting down for that long putt for birdie don't see. Spectators see a beautifully painted canvas, not the inner workings of water management under the field—just how we like it and as it should be."**

From stadiums to municipal facilities, people want the same thing: playable and accessible turf. Montgomery has seen it first-hand in his twenty-seven-year career that began in the suburbs of Sylvania, Ohio. Now, he hits the road managing turf for the biggest events in sports around the globe. He's also a father whose grown children once upon a time participated in school sports and community leagues. "It doesn't matter if you play on a professional field or a parks and rec team; people want their kids to play on fields that are as lush as pro athletes experience," Montgomery says. Yet the real challenge comes with maintenance, limited budgets and decision-makers being on the same page. "Grass is a living, breathing organism underneath traffic, activity and kids having fun. The longer it is compacted, constricted and succumbs to the force of activity, it begins to decay without intervention. That's where having drainage comes in. Without that system in play, no one is on the field playing," he shares.

Live grass isn't the only type of turf that needs proper drainage, though. Artificial turf, like what Algona High School in Algona, Iowa hoped to update their aging field with, also needs just the right moisture to be perfect under Friday night lights.

Whatever they're made of, top-notch playing surfaces don't just happen. It takes a lot of hard work and careful planning to get fields player-ready hours before the ref blows the whistle. **Below the painted lines and tangle of players' feet are intuitively-designed pipe systems, like Fratco's, keeping total washouts away and players doing what they love most.**

For the Algona Bulldogs, constructing a safe, dependable surface provided a sound, reliable and sure-footed field for both the Scarlet Regiment Marching Band and their winning football team. Reengineering the property resulted in one of the best outdoor facilities in the state for other local youth athletic clubs to utilize, and Fratco is proud to have been a part of the community effort.

Algona Schools Superintendent Joe Carter saw one too many of his students unable to participate on the field through no fault of their own. "Due to the condition of our football field, we had to move multiple football games to facilities in other towns, taking away opportunities for our students, parents and community. For many years, we have not allowed the youth teams in our area to use our field in fear of what could happen due to inadequate drainage and often wet conditions." Head football coach Andy Jacobson was adamant that new turf would help students and the community in more ways than imaginable. Kurt Kissinger of the Scarlet Regiment Marching Band believed that a turf field would



enhance the musicians' sound quality and promote student safety. The community of Algona agreed and set out to install turf with a little help from neighbors and friends, like Fratco.

Craig Douglas, Fratco's sales manager, loves being a part of a company that believes in giving back to the community. **"It's one thing to say we care about the future of our youth, yet it's quite another to join other Algona-area sponsors and**

contributors to bring the track and field to life." Fratco's pipe donation helped bring players back onto the field, track athletes back in the lanes and musicians back to performing for cheering crowds, something for Algona Bulldog fans to celebrate.

Sources: Sports Turf Managers Association, American Journal of Sports Medicine, Boyd Montgomery & Algona Community Turf Project

DID YOU KNOW?

WE'RE IN THE "BUILDING" BUSINESS.

Fratco commercial products are designed and tested to every major building spec. That's pipe your job sites can count on.

FRATCO IS FOUR GENERATIONS STRONG.

We began as a local clay tile kiln in 1923 and have grown into a multi-location, state-of-the-art producer of trusted drainage solutions. It's all because of you, our loyal customers. Thank you!

LIFE HAPPENS. WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

Fratco created the Employee Support Fund to aid our employees who experience unexpected financial burdens. Unanticipated events can derail good things our teammates have going, and we're here to help.



NEXT GEN FARMING

Make room for new growers

For new farmers looking to invest in land, the task can feel daunting. Pressures abound, like finding the perfect plot, affording the purchase price, competing with those who have deeper pockets in a volatile market, creating a solid business plan and engaging with consumers to move the needle towards profitability.

Now, consider the growers speeding towards retirement. The average age of an American farmer is 58 and close to 60% own their property. The face of agriculture is changing over the next few years, and the dance between transfers of knowledge, skills and—lest we forget—land means everything. Whether discussing legacy farmers or white-collar workers ready to ditch the rat race, so many new farmers have shown

up ready to go, right on time and with methods and measures a little different than their predecessors.

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY, BUT THE MISSION

The next generation of farmers is wired a little differently and takes environmental stewardship to a new level. This work is missional for them—it's not about the money. Next gen growers want to control the food production process to make it as eco-friendly as possible. Like their predecessors, they see themselves as stewards over the land they've been entrusted to care for.

Their ideals marry with the desire to leave a smaller environmental footprint behind while fostering

a better tomorrow by growing food their way. This drive matches today's consumers who want to know more about where their food comes from, beginning with the hands that produce it.

A new legion of farmers also answers the question of where our food will come from to meet food supply demands one crop at a time. Organic-principled farming means saying no to pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers. Safeguarding the land is fundamental to what these growers sell and feed their families with. There's also the pivot concerning what next gen growers want their lives to look like. They have zero desire to punch the clock, fight rush hour traffic or wonder if they are next in line for a promotion. Peaceful

mornings as the sun rises, surrounded by nature's beauty while connecting with the soil, seems like the perfect day at the office for them.

EDUCATION IN THE FIELD

The mode in which rookie farmers become operational business owners differs. Some are returning from studying agribusiness at college, putting new-found techniques into practice on the land they love. Growing up outdoors sometimes lays a career-cementing foundation. Yet not all those carving out a career in ag have the inside family track to rely upon nor did they earn a diploma certifying they know all things ag. So, how do these growers get into the game?

Organizations exist that match those looking to learn organic ag skills with farmers who need help. This pairing allows growers to pass along wisdom not always learned in a textbook to those yearning to learn; it's a match made in harvest heaven. Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) is a cultural and educational exchange program whose mission is to build a globally conscious community of farmers. Host families provide eager learners with experience. Eager visitors receive free room and board in exchange for a hands-on ag education. From 12 acres along the Oregon coast to micro-vertical farming just outside New York City, "interns" are immersed in farm life, an excellent way to try a career on for size before jumping in with both feet.

It's a great way to learn the business, hone skills, then take those tools of the trade to begin a new career.

It's a great way to learn the business, hone skills, then take those tools of the trade to begin a new career.

GETTING UP AND RUNNING

Community-supported agriculture is gaining ground by funding newly-formed farms with provisions for those who invest. Here's how it works: A consumer buys shares up-front for the next season's production of crops on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. Then consumers get to choose from the freshest of flowers, fruits and vegetables while building relationships with local growers. It's a win-win for all involved. Farmers can rest a little easier knowing crops are pre-sold. That means less time marketing and more time focusing on production. Supply and demand never looked so good.

For some newbie farmers, a small amount of acreage is gifted or rented on the family farm for a trial run. This provides an opportunity to work out logistical issues while planning for growth. An instant overhaul of operations may be a step too far. Taking a quarter of an acre to get the hang of how a flower farm or turn-crop microgreens operation may work is an experiment worth the risk.

Next gen farmers also experience a learning curve figuring out how to coexist with nature, weather the seasons and adjust to Mother Nature's temper. That's where Fratco loves coming in for the assist by helping growers with their drainage needs. **When crops flourish, businesses succeed, and that means communities live well. It's a scenario that makes everyone at Fratco proud to be a part of something greater: feeding the world.**

Sources: Forbes, USDA, OBF, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and WWOOF



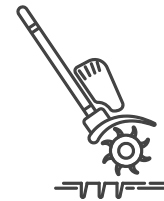
LAWN PREP NOW, GREEN GRASS LATER

Although lawns don't require as much care in cooler seasons, it doesn't mean you can completely ignore your yard during these months. Here are a few steps you can take this fall to make your yard the envy of the neighborhood next spring.



DRAINAGE

Now is the perfect time to move water away from poorly draining areas and house foundations. Fratco's plastic corrugated pipe is easy to install and an investment worth every penny. Placing a system in your backyard and around the perimeter of your house means fewer water woes now and more worry-free summer days later.



AERATE

Lawn aeration means removing cores—or plugs—of soil from your lawn. This process gives grass a chance to breathe because compacted soil inhibits air, water and nutrients from reaching the root system, impacting grass health. Late fall, before the first snowfall, is the perfect time to aerate your lawn, which you should do every two or three years.



KEEP IT CLEAN

Leaves left on the lawn can mean grass suffocation during winter. Although it's strange to think of grass as a living, breathing entity, that's exactly what it is. Wet leaves invite disease and rot, so mulch them into small pieces with your mower, allowing the nutrients to recycle into the lawn.



AVOID SALT DAMAGE

The sand used to make icy driveways and sidewalks less slippery can cause damage to nearby grass. Not only can salt create bare spots, but it also impedes nutrient absorption. Choose products that contain calcium chloride instead of sodium chloride. If salt and runoff from melting snow make turf contact, water your lawn well when temperatures are above freezing.



MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT

Now that your mower and edger are taking a well-deserved break, it's a perfect time to clean, repair and replace worn parts. Sharpen mower blades. Check the height adjustment gear. Perform maintenance now, so you'll be ready to fire it up on that first warm, sunny day.



RECIPE

APPLE BUTTER

Apple Butter

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 11 hours

Makes 4 pints



INGREDIENTS

- 5½ pounds of apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 4 cups sugar
- 2-3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Place apples at the bottom of a 3-quart slow cooker.
2. Combine sugar, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Pour over the apples and mix well.
3. Cover and cook on high for 1 hour. Reduce heat to low. Stir apples, replace the lid and cook for 9 to 11 hours or until the apple butter thickens and becomes dark brown. Stir occasionally.
4. Uncover and cook on low 1 hour longer. Stir with a wire whisk until smooth.
5. Let cool, then spoon into freezer-safe containers, leaving ½ inch of headspace at the top. Cover and refrigerate or freeze.

Kitchen Hints

- Softer apples, such as golden delicious, Fuji, Braeburn or Cortland, work best.
- Once opened, apple butter lasts one week refrigerated. Unopened jars in the freezer last six months.



INSTRUCTIONS: Cut along the dotted line for 5x7 frames, cut out the image for 4x6 frames.



Fratco
4385 S. 1450 W.
P.O. Box 368
Francesville, IN 47946