

Virtual Field Day to Explore Prairie Establishment and Management with Carl Kurtz

Iowa Learning Farms virtual field day is scheduled for Feb. 12 at 1 p.m. CST

By Elizabeth Ripley

AMES — Iowa Learning Farms, in partnership with C-CHANGE: Grass2Gas, will host a virtual field day on Thursday, Feb. 12, at 1 p.m. CST. The event, which is available at no cost, will feature a live discussion with Carl Kurtz, a professional writer, teacher, naturalist and photographer with over 50 years of prairie establishment and management experience.

This field day aims to assist farmers, landowners and conservation professionals with establishing and maintaining

prairie perennial vegetation. These areas provide numerous benefits, such as creating pollinator habitats, reducing soil erosion in sensitive locations, improving soil health, enhancing wildlife presence, increasing landscape beauty and serving as biomass feedstock for renewable natural gas production.

"About 50 years ago, I was introduced to the prairie by Roger Landers, who was a botanist at Iowa State University, and with my background in wildlife biology, I began to see that this is probably some of the very best wildlife habitat there is," noted

Kurtz.

Any person interested in establishing and managing a prairie is welcome to attend the virtual field day. Participants are also encouraged to bring any questions they would like to ask.

"You've got to remember you're going to be in it for the long haul. It's not something you plant for one year, and then you plow it up 10 years," explained Kurtz when asked what advice he would share with those looking to establish a prairie. "In 10 years, it's just getting started doing what it will do best, and the diversity will start to get really good."

To participate in the live virtual field day, visit Iowa Learning Farms Field Days — Exploring Prairie Establishment and Management With Carl Kurtz, or join from a dial-in phone line (dial 646-876-9923 or 646-931-3860, with meeting ID 914 1198 4892). The field day will be recorded and archived on the ILF Virtual Field Day Archive for future viewing.

Participants may be eligible for a Certified Crop Adviser board-approved continuing education unit. Information about how to apply for and receive the CEU will be provided at the end of the event.



Carl Kurtz

THE AMISH COOK

There's a job for everyone when the folks gather to make blankets

By Gloria Yoder, The Amish Cook

Life tends to become mundane, but then sometimes you shake your head and wonder ... In the wee hours of the morning, something unusual transpired, soon after I was summoned to my little daughter's side.

The night before, I had been in awe of how I could feel the presence of angels. It was so peaceful and serene. The reality of heaven made the natural things of this world seem so minute. Even the best things of earth seemed to fade and pale. Part of me wondered how I could ever go on with life on earth as it felt so tainted compared to the heavenly realm. Then the thought hit me that as we journey on in the Lord, we are actually living in His holy presence even in our earth-bound bodies!

Now in the stillness of the morning hour, I headed for the kitchen where I planned to

fetch something for Hosanna's headache. Just like that, a light flashed from behind me. Instinctively, I turned to look behind me; there was no light and no apparent source of light — it was gone. In my mind I can still see the shadow of my shoulders and head against the wall in the darkness of the kitchen.

There was nothing left to do but fetch the vitamin for Hosanna and realize that there is a God in heaven who really dwells with us, who shines His light upon us even in the dark times. The waking hours we spent together did not matter anymore.

Despite that precious touch from our Maker, I am human and I still get tested! This afternoon as I thought of the children coming home from school, I wondered how things would go ... Somehow it looked big to me to keep things flowing smoothly. It's also the time of day Daddy used to come in

from the shop. And you know how it is — there are no good options in life besides taking it a minute or second at a time.

Things flowed well and I enjoyed the children, but when the door opened at 4:00, a stab went through me. No, it was not my husband — it was one of the boys who had been doing chores. It hurt, but it was okay; God is still good. Like the song Daniel used to sing, "Bigger than any mountain that I can or cannot see ..."

You know how it is. Sometimes we get so hung up or distracted with what is bothering us most that we forget to do what we can to lighten another one's load. Children may be a good example of that. Bickering seems to come so naturally! "It was not my fault, and it's my turn!" Today I've been contemplating some good ways for them to get their focus off of what they feel

they deserve and onto others' feelings. Not sure that I've pulled it together in my head, but we'll keep working on it.

One simple thing the children enjoy is helping make blankets for those in need. About once a month we'll gather with other folks from church and knot comforters. There is work for all to do — from the little ones who can barely peer over the tables to the grandparents, there is a job for one and all.

Joshua enjoys using chalk to mark where the knots will go. A large piece of cloth with holes is placed on top of the comforters and used as a pattern to mark where the knots should go. One of my highlights from the last time was watching the first and second-graders as they eagerly learned how to weave the needle up and down through the three layers of fabric and lining, then cut the yarn and tie the knots.

By 8:00, things begin to wind down as we get ready for what the boys look forward to the most — snack time! Each family brings a finger food of their choice. I'm amazed by the balanced variety that seems to be there each time — usually there will be fresh fruits, veggies, baked goods, salty snacks, and a variety of dips to go with various dishes. This last time, one particular dip caught my eye. I felt something like resistance, but then there was that choice to make. Why should I reject it just because of the memory I had linked to it from having made it for Daniel? I haven't made that dip since the day I served it to him 10 years ago. I decided to try it, and yes, it tasted just like it did a decade ago. Matter of fact, I went back for seconds. You know, God knows those moments. He understands because He cares about the details! Okay, I can't help but share it with you.

PRETZEL DIP

- Cream Cheese Layer:**
- 8 oz. cream cheese
 - 1 tablespoon finely chopped onions
 - 1/8 teaspoon garlic salt
- Sweet Layer:**
- 1/4 cup butter
 - 1/4 cup brown sugar
 - 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 - 1/2 teaspoon mustard
- Topping:**
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- Instructions:**
1. Cream Cheese Layer: Mix together cream cheese, onions, and garlic salt. Spread about 1/2 inch thick on a nice serving plate.
 2. Sweet Layer: Combine butter, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce, and mustard in a saucepan and heat until melted. Do not boil. Spread over top of cream cheese layer.
 3. Top with chopped pecans.
- Note: We like to dip with square pretzels.

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JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PROCEEDINGS
January 19, 2026
At 8:30 A.M., Chair Drish called the meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order. The meeting was held in the first-floor meeting room of the Jefferson County Courthouse. Board members present were: Susie Drish, Chairman; Joe Ledger, Vice-Chairman; Lee Dimmitt, Supervisor. Supervisors met with Gordon Flesch to discuss Cloud phone system proposal. It was moved by Ledger, seconded by Dimmitt that the minutes for the January 12th, 2026 meeting be acknowledged. All "Aye". Motion carried. Supervisors met with the County Engineer. It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Ledger to approve the following resolution:

RESOLUTION
BE IT RESOLVED, by the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors that the following wage rate and classification for Secondary Road Department full time employee shown below be effective January 16, 2026.

Employee	Current Title	Pay Range	Base Wage	Certs	Lgvtly	Total Rate
Kenneth Cronk	\$ 36.65 MS2	19	F	\$ 36.10	0.35	0.25

\$36.70
Passing this 19th day of January, 2026.

Ayes: Susie Drish, Chairman; Joe Ledger, Vice-Chairman; Lee Dimmitt, Supervisor. Attest: Christy Conner, Jefferson County Auditor. The Board met with the Ambulance Director. Supervisors discussed office rent with Jerry Leonard. Discussion tabled for 1/26/26 meeting. The Board discussed Environmental Health holding a Contractor's meeting at County Engineer's office. It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Drish to appoint Tom Drish to the Compensation Commission. All "Aye". Motion carried. It was motioned by Dimmitt, seconded by Ledger to approve the closing of the Courthouse on February 25th from 8-12 for employee safety training. All "Aye". Motion carried. It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Ledger to approve the renewal of services with Anderson, Larkin & Co., P.C. for fiscal years ending 6/30/26, 6/30/27, & 6/30/28 for \$25,000, \$25,500, and \$26,000 respectively. All "Aye". Motion carried. Committee Reports: Dimmitt reported on RUSS and KBIZ radio show. Ledger reported on RHTF and Chamber ribbon cutting ceremony. Drish reported on Libertyville City Council meeting and EMA meeting. Public Comment: None. It was moved by Dimmitt, seconded by Ledger to allow the claims against the county in the amount of \$880,035.67 and to direct the county auditor to issue checks against the various funds of the county in payment of the claims allowed. All "Aye". Motion carried. Supervisors held a budget work session. The Board met with the Treasurer and County Engineer. ATTEST: Christy L. Conner County Auditor Susie Drish, Chairman Board of Supervisors

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JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PROCEEDINGS
January 20, 2026
At 1:00 P.M., Chair Drish called the meeting of the Board of Supervisors to order. The meeting was held in the first-floor meeting room of the Jefferson County Courthouse. Board members present were: Susie Drish, Chairman; Joe Ledger, Vice-Chairman; Lee Dimmitt, Supervisor. Supervisors held a budget work session. There being no further business, the Board adjourned. ATTEST: Christy L. Conner County Auditor Susie Drish, Chairman Board of Supervisors

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SOUTHEAST IOWA MULTI-COUNTY SOLID WASTE AGENCY BOARD PROCEEDINGS
The Board met in regular session, January 21, 2026. Youngquist called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Members present were: Susie Drish, Millie Youngquist, Randy Hemsley, and Mike Hadley. Others present: Bo Hackert, and Bill Sloop. Motion by Hadley, seconded by Hemsley to approve the minutes of October 15, 2025. Motion carried. Sloop distributed the 2nd Quarter FY2026 financial statements. Motion by Hadley, seconded by Sloop to accept to place on file for audit the 2nd Quarter FY2026 financial statements. Motion carried. Sloop presented the manager's report. Motion by Hadley, seconded by Hemsley to approve the 2nd quarter FY2026 Managers report. Motion carried. Items under Old Business: FY2025 Audit Approval. Sloop reviewed the audit numbers and findings with board. Motion by Drish; seconded by Hemsley to approve the FY2025 Financial Report. Motion carried. Items under New Business: Update on Airspace Survey and Contractor Compaction Incentive. For the period October 3, 2024, through October 1, 2025, the in-place density was calculated to be 2,157 lbs./yd3. The site as constructed is estimated to have 11.9 years of remaining life. 2,157 lbs./yd3 falls within the 40% bonus range. 40% of \$515,439.35 = \$206,175.74. Manager Annual Review and Compensation Decision. Motion by Drish; seconded by Hemsley to approve regarding all SEMCO accounts. Motion by Drish; seconded by Hemsley to approve the Authorized Depositories and Signatures. Authorized Depositories, each having an upper limit on deposits of \$8,500,000: Hills Bank; Libertyville Savings Bank; Midwest One Bank; and Washington State Bank. Authorized Signatures for SEMCO business and financial transactions: Randy Hemsley - Vice Chair; Mike Hadley - Treasurer/Secretary; William Sloop - Manager; Brooke Stout, Sean Cortum, Terri Crochet, and other staff from LattaHarris, LLP are approved to contact depositories with inquiries regarding all SEMCO accounts. Motion by Drish; seconded by Hemsley to approve the Authorized Depositories and Signatures. Motion carried. The next regular SEMCO board meeting is scheduled April 15, 2026, at the landfill office. Motion by Hadley; seconded by Drish to adjourn the meeting at 9:45. Motion carried. The above and foregoing information is a summary of the minutes taken at the above-indicated meeting. The full and complete set of minutes is recorded and available at the office of the Southeast Iowa Multi-County Solid Waste Agency. Regular meetings are scheduled for 9:00

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