

FALL 2026

fresh pickings

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE IOWA FOOD & FAMILY PROJECT

AUTUMN AT
THE TABLE



BEDROCK OF
BRAVERY



A CONFLUENCE
OF CULTURE

AN IOWA FALL
worth exploring

fresh pickings

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE IOWA FOOD & FAMILY PROJECT

FRESH PICKINGS MAGAZINE

EDITOR

LYDIA ZERBY

PHOTOGRAPHER

JOCLYN KUBOUSHEK

DESIGNER

BRIANNA SCHECHINGER

CONTRIBUTORS

APRIL PEARSON

April Pearson Creative

CRISTEN CLARK

Food & Swine

HALEY BANWART

Farm Roots & Chore Boots

ANNA TOOT

Wixted & Company

GRETCHEN WESTDAL CENTERS

GWC Creative

IOWA FOOD & FAMILY PROJECT

FOUNDERS

Iowa Soybean Association

Iowa Beef Industry Council

Iowa Pork Producers Association

Midwest Dairy

Iowa Corn Growers Association

Iowa Poultry Association

Iowa Egg Council

Iowa Turkey Federation

The Soyfoods Council

SUPPORTERS

Anderson Erickson Dairy

Cargill

Cookies Food Products

Corteva Agriscience

Earl May Garden Centers

Farm Credit Services of America

Heart of America Group

Hy-Vee

Iowa Grocery Industry Association

Iowa Machine Shed Restaurant

Iowa State Fair

Key Cooperative

Latham Hi-Tech Seeds

Live Healthy Iowa

REQUEST YOUR MAILED SUBSCRIPTION AT
IOWAFOODANDFAMILY.COM/MAGAZINE/SUBSCRIBE

Thank you to the Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Beef Industry Council, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Midwest Dairy, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Egg Council, Iowa Turkey Federation, Farm Credit Services of America, Cargill, Corteva Agriscience, Key Cooperative, Live Healthy Iowa and Earl May for the financial investment that makes this publication possible.

Fresh Pickings is published four times a year by: Iowa Soybean Association, 1255 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa 50023

For advertising information, complete the form at iowafoodandfamily.com/about/contact

Advertising space reservations must be made through the above form. In consideration of the acceptance of the advertisement, the agency and advertiser must, in respect of the contents of the advertisement, indemnify and save the publisher harmless against any expense arising from claims or actions against the publisher because of the publication of the content of the advertisement.

Comments: iowafoodandfamily.com/about/contact

Welcome

IN THE FALL ISSUE OF **FRESH PICKINGS** MAGAZINE,
YOU'LL FIND STORIES THAT CELEBRATE THE INCREDIBLE
FOOD, FARMS AND FAMILIES THAT MAKE IOWA
A SPECIAL PLACE TO LIVE.

THIS QUARTERLY PUBLICATION IS BROUGHT TO
YOU BY THE IOWA FOOD & FAMILY PROJECT. WE ARE AN
INITIATIVE THAT INVITES IOWANS TO EXPLORE HOW FOOD
IS GROWN AND RAISED AROUND THE STATE AND
MEET THE FARMERS WHO MAKE IT HAPPEN,
24/7, 365 DAYS A YEAR.

WE NETWORK WITH NEARLY 35 FOOD, FARMING
AND HEALTHY LIVING ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE PROUD
OF IOWA'S HOMEGROWN FOODS AND
HOMETOWN VALUES.





Photo courtesy of Iowa Egg Council



Features

12 **WHERE LEADERSHIP TOOK ROOT**
Shannon Latham's lifelong passion for agriculture has led from the family farm to public service and now on to leading the Iowa FFA Foundation into its next chapter.

18 **BEYOND BREAKFAST**
Science meets nutrition when it comes to the genius that is cooked up by Nelson Serrano-Bahri and the American Egg Board's Eggcelerator Lab™.

22 **BEDROCK OF BRAVERY**
Throughout all of Iowa's 99 counties, stone canvases pay tribute to veterans and service members in stunning detail.

28 **FARM TO PORCH**
VM & Co.'s custom pumpkinscapes transform front porches into seasonal showpieces, offering central Iowans a festive way to celebrate fall while supporting local agriculture.

34 **A CONFLUENCE OF CULTURE**
Sioux City is a veritable treasure trove of exciting experiences that preserve the region's past and celebrate its future.

40 **AUTUMN AT THE TABLE**
Fall invites us back to the kitchen with cooler days and comforting cravings. From weeknight favorites to memorable meals, these recipes make every autumn gathering delicious.

In Every Issue

5
EDITOR'S NOTE
MAKING ROOM FOR FALL

6
FAMILY TABLE
SLOW COOKER PORK AGRODOLCE

8
KIDS FIELD GUIDE
EXPLORE, TEST, MEET AND TRY!

10
POINT OF INTEREST
HARLAN THEATRE

44
FRESH PICKED
SOY'S PLACE AT THE TABLE

ON THE COVER

Take in the beauty of Sioux City from above, then discover what makes this community special from the ground up. Explore local food, family fun, Iowa hospitality and plenty of reasons to add Sioux City to your fall itinerary.

FALL 2026 | ISSUE NO. 31



Thank You

We're so grateful to the readers who choose to support Fresh Pickings with a paid subscription. Your support helps us continue sharing the people, places, food and farming stories that make Iowa special — and helps us reach even more Iowans with the mission of the Iowa Food & Family Project.

Thank you for believing in what we do and helping us keep these stories growing!

AJ S.	Carol M.	Genan K.	Julianne K.	Linda J.	Nancy S.	Sarah O.
Allison S.	Catherine L.	Gerald S.	Julie B.	Linda T.	Nancy K.	Scott M.
Amy G.	Cathy C.	Geraldine J.	Julie D.	Lindy P.	Neil S.	Shannon L.
Amy O.	Charles B.	Gina K.	Julie P.	Lisa M.	Nisa R.	Sharon D.
Amy H.	Cheryl K.	Glenda S.	Kandy S.	Lisa M.	Pamela P.	Sheila B.
Andi K.	Chris B.	Grace L.	Karen B.	Liz R.	Pamela S.	Sheila W.
Andrew R.	Cindy S.	Heather M.	Karla T.	Lora A.	Pamela L.	Sheila B.
Angie S.	Cindy H.	Hilary M.	Kate G.	Lori B.	Paris H.	Shelly G.
Ann L.	Colette S.	Ian M.	Kate H.	Lori M.	Pat S.	Sherrie J.
Ann C.	Connie R.	Irene D.	Katherine S.	Lori R.	Patricia P.	Steven L.
Ann D.	Dan B.	J.F. Kennedy	Kathleen C.	Lori D.	Patti A.	Sue R.
Ann B.	Danielle N.	Library	Kathy K.	Lori D.	Paul S.	Sue H.
Ann S.	Darla S.	Jacki L.	Kathy A.	Luan M.	Paula W.	Sue T.
Anni P.	David H.	James L.	Katie L.	Maggie J.	Paula S.	Susan W.
Anthony C.	Dawn G.	Jan M.	Kayelyn B.	Marcie F.	Penny H.	Susan C.
Barb E.	Dean N.	Jan T.	Kelli B.	Marge R.	Peter V.	Susan L. M.
Barb J.	Deb M.	Jan B.	Kellie H.	Marlan L.	Polly R.	Susan B.
Barbara S.	Deb F.	Jane M.	Kelly R.	Marshall G.	Polly P.	Susan L.
Barbara R.	Deb S.	Janet V.	Kelly S.	Mary B.	Ramona H.	Susan B.
Becky J.	Deb E.	Janette K.	Kelly D.	Mary S.	Rebecca S.	Susanne O.
Becky D.	Deborah B.	Janie C.	Kenneth K.	Mary H.	Renae Z.	Suzanne S.
Bernadette K.	Debra Y.	Janine B.	Kenneth K.	Mary Beth A.	Renee C.	SuzAnne S.
Beth B.	Denise S.	Jayne D.	Kim O.	Maryanna V.	Richard S. T.	Suzanne M.
Beth V.	Denise M.	Jean C.	Kim N.	Matthew B.	Rick J.	Tammy W.
Bonnie V.	Dianna C.	Jean W.	Kimberly G.	Melinda J.	Robert R.	Tarin T.
Brandon H.	Dianne H.	Jennifer L.	Kimberly S.	Melissa A.	Robin A.	Tim W.
Brian M.	Dixie M.	Jill C.	Kristin N.	Michael H.	Ronald R.	Tim H.
Brianna S.	Donna K.	Jill K.	Lacey G.	Michael L.	Ronda W.	Tina B.
Bruce C.	Dorothy V.	Jim V.	Larry M.	Michelle D.	Rosalie H.	Trina S.
Bruce V.	Ferdinand C.	Jim O.	Laura E.	Michelle H.	Rosemary P.	Vicki S.
Candy P.	Gail B.	Joan S.	LaVonne K.	Nancy T.	Sally R.	Virginia R.
Carla Y.	Garner Library	Jolene R.	Lee B.	Nancy C.	Sara R.	Wendy K.
Carly H.	Gary M.	Julia B.	Lexi R.	Nancy M.	Sara H.	Yvonna K.

Making Room for Fall

WELCOMING CRISP DAYS, CHANGING FIELDS AND ALL THAT FALL BRINGS.



games on Saturdays, colorful leaves and pumpkin patches overflowing with visitors.

When I think about Iowa farm families and the seasons they move through, I'm especially inspired by what fall represents for them. They've spent the spring and summer planting, scouting crops and watching the weather, crossing their fingers that Mother Nature provides just the right combination of sunshine and rain. Now, after months of waiting and watching, it's go time.

In this issue, we highlight a family who has turned their love of growing pumpkins into a way of sharing their fall bounty with city dwellers. We'll also take you to Sioux City, where nature and culture come together to create a beautiful and welcoming Iowa community. And, of course, you'll find plenty of recipes to welcome the season, featuring warm, comforting dishes made with Iowa-grown and raised ingredients.

As the seasons change around us, I hope you'll take a moment to slow down, savor what makes fall special and appreciate the people who help bring Iowa's bounty to our tables.

Enjoy the issue,

Lydia Zerby

And fall in Iowa gives us plenty to look forward to: crisp, cool mornings, football

A Supper Worth Waiting For

SWEET, TANGY AGRODOLCE GIVES TENDER IOWA PORK SHOULDER A FLAVORFUL ITALIAN TWIST.

By Cristen Clark



Cristen Clark is a pig farmer, creator of the Food & Swine blog, and an award-winning baker and cook. She lives on a farm near Runnells with her husband Mike and children Halle and Barrett.

There are few meals that make a house feel more welcoming than the aroma of a comforting meal simmering in a slow cooker all day. With just a little patience, fork-tender bites of pork shoulder soak up bold flavors, creating a meal worthy of a Sunday supper.

One of my favorite ways to prepare pork shoulder is with agrodolce, an Italian sauce whose name literally means "sweet and sour." Unlike the bright, vinegar-heavy flavors found in many barbecue sauces common in the Midwest, agrodolce is a bit mellower and more balanced. It combines the sweetness of honey and apples with a delicate tang from quality balsamic vinegar. The added layers of garlic, onions, apples and herbs create a rich, glossy sauce that perfectly complements slow-cooked pork and dreamy mashed potatoes.

The slow cooker is made for recipes like this. Pork shoulder contains generous marbling that gradually melts during several hours of low, slow cooking. The result is succulent meat that can be shredded with a fork or served in hearty chunks, depending on your preference.

While the pork shines on its own, serving it over whipped ricotta

mashed potatoes makes it special and adds a nod to this recipe's Italian roots. The creamy ricotta cheese lightens traditional mashed potatoes while adding subtle richness and a delicate tang. The fluffy potatoes absorb every spoonful of the agrodolce sauce, ensuring none of those flavorful juices are wasted.

A few simple tips guarantee success with this recipe every time. Browning the pork before placing it in the slow cooker isn't required, but it develops deeper flavor and richer color. Slow cooking at low heat for 8 to 10 hours creates a melt-in-your-mouth texture that makes pork shoulder so satisfying. Finally, let the cooked pork rest in its juices for 15 to 20 minutes before shredding. It will absorb even more flavor and moisture.

As cooler evenings return and schedules grow busier, recipes that reward patience become even more valuable. This slow-cooker pork agrodolce is a reminder that simple ingredients, a dependable cut of Iowa-raised pork, and a few hours of gentle cooking can produce a meal that feels both comforting and memorable. 🌿

Slow Cooker Pork Agrodolce with Creamy Ricotta Mashed Potatoes

FOR THE PORK

- 3½–4 pounds pork shoulder roast
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 1 large or 2 small tart apples (Granny Smith or other), peeled, cored, and sliced ½-inch thick
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons quality balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary

CREAMY RICOTTA MASHED POTATOES

- 3 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup whole milk, warmed
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

OPTIONAL GARNISH

- Chopped fresh parsley
- Grated Parmesan cheese
- Freshly cracked black pepper

Season the pork with salt and pepper. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and brown the pork on all sides, if desired.

Place the sliced onion, apple, and garlic in the bottom of the slow cooker. Add the pork.

In a bowl, whisk together the chicken broth, balsamic vinegar, honey, tomato paste, Dijon mustard, oregano and crushed red pepper flakes. Pour over the pork and add the rosemary sprigs, keeping them away from the sides of the slow cooker.

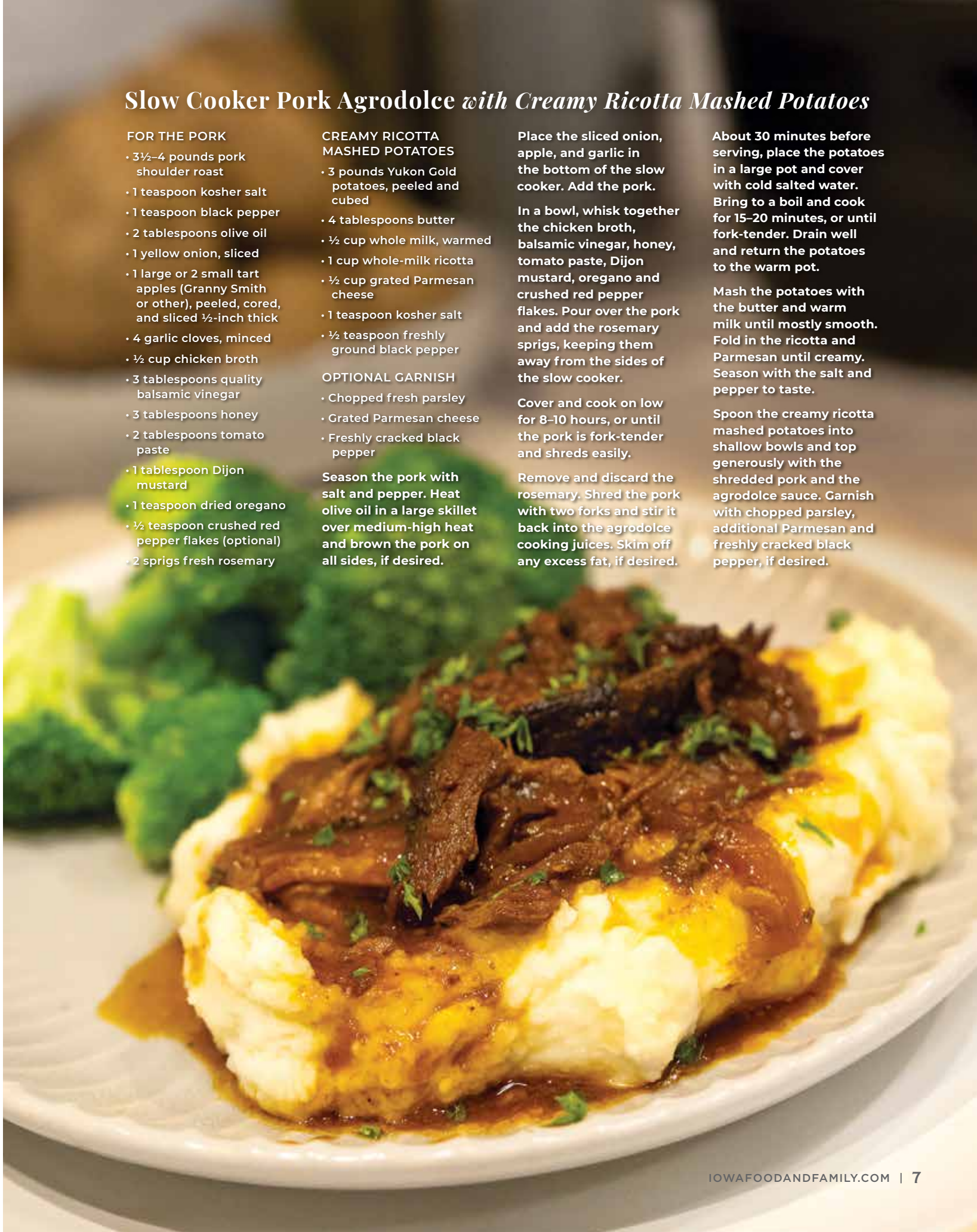
Cover and cook on low for 8–10 hours, or until the pork is fork-tender and shreds easily.

Remove and discard the rosemary. Shred the pork with two forks and stir it back into the agrodolce cooking juices. Skim off any excess fat, if desired.

About 30 minutes before serving, place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold salted water. Bring to a boil and cook for 15–20 minutes, or until fork-tender. Drain well and return the potatoes to the warm pot.

Mash the potatoes with the butter and warm milk until mostly smooth. Fold in the ricotta and Parmesan until creamy. Season with the salt and pepper to taste.

Spoon the creamy ricotta mashed potatoes into shallow bowls and top generously with the shredded pork and the agrodolce sauce. Garnish with chopped parsley, additional Parmesan and freshly cracked black pepper, if desired.



every issue

EXPLORE IT
agriculture fact/storyTEST IT
quizMEET IT
farmer/food producerTRY IT
activity or recipeYOUR GUIDE TO
FOOD, FARMING &
FUN IN IOWA.

By Lydia Zerby

What's happening on
Iowa farms in the Fall?**CORN: Time to harvest!**

After months of growing, corn is ready to come out of the field. Farmers use combines to harvest the ears and separate the kernels from the rest of the plant.

**SOYBEANS:**
Look for the golden fields!

Soybean plants begin turning from green to yellow and brown as they mature. When the beans are ready, farmers harvest the plants and collect the tiny soybeans inside the pods.

**PUMPKINS: Pick me!**

Fall is pumpkin-picking season! Pumpkins grow on vines and change color as they mature.

**CATTLE:**
Getting ready for cooler weather!

Fall also means changing routines for cattle farmers. Farmers make sure their animals have plenty of feed, clean water and comfortable places to spend the colder months.

**APPLES: Crunch time!**

Many Iowa apple orchards are busy with harvest. Apples are picked when they're ready and can be eaten fresh, turned into cider or used in favorite fall recipes.

**COVER CROPS:**
What happens after harvest?

After farmers harvest crops, many plant cover crops. These plants grow when the main crop isn't in the field and help protect the soil.

Iowa farms don't all look the same — and they don't all follow the exact same schedule. Weather, soil, crops, livestock and location all influence what farmers are doing throughout the year.

explore it.

meet it.

Name:
Mike Yegge**Favorite farm job:**
Combining in the Fall**Favorite Iowa food:**
Sweet Corn**What did you want to be when you grew up?**
NBA Basketball player**Q: What crop is used to make ethanol, a fuel for family vehicles? Wheat, soybeans or corn?****A:** Corn. Iowa is the #1 producer of ethanol in the U.S.**Q: On average, how many hours a day do cows lie down to rest? 8, 13 or 17?****A:** 13 hours. Resting is an important part of keeping cows healthy and comfortable.**Q: What is another name for green soybeans?****A:** Edamame. They are soybeans harvested at about 80% maturity, which accounts for their higher moisture and sugar content.**Q: One glass of milk has the same amount of calcium as how many cups of broccoli? 3 cups, 5 cups or 7 cups?****A:** 3 cups. Milk is white because it contains casein, a calcium-rich protein.**Funniest thing that has happened on the farm:**

When out-of-state visitors come to the farm!

One thing kids should know about farming:

Farming is hard work, but can be one of the most rewarding careers if you enjoy what you do.

try it.

Pork Nuggets

- 1 pork loin (1 ½ to 2 pounds)
- 1 box (7-ounces) Cheezits (baked snack crackers)
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup water
- Vegetable oil, for frying

Cut pork into bite-sized pieces.

Pour crackers into a food processor or blender and pulse until they're fine crumbs; set aside.

In another bowl, whisk together eggs and water; set aside.

Take a piece of pork, dunk in egg mixture, then coat in cracker crumbs; repeat until all pork pieces have been coated.

Use one of the following methods to cook the pork nuggets.

Fry: Pour vegetable oil into a pan until it's at least 1 ½ inches deep. Heat the oil to 350 degrees F and then fry several pork nuggets at a time for about 3 minutes or until the internal temperature of the pork is 145 degrees F. Remove the pork nuggets and place on a paper towel-lined plate and repeat until all nuggets are cooked.

Air fry*: Place the nuggets in an even layer in the air fryer, making sure to give some space between the nuggets. Air fry at 375 degrees F for about 6 minutes or until the internal temperature of the pork is 145 degrees F. Remove the pork nuggets and repeat until all nuggets are cooked.

**Air fryers vary greatly, so you may have to adjust the time and temperature depending on the brand you have.*

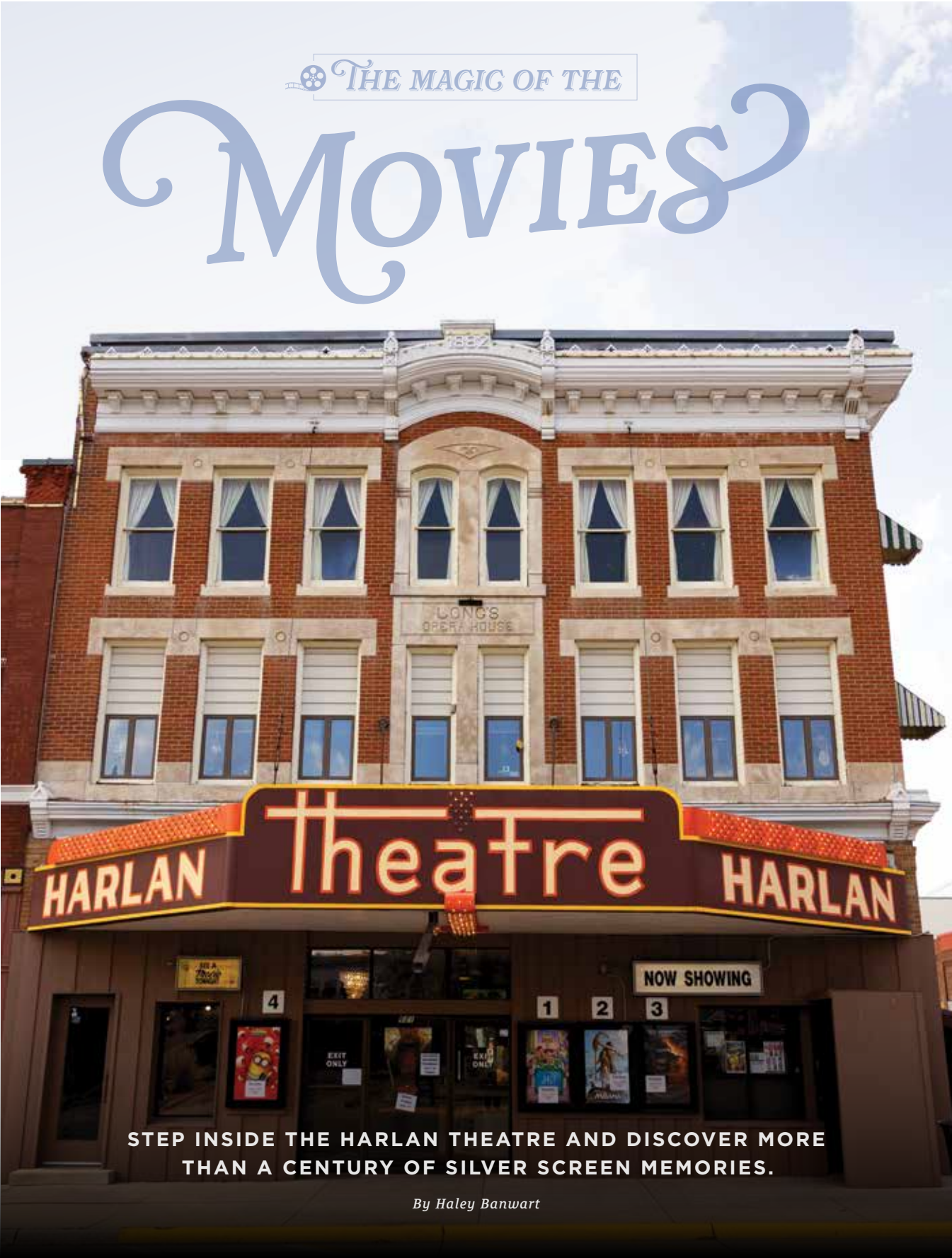
Bake: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the pork nuggets on the baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the largest pork nuggets are 145 degrees F.

Serve pork nuggets warm with dipping sauce of choice. Serves six (¼ pound of nuggets each).

Recipe and photo credit: Iowa Pork Producers Association



Yummy!



THE MAGIC OF THE MOVIES

STEP INSIDE THE HARLAN THEATRE AND DISCOVER MORE THAN A CENTURY OF SILVER SCREEN MEMORIES.

By Haley Banwart

Every small town is defined by the places where memories seem to multiply over the decades. For generations of moviegoers, the Harlan Theatre has been that spot.

For more than 140 years, the historic building has served as a gathering space for families and community members. Long before blockbuster films filled its screens, the building opened in 1882 as James Long's Opera House, welcoming audiences for live theater productions, comedy acts and vaudeville performances, before transitioning into a movie house as motion pictures gained popularity.

More than a century later, much of the Harlan Theatre's storied history remains visible. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the building still bears the original "Long's Opera House" name above its marquee. Its historic brick exterior and elaborate Italianate architecture continue to anchor the community as the only three-story building in downtown Harlan.

Despite changing ownership and evolving entertainment, the heart

of the Harlan Theatre remains much the same. For owner Sharon Lucke, that legacy is deeply personal.

Lucke represents the third generation of her family to operate the Harlan Theatre. Her family was living in Aberdeen, South Dakota, when her parents were invited to move to Harlan in 1968 to run the community's drive-in theater. At the time, her grandparents were already operating the downtown movie theater. Her parents later bought into the family business, and Lucke eventually followed in their footsteps.

Like so many of the theater's longtime patrons, Lucke's connection to the Harlan Theatre is rooted in childhood memories.

"One of my favorite memories as a kid was visiting my grandfather at the theater. He would let me go to the Saturday matinee, and of course since I was family I could get in for free, and he would give me a quarter for concessions," she shares. "Halfway through, they'd stop the film to hand out prizes, toys and stuffed animals."

"I've always enjoyed the movies, and I told my parents I'd be happy to buy the theater if the opportunity ever presented itself," she says. "My dad taught me everything I know about the business."

A Legacy in Motion

Over the decades, the theater has carefully balanced preservation with modernization. Since purchasing the theater in 2005, Sharon and her husband, Kevin, have invested in updates including new seating, screens, sound systems and concession improvements. One of the biggest milestones came in 2012, when the theater transitioned from film to digital projection.

During renovations, Lucke has uncovered pieces of the theater's past, including vintage projection equipment and original movie posters tucked away like a time capsule.

"Today we have four screens, which makes Harlan unique — few small towns have a multi-screen theater," she shares. "We offer showings that appeal to families as well as different genres, so there's something for everyone to enjoy."



Beyond the theatre, the Luckes are farmers, raising soybeans and corn.



Comfy seats and a big screen ready for showtime.



Vintage movie posters and old-world charm fill the halls of the Harlan Theatre.

WHERE LEADERSHIP TOOK ROOT

SHANNON LATHAM'S AGRICULTURAL JOURNEY COMES FULL CIRCLE AS SHE LEADS THE ORGANIZATION THAT HELPED SHAPE HER FUTURE.

By Anna Toot

Shannon Latham's passion for agriculture started young. Raised on a small farm on the outskirts of Greene, Latham loved spending time with her dad in their barn and at the livestock sale barn. She looked up to the older kids showing sheep at the county fair — and at age nine, she got to join them.

In her own words, she got “hooked with the show bug.” She loved looking around and seeing other participants' custom farm shirts and colors, and credits this as her first exposure to marketing and branding.



Photo courtesy of Shannon Latham

Enchanted Acres, founded by Latham, welcomed families to enjoy fall fun on the farm for 11 seasons.

Counting Sheep

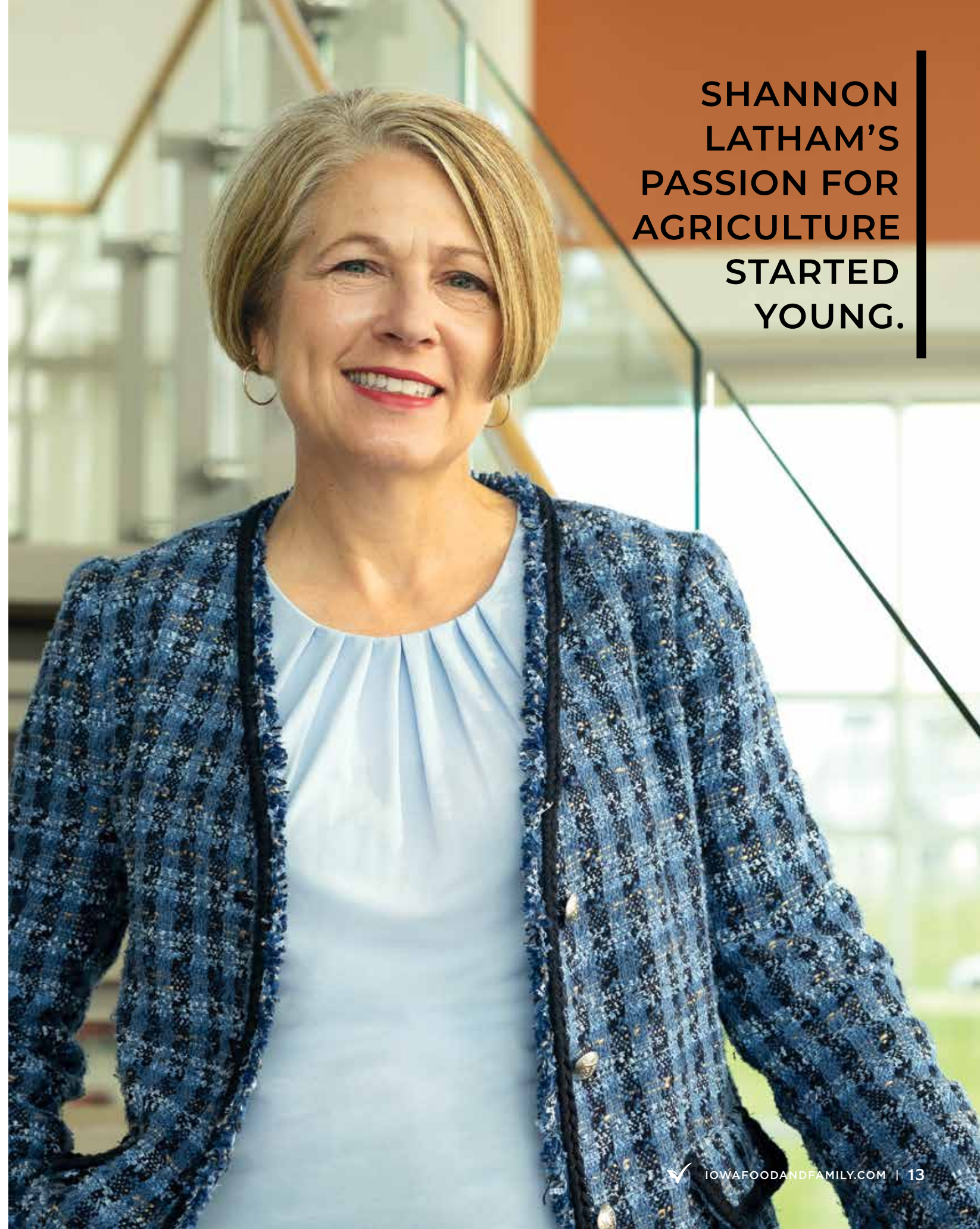
Latham opened her first business checking account at age 10 to buy and sell sheep. Although the risks that came with overdrawing the account were relatively low stakes — likely just a small fee and a strong talking-to from her mother — Latham looks back and appreciates the opportunity to “fail small” at a young age.

Thankfully, failure wasn't in the cards for Latham. For her 4-H project and, eventually, her FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), Latham raised purebred Suffolk sheep and ran the enterprise as a business. Through this experience, Latham learned the value of investing in quality breeding stock and gained a deeper understanding of genetics. Still, most importantly, she learned how to set goals and work hard to achieve them.

“My parents were small business owners, so I was raised to think like an entrepreneur,” Latham says.

She earned a spot on the Iowa State 4-H Council and, with her dad's encouragement, became a charter member of the North Butler FFA her junior year, serving as chapter president her senior year. Through FFA, she built a strong network. She gained

SHANNON LATHAM'S PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE STARTED YOUNG.



LATHAM CULTIVATES PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROMOTE EDUCATION, WORKFORCE READINESS AND LEADERSHIP GROWTH.



Latham connects with farmers while speaking at an Iowa Soybean Association event in northern Iowa.



Photo courtesy of FarmerHer.

Latham moves straw bales in the barn.



Photo courtesy of Shannon Latham

Latham officially files to run for the Iowa House.

transformative job shadowing and career-readiness opportunities that she now carries into her current role as executive director of the Iowa FFA Foundation.

“Every job I’ve ever gotten was because someone I knew either recommended me for the job or told me about it,” Latham says. “The lifelong network FFA gives our members is amazing.”

A Marketing Mastermind

At the urging of her FFA advisor, Latham attended Iowa State University, where she double majored in agricultural journalism and public service and administration in agriculture. Her first job out of college was as the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Agribusiness Association of Iowa, where she worked closely with members of the Iowa House Agricultural Committee.

“It was such a wonderful opportunity. I realized that all these people were Iowans who wanted to make a difference. The reason they ran for office is that they cared about the state and wanted it to be better,” Latham says.

This planted a seed in Latham: She wanted to serve in elected office someday. But timing was key.

In 2004, Latham and her husband, John, started Latham Hi-Tech Hybrids. Then in 2009, Latham Hybrids and Latham Seed Co. merged and began doing business as Latham Hi-Tech Seeds.

In the company’s early days, Latham wore many hats, but her true passion was marketing.

“When you’re part of a small company, you have to find a way to break through the noise,” Latham says.

One of the proudest moments in her career was establishing the Latham Freedom Ride. This “field day on two wheels” combined a scenic motorcycle ride through farm country with stops featuring the latest seed technology, weed management and cover crops. She also spearheaded the company’s sponsorship of the charity stripe promotion at Iowa State and University of Iowa basketball games. Every time a home team sinks a free throw, the company donates to the American Cancer Society through Coaches vs. Cancer.



The initiative has raised over \$65,000 since its inception in 2012.

Public Service and Full-Circle Leadership

As a lifelong learner and agricultural advocate, Latham's call to serve in office became a reality. In 2020, she was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives.

"I decided to run for the Iowa House to advocate for agriculture and small business, the backbones of the Iowa economy and the heart of Iowa House District 55," Latham says.

Two of her proudest accomplishments in office are the passage of the Butchery Innovation and Dairy Innovation Bills. Both established grants to boost Iowa agriculture producers and strengthen local food supply chains.

In November 2026, Latham's time in office will come to a natural end. She chose not to run for office to focus on her new role with the Iowa FFA Foundation. She credits FFA with shaping not only her agricultural career, but also who she is as a person.

"I'm at the point in my career where I was looking for a new challenge but also wanted to give back," Latham shares. "The FFA Foundation provided me with that full-circle opportunity."

In this role, Latham cultivates partnerships that promote education, workforce readiness and leadership growth. She acknowledges

the deep impacts FFA has on members and their workforce readiness, as well as the state of Iowa.

"Small communities are the fabric of our state. If we didn't have them, it would change the culture of our state," Latham says. "What do we need to keep these communities strong?"

"That's where FFA comes in. It truly prepares the next generation of leaders. Of course, I want to see young Iowans pursue careers in agriculture. Most of all, I want to keep our homegrown workforce here in Iowa. The FFA helps everyone develop leadership skills, whether an EMT, firefighter, a member of the school board or city council, a doctor or anything in between. FFA helps members develop the skills they need to be confident in their careers."

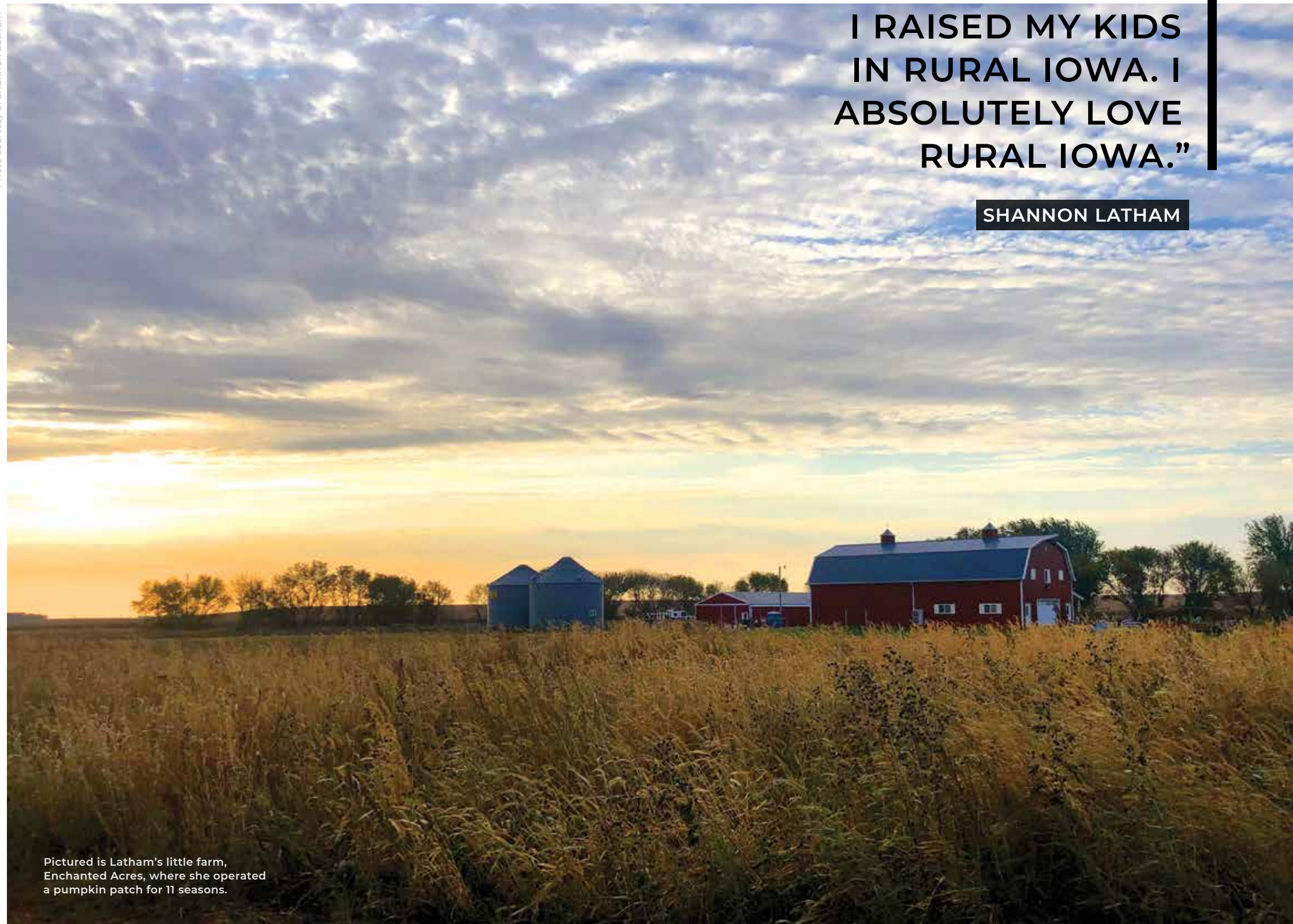
Latham loves her home state, and she wants Iowa's young people to feel the same.

"I was raised in rural Iowa. I raised my kids in rural Iowa. I absolutely love rural Iowa," Latham says. "We are raising some of the most talented and hard-working children. If I had to tell them one thing, it would be this: There are so many exciting opportunities available to you, right here in Iowa." 🍂

Photo courtesy of Shannon Latham

**"I WAS RAISED
IN RURAL IOWA.
I RAISED MY KIDS
IN RURAL IOWA. I
ABSOLUTELY LOVE
RURAL IOWA."**

SHANNON LATHAM



Pictured is Latham's little farm, Enchanted Acres, where she operated a pumpkin patch for 11 seasons.



By Gretchen Westdal Centers

BEYOND BREAKFAST

HOW THE AMERICAN EGG BOARD'S EGGCELERATOR LAB™ IS TRANSFORMING THE HUMBLE EGG.



GIVE
AWAY

WIN AN EGG LOVERS GIFT BASKET

Enter to win an egg-lovers gift basket, perfect for enjoying eggs anytime at iowafoodandfamily.com/contest/eggs-please.

EGGS HAVE A PLACE AT ALL MEALTIMES.

Early morning dawns. The coffee sputters into the pot. A frying pan heats up for morning eggs. It's a scene that's played out for countless decades. Eggs are synonymous with breakfast. And while they're a classic early-morning meal for good reason — nutrient-dense and rich in protein with all nine essential amino acids — eggs have a place at all mealtimes.

That's what the American Egg Board's (AEB) Nelson Serrano-Bahri believes. Serrano-Bahri, who has a degree in culinary arts and nutrition, leads the innovations that occur within the Eggcelerator Lab™. As the chef and director at AEB, he and his team are pushing the boundaries of food

EGGS SERVE AS
A TRUE CULINARY SWISS
ARMY KNIFE

science, sensory design and commercial manufacturing for eggs and egg products. The Eggcelerator Lab™ works with consumer-packaged goods companies and food developers to reimagine how eggs can be used across all meals and occasions.

The Culinary Arts and Sciences

For most, food is exactly what it is: something to eat or an ingredient in a larger recipe. For food scientists and technologists, it is a starting point to something much larger. The AEB employs these specialists to help develop more meal and packaged goods options that derive from our favorite staples like eggs.

Before joining the AEB, Serrano-Bahri built a distinguished career spanning major multinational food leaders, including Unilever, Kraft and Ingredion. This background established his central



Photo courtesy of American Egg Board

Chef Nelson highlights how eggs extend beyond the breakfast plate in new and exciting ways.

professional philosophy: true innovation in food must work seamlessly on two distinct levels. One, it must taste exceptional to the consumer, and two, it has to be practical, scalable and consistent in mass production.

“I’ve always believed that great food innovation has to work on two levels: it has to taste great, and it has to work in the real world,” explains Serrano-Bahri. “My culinary background helps me start with the eating experience, while my food science background helps me understand how to make an idea practical, scalable and consistent. At the Eggcelerator Lab™, we bring those two worlds together to help companies solve challenges and find new opportunities for eggs.”

In product formulation, eggs serve as a true culinary Swiss Army knife due to their extraordinary multifunctional properties. Eggs can provide essential aeration, structural integrity, emulsification, moisture retention, natural color and rich flavor development. When developers

attempt to remove or replace eggs, they often must combine several synthetic ingredients and hydrocolloids to restore the traits lost. Crucially, as the team explores these technical capabilities, maintaining strict food safety guidelines remains non-negotiable; standard safety guidelines dictate that eggs should always be cooked to 160 degrees F to guarantee safety and product quality.

It’s Egg O’Clock

While breakfast will always remain an essential home for eggs, consumer eating behaviors have shifted dramatically in recent years. Today’s consumers eat on the go, snack continuously throughout the day, and want clean-label, low-carb and high-protein options across all dining occasions.

To break eggs out of the morning stereotype, Serrano-Bahri and the Eggcelerator Lab™ team examine eating patterns across the entire day, drawing inspiration from global food cultures and emerging consumer trends.

“It’s very collaborative,” notes Serrano-Bahri. “We start by understanding what the manufacturer is trying to accomplish — whether that’s creating something new, improving an existing product or solving a specific challenge. We also look at whitespace opportunities and consumer insights to identify unmet needs in the market. From there, we work together on the concept, formulation and prototypes, then help connect the idea to the right ingredients, processes and partners needed to scale it. Our role is really to help move an idea from ‘What if?’ all the way through development and into the marketplace, turning insights into products that can realistically reach consumers.”

The Eggcelerator Lab™ demonstrates that eggs are far more than a morning side dish; they are an extraordinarily versatile ingredient adaptable to almost any eating scenario.



Photo courtesy of American Egg Board

One of Serrano-Bahri’s favorite recipe innovations of late is using hard-boiled eggs to make chocolate mousse. It sounds unusual, but when formulated correctly, the eggs help create a rich, creamy texture while also adding high-quality protein.

“Most people would never guess what’s in it — and that’s part of the fun,” laughs Serrano-Bahri. “It’s a great example of how we can take something as familiar as an egg and completely rethink what it can become.”

Unlocking the Future of Egg Innovation

By merging world-class culinary art with technical precision, Nelson Serrano-Bahri and the American Egg Board’s Eggcelerator Lab™ are fundamentally changing how the food industry views and uses eggs. By conducting research and development for brands and pushing culinary boundaries, the Lab ensures that the incredible egg remains at the very center of all mealtimes and modern food innovation. 🌿

Freedom Rock
in Greenfield.



THE STORY OF IOWA'S FREEDOM ROCK

By Gretchen Westdal Centers

Resilient. Strong. Weathered. All adjectives that can be associated with the boulders and rocks that dot Iowa's landscape. These same adjectives can also describe our country's courageous veterans and servicemembers. And Ray "Bubba" Sorensen knows something about both.

Sorensen is the artist responsible for The Freedom Rock. Found in all of Iowa's 99 counties, these rocks feature vivid, moving murals depicting Iowa's veterans and heroes. The first rock was painted in 1999, right around Memorial Day. Sorensen, 19 years old at the time, was fresh out of high school and felt called to do something to honor the sacrifices of the nation's brave servicemembers and veterans.

That original rock, which is approximately 12 feet tall and weighs around 60–90 tons, sits in Adair County, along Highway 25, outside the small town of Menlo. Sorensen returns annually before Memorial Day to paint a new mural that will honor veterans

and bring visitors to take in the visual stories he creates.

"Every hometown has a hero — or heroes — and their stories are begging to be told," Sorensen shares. "Art comes in many forms. You can tell a story through a song, a painting, or by sharing photographs. There are a million ways to honor these folks, and mine has become mural painting on rocks."

From Fields to Freedom Rock

Growing up in Fontenelle, Sorensen participated in 4-H and showed cattle. And, like most kids in agriculture, he quickly learned about the resilience and patience that's necessary for life on a farm or raising livestock. Those early experiences navigating situations beyond his control and the physical demands of farming helped shape his outlook on his future work.

"Being in a small town, you recognize the value of hard work — and hard work not for yourself or for recognition, but for something

BEDROCK of BRAVERY



Each Freedom Rock is hand painted to honor veterans, part of a tradition that now spans all 99 Iowa counties.

bigger than yourself,” says Sorensen. “I think that’s what a lot of farmers and veterans have in common. Growing up around that pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps mentality is what shaped me in those early days.”

Honoring that commitment and sacrifice is what Sorensen still does today through his work on The Freedom Rock and Freedom Rock Tour. He is also a member of the Iowa House of Representatives for the 23rd District, which includes Adair and Madison counties and portions of Dallas, Union and Clarke counties.

He balances his time between painting murals and visual storytelling, representing his constituents, and promoting Iowa tourism and The Freedom Rock Foundation.

From Small Town to Massive Mission

He, his wife, Maria, and often their three kids run The Freedom Rock and also have a graphic design and photography business. Now that he has completed a Freedom Rock in every county in Iowa and painted murals across the state honoring the men and women who have served, Sorensen has big goals.

“My biggest goal that I want to cross off the list is to get at least one Freedom Rock in all 50 states,” Sorensen explains. “Beyond that, I am working on a project called the Medal

of Honor Murals along Highway 20, which runs coast-to-coast right through Iowa. It is officially the Medal of Honor Highway. We have over 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients, and I would like to paint freestanding murals along that entire highway honoring them.”

It’s a large undertaking. But he’s on his way. Sorensen just painted the first mural honoring Bud Day, a Medal of Honor recipient from Sioux City who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

As the U.S. celebrates its 250th anniversary, Sorensen’s work feels even more significant in commending and remembering all those who’ve served and given their lives to protect the country.

“History tends to forget or push people aside over time,” Sorensen notes. “My goal is to have that face or those eyes staring back at you from the rock for years to come, bridging the generational gap. A World War II hero may have passed on, but now he is looking back at his grandson, prompting the family to talk about his service.”

Creating Community

Throughout the state, The Freedom Rock becomes a community gathering place for residents and veterans to pause, remember and reminisce about those depicted on



Ray and his wife Maria with their children, Indie age 14, Mikey age 12, and Libby age 5.

Photo courtesy of The Freedom Rock



Sorensen painting a new Freedom Rock in Hull.



“HISTORY TENDS TO FORGET OR PUSH PEOPLE ASIDE OVER TIME. MY GOAL IS TO HAVE THAT FACE OR THOSE EYES STARING BACK AT YOU FROM THE ROCK FOR YEARS TO COME, BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL GAP.”

BUBBA SORENSEN

the stone or of other veterans they cherish. Grandparents sharing with their grandkids about their service. Veterans connecting with one another to empathize about their experiences.

These rocks are visual representations of the magnitude of war and conflict, of the physical and emotional toll it takes on those who serve. The size and strength of the stone remind the viewer of the strength necessary to enter a conflict and bear the responsibility of service.

Sorensen shares an impactful interaction he had while painting a particular mural. “There was one specific story involving a man who was both a farmer and a veteran,” begins Sorensen.

“He came out very late one night while I was painting. He sat down and didn’t say much at first. When he felt it was the right time to talk, he told me that he had seriously contemplated taking his own life. He had come back from service with a lot of mental scars and felt like he returned to a different country.”

“He came out to the rock when nobody was around, sat there, looked at it. He thanked me for bringing his experience to life, which made him feel remembered and seen. That hit me very hard because it validated exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted the rock to

bring healing and to bridge the past, present and future. War is not glorious, but we must remember our history and the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms. These men and women who put their lives on the line are worth remembering.”

A Tour to Honor

There are 100 different rocks to visit in Iowa, with 100 different faces, images and memories to see and treasure. Travel Iowa has a complete checklist that people can use to find the location of each rock and mark off the ones they see. There’s also a helpful interactive map that provides suggested driving routes, allowing viewers to see multiple rocks in one trip.

When asked what Sorensen hopes people take away from visiting a Freedom Rock, he says:

“A sense of pride in our history. This country is very young, and it was built on the backs of farmers who set down their pitchforks and picked up rifles — men who literally didn’t have shoes and left bloody footprints in the snow. It’s about remembering where we came from and the actual history, even the parts that aren’t good or that we’re not proud of. Remembering all of it shows how we developed into something to be proud of.”

FOLLOW THE JOURNEY OF
ONE IOWA FARM FAMILY
BRINGING THEIR HARVEST
TO HOMEOWNERS.

By Haley Banwart

FARM TO PORCH

More than 100 varieties of pumpkins are grown each year, giving VM & Co. endless ways to create inviting, one-of-a-kind front porches.

By the time autumn arrives in Iowa, Kate Van Manen has already spent months thinking about pumpkins.

It starts during the quiet of winter, when empty fields sit beneath a blanket of snow, waiting for another growing season to begin. While many Iowans are dreaming about warmer weather, Van Manen is planning next fall's color palette — soft blue heirlooms, creamy white pumpkins, vibrant orange classics, deep green gourds and quirky, warty squash.

“Usually, I wait for a big snowstorm around January or February, and that's when I get out my seed catalogs and magazines to start putting orders together,” she says.

Months later, those carefully selected seeds become more than 100 varieties of pumpkins and squash, growing across five acres on the Van Manen family farm near Kellogg. Some will find their way to self-serve stands located in nearby communities, but an increasing number are making a different journey altogether — from patch to porch.

Through her business, VM & Co., Van Manen creates custom pumpkinscapes, transforming front porches into seasonal works of art. She's the first to offer a dedicated porch-decorating service in central Iowa, giving homeowners a chance to celebrate the season while supporting Iowa agriculture in an unexpected way.

Photo courtesy of VM & Co.

How the Business Took Root

Returning to rural Iowa wasn't always part of Van Manen's plan. Although she grew up on her family's farm near Storm Lake, she imagined her future taking a different path. Agriculture had a way of calling her back.

A degree in agricultural communications from Iowa State University led Van Manen to an internship with the Iowa Corn Growers Association. While helping coordinate an Iowa Food & Family Project farm tour, she met her husband, Jacob, whose family operation was one of the tour stops.

Today, the couple are raising their three children just a quarter of a mile away from the Jasper County farm where Jacob grew up, which also raises corn, soybeans and Holstein cattle. Sweet corn has long been another important part of the operation — a seasonal business Jacob and his sister have been building for 20 years.

The Van Manen's pumpkin venture started as a fun side project a decade ago, and gradually evolved into a niche enterprise. Like the sweet corn business, it created another opportunity to diversify their operation. The challenge was that peak pumpkin season coincides with corn and soybean harvest.

"Since Jacob is busy in the fields during the fall, it was up to me to decide what to do with our growing pumpkin business," Van Manen says. "I recognized that, unlike sweet corn, pumpkins required a different marketing strategy. They're more of a decorative crop, rather than a consumable one, so I would need to promote them differently."

PUMPKINS DIVERSIFY FARM OPERATION

In 2021, she opened her first self-serve stand on a hay rack near Interstate 80. The operation has since expanded to four self-serve stands, open Labor Day through Halloween, where travelers and neighboring community members can find a wide selection for every fall tradition.

Planning the Patch

Growing more than 100 pumpkin and squash varieties is equal parts strategy and experimentation. Each season, Van Manen curates a colorful array of different shapes, sizes and textures. From miniature pumpkins to classic oversized jack-o-lanterns, she plants tried-and-true varieties along with unique additions that often-become new favorites.

One of Van Manen's favorites is Marina di Chioggia, a blue-green heirloom pumpkin with a flat top and distinctive warty skin. "I can't seem to ever find enough of them in the patch," she shares. "Every year I find a new favorite variety to incorporate."

By late spring, the pumpkin and squash seeds begin making their way into the ground. Using a four-row planter, family members ride along and drop seeds into the soil by hand, rather than planting them in traditional mounds, so the rows don't become overcrowded.

GIVE
AWAY

WIN A \$250 GIFT CARD

Enter to win a VM & Co. gift card at iowafoodandfamily.com/contest/pumpkinscape.



Fresh from the patch: the Van Manen family is the heart of VM & Co. pumpkin farm.

"We don't use GPS. It's a manual process, but the kids love to get involved and help plant," Van Manen shares. "It usually takes us one big day or two half days to plant all five acres."

By September, sprawling vines stretch across the field, making harvest its own carefully organized operation — and a bit of a treasure hunt. As the



plants grow together, distinguishing one variety from another isn't always easy. To stay organized while planting, Van Manen organizes the 100 varieties into different categories to keep like kinds together throughout the patch - Traditional, Extra Large, Stackers, Specialty, Warty, Small, Mini and Gourds are a few of the categories.

Harvest happens three times a week with a crew of three to four people loading pumpkins onto a truck and trailer that travel designated paths through the field. Unlike sweet corn, which is picked every morning around 6 a.m., pumpkins offer a little more flexibility. Evening harvests fit around the

family's schedule. This allows the self-serve stands and the porch-decorating business to stay well stocked throughout the season.

Even weed management reflects Van Manen's willingness to try new ideas. Rather than relying solely on traditional methods, she plants rye between pumpkin rows as a natural way to suppress weeds — an approach she discovered through an online farming community.

The Art of Pumpkinscapes

As the Van Manen's pumpkins gained popularity, Kate noticed another trend taking root: pumpkinscapes.

Inspired by elaborate porch displays she

CUSTOM PUMPKINSCAPES TRANSFORM FRONT PORCHES

pumpkins, plants and accessories, then begins layering textures, colors and heights until the porch feels complete. Even then, she often finds herself making last-minute adjustment.

"Having the discipline to stop can be a challenge," she says. "I love the design part so much. It's fulfilling to grow the pumpkins and then get to share them with other people to enjoy."

A Year-Round Vision

The success of pumpkinscapes sparked another idea. If homeowners want their porches decorated in the fall, why not offer the service year-round?

This year, VM & Co. expanded into year-round porch memberships, refreshing outdoor spaces every three months with locally sourced seasonal décor. Spring and summer feature flowers and colorful container gardens from local greenhouses. Fall showcases Iowa-grown pumpkins, while winter incorporates evergreen porch pots with greenery sourced from Kate's sister-in-law's Christmas tree farm.

For Van Manen, it's another way to strengthen connections between Iowa farms and the communities they serve. She enjoys hearing from homeowners after they return home to a freshly decorated porch.

"It's fun to be part of that excitement and bring local goods and Iowa farming directly to their door," she shares. "As a younger family in farming, we're lucky to be doing it full time. Having niches like the pumpkin patch creates another source of revenue, allowing us to diversify and add value back to Iowa's economy." 🍂

Five-year-old Karter Van Manen searches for the perfect pumpkin to pick in a field near Kellogg.

saw online, she wondered whether Iowa homeowners would embrace a service that brought locally grown pumpkins directly to their front doors. Last fall, she brought the concept to life, launching VM & Co.'s porch-decorating business while balancing life with a newborn at home and a harvest season in full swing.

Customers choose a decorating package, then complete a questionnaire about their home's layout, sun exposure and decorating preferences before installation day. From there, Van Manen handles the rest.

Each installation starts with a clean slate. Van Manen sweeps away leaves, unloads



The Missouri River
has shaped Sioux
City since Lewis
and Clark passed
through in 1804.

EXPLORE SIOUX CITY'S
INCREDIBLE HISTORY,
BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE AND
UNIQUE ATTRACTIONS.

By April Pearson

A Confluence of Culture

It's where three rivers converge and three states meet. It's where Native Americans communed, Lewis and Clark experienced the Loess Hills, and livestock and crops combined to create an agricultural powerhouse. It's home to amazing museums, restaurants, architecture and people. It's Sioux City, and its rich narrative is noteworthy.

How Sioux City Started

Sioux City may not exist if not for a Sioux woman named Iron Woman Who Laughs.

Centuries before Sioux City was Sioux City, it was home to the Yankton Dakota and Santee Dakota tribes of the Great Sioux Nation. In 1804, the Lewis and Clark Expedition noted the Loess Hills' potential for westward expansion. But peaceful passage for pioneers required the goodwill of the Indigenous population. "The Yankton were the most important military force in the area at the time," says Matt Anderson, curator of history and exhibitions for the Sioux City Public Museum. "They could have easily scared off any fur traders, because they were that numerous and powerful."

Iron Woman Who Laughs (a Yankton woman) married War Eagle (a Santee man) in 1830 and welcomed him into the powerful Yankton tribe, where he eventually became chief. Contrary to his name and the fighting power of his people, Chief War Eagle was a peace-loving man who worked relentlessly for the mutual benefit of Native Americans and white settlers.

The couple's daughters, Dawn and Blazing Cloud, married prominent French-Canadian fur trader Theophile Bruguier. In 1849, they permanently settled in the area, ushering in a new era of trade and farming. Sioux City was officially incorporated in 1857 and quickly grew into a vibrant hub.

The Missouri, Big Sioux and Floyd Rivers all converge in Sioux City. The Floyd River is named after 22-year-old Sargent Charles Floyd, the only person to die on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, likely of a ruptured appendix. He's buried on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River.

If Iron Woman Who Laughs hadn't married War Eagle, he wouldn't have become chief of the powerful Yankton tribe. His unique ability to broker peace among vastly different groups led to a pioneering settlement that became a thriving community and ultimately gave rise to the Sioux City we know today.

An Agricultural Epicenter

Located on the border of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota, Sioux City is perfectly situated between cattle country and the corn belt. Feeder cattle from big ranches in Nebraska and South Dakota would be brought to Sioux City stockyards to be fed Iowa corn and soybeans. The fattened cattle, as well as hogs from Nebraska, could then be sold for processing. "The meat industry has been essential to Sioux City since the 1870s," says Anderson, "and it all has to do with geography." Sioux City Stockyards were one of the biggest facilities in the U.S. for many decades.

Meat-packing jobs drew in immigrants from Europe, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America. "It was a tough job that a lot of people didn't necessarily want to do, but you could make pretty good money doing it as an immigrant laborer, and that continues to be the case today," says Anderson. Agricultural corporations currently operating in the area include Perdue Premium Meat Company, Seaboard Triumph Foods, Smithfield Foods and Cargill.

Sioux City has fabulous flavors from all over the world. Here are a few local favorites:

CULTURES & CUISINES

Braunger Steak Co. — a one-stop butcher shop that carries meat, seafood, cheese and wine.

Crave — a contemporary and eclectic American kitchen and sushi bar with scenic river views.

Da-Kao — a Vietnamese restaurant where every dish is handmade with fresh ingredients.

El Fredo — a classic pizza joint with pastas, salads and sides; known for its sauces.

Habesha — an Eritrean and Ethiopian restaurant with sensational food and great service.

Jerry's Pizza — a local tradition since 1959; known for its thin crust and ample toppings.

Kahill's Chophouse — a fine dining steakhouse with riverfront dining in Nebraska.

La Juanita — an authentic Mexican restaurant with distinct flavors from Jalisco, Mexico.

Milwaukee Wiener House — a family-owned and operated hot dog shop built in 1918.

Pete's Thai Kitchen — a laid-back eatery featuring delicious stir fries, curries and noodle soups.

Tastee Inn and Out — a family-owned drive-thru famous for its onion chips and dip.

SWEETS & TREATS

Black Box Bakery — a sweet spot with made-to-order goods baked from scratch with fresh ingredients.

Cleo's Bakery — a pastry shop with inspired flavors from Durango, Mexico.

Koated Kernals — a specialty popcorn shop with tasty treats made with Sioux City's Jolly Time popcorn.

Palmer's Olde Tyme Candy Shoppe — the storefront and small museum of a nationally recognized candy company.

BREWS & BREWS

Council Oak Supply — a coffee roaster and coffee bar located in a cool old building on historic Prospect Hill.

Hardline Coffee Co — a coffee shop specializing in ethically sourced coffee and house-made syrups and pastries.

Jackson Street Brewing — a brewery featuring taprooms and tavern fare.

Marto — a craft beer and grub pub in a trendy, rustic-industrial venue with outdoor seating.

Pierce Street Coffee Works — the oldest coffee shop in town; also offers pastries, soups and sandwiches.

Sioux City Distilling — a tasting room, restaurant and event venue featuring spirits crafted with local ingredients.

things to eat & drink

Palmer's Olde Tyme
Candy Shoppe



\$150 KWIK STAR GIVEAWAY

Enter to win a gift card to fuel your road trip to Sioux City at iowafoodandfamily.com/contest/sioux-city.

Sioux City has a wide variety of attractions to suit everyone's interests and budget.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center — a cultural venue offering performances and programming for children and adults.

Orpheum Theatre — a performing arts center built in 1927 that's home to the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra.

Sioux City Art Center — a museum featuring more than 1,200 works of art in its permanent collection and temporary exhibits.

Vanguard Arts — a live music venue and art gallery lounge; home of the Alley Art Festival.

MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS

Jolly Time Museum — a 100-year history showcasing how Jolly Time Pop Corn went from a Sioux City small business to a national brand.

Sergeant Floyd Monument — a stone obelisk dedicated to Sgt. Charles Floyd.

Sergeant Floyd River Museum and Welcome Center — a retired riverboat tugboat that's permanently docked on the Missouri River.

Sioux City Public Museum — an interactive learning space detailing the region's history and transformation.

Sioux City's Railroad Museum — a collection of steam locomotive servicing buildings, structures and archeological remnants.

War Eagle Monument and Park — a bluff offering panoramic views of the Missouri River valley where Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota meet.

things to see & do

Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center trail

Natural Wonders Never Cease

Outdoor adventures are abundant in Sioux City. "It's definitely a fabulous place to explore and discover," says Theresa Kruid, education director for Woodbury County Conservation.

Stone State Park offers miles of well-marked trails through the Loess Hills, breathtaking views, inviting picnic areas and a modern campsite. The nearby Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center features an interactive "walk-under" prairie, a 400-gallon aquarium, live animal exhibits, natural history displays, butterfly and wildflower gardens, a discovery playscape for kids, and trails through Iowa prairie and woods.

Kruid says that restoring and maintaining native Iowa landscapes is important for future generations. "We have less than one-tenth of one percent of native prairies left in Iowa," she says. "The prairie is a diverse ecosystem where things rely on each other for survival. For example, the yucca plant can't bloom and pollinate without the yucca moth. There are a lot of symbiotic relationships like that in the prairie."

Sioux City visitors can enjoy a stunning array of prairie wildlife, including songbirds, flowers, reptiles and amphibians — such as the ornate box turtle, a protected species. "One of my favorite animals here is a broad-winged hawk," says Kruid.

"They usually show up in the spring, and they have a long, piercing cry that you can hear throughout the summer."

Enduring Design

Architecture enthusiasts will enjoy three important, beautifully preserved buildings throughout Sioux City, many of which are open



Peirce Mansion

to the public and recognized nationally as historically significant. "Keeping these buildings up is a constant labor of love by very dedicated volunteers and business leaders," says Anderson.

Peirce Mansion, an elegant home constructed with South Dakota quartzite, is an exceptional example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. "It's just beautiful," says Lindsey Gibbs, communications director for the Sioux City Public Museum. "Some of the rooms are still decorated as they would have been when [original owner] John Peirce

lived there." The Evans Block and Boston Block buildings are also in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

The Warrior Hotel and Davidson Building exemplify bold Art Deco design, complete with geometric shapes, luxurious materials and modern sleekness. The Badgerow Building, a 12-story skyscraper with terrazzo flooring, brass elevator doors and marble wainscoting, is Art Deco as well.

With its horizontal lines, abundant natural light and terracotta detailing, the Woodbury County Courthouse is a model of Prairie School architecture, as championed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Similarly, the Williges Building was designed to complement the sweeping Midwest landscape.

A Hidden Gem Worth Remembering

Sioux City has a fascinating history, endless things to see and do and extraordinary people who care about preserving the past while celebrating the future.

"I think the rest of Iowa kind of forgets we're here because we're on the very western edge of the state," says Anderson, "but we're a great community, and we're trying our best to be a place where people want to come live or visit."

Gibbs agrees. "The constant evolution of Sioux City is really unique and interesting," she says. "We have tenacity." 🌿



AUTUMN AT THE TABLE

FOUR HEARTY RECIPES PERFECT FOR CRISP AUTUMN DAYS —
FROM BUSY WEEKNIGHTS TO SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS.

By Lydia Zerby

There's something about fall that calls us back to the kitchen. Maybe it's the cooler weather, the return of family routines or simply the craving for hearty, homemade meals. These recipes offer a little of everything the season has to offer. Cozy comforts, everyday conveniences and special occasion favorites to grace your table.

TURKEY, MUSHROOM & WILD RICE SOUP

- 3–4 pound roasted bone-in turkey breast
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2–3 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 ounces button mushroom, chopped
- 1 cup wild rice
- 1 ½ tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary or thyme, divided
- Salt and pepper

ROAST THE TURKEY BREAST (may be done ahead of time)

Note: You will use half the roasted turkey to get the 2–3 cups of shredded turkey needed for this recipe.

Dry brine the turkey breast: Season with salt, black pepper and the zest of one lemon. Refrigerate for at least two hours or overnight.

When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Remove the turkey breast from the refrigerator and let temper on the counter for up to 30 minutes.

Line a sheet tray with parchment and drizzle the turkey breast with a tablespoon of olive oil. Roast the turkey breast for about 20 minutes, then reduce the oven to 375 degrees F. Continue to cook for about 35–45 minutes or until an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Let the turkey rest to cool before shredding. Shredded turkey can be made ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator for 3 days.

MAKING THE SOUP

Sauté the onion on medium heat for about 5 minutes, until it starts to become translucent. Add the carrots and celery, and cook for another 5 minutes or so, until the vegetables are slightly tender. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds, until fragrant.

Add the chopped mushrooms. Cook for about 10 minutes, until tender and lightly browned.

Make a well in the middle of the pot by pushing the vegetables to the sides. Add a tablespoon of oil and the tomato paste to the middle of the pot and stir for about 30 seconds, letting it cook and darken slightly. Add 1 ½ teaspoons of chopped rosemary, then combine all the ingredients.

Stir in the chicken stock and salt.

Add the wild rice. Cook for about 40 minutes, until tender.

Add 2–3 cups of shredded turkey and the heavy cream. Stir to combine and warm through.

Serve immediately, topping each portion with black pepper and a pinch of the remaining chopped rosemary or thyme, if desired.

Serves 6

*Photo and recipe credit:
National Turkey Federation*

WELLINGTON

- 1 center-cut beef tenderloin roast, fat removed (about 2 pounds)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper, divided
- 8 ounces mushrooms
- 1 large shallot
- 2 tablespoons dry red wine
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (½ package), thawed

Heat ½ teaspoon oil in large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat until hot. Combine salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Press evenly onto all surfaces of beef tenderloin roast. Place roast in skillet; brown evenly. Remove roast from skillet.

Heat oven to 425 degrees F. Place mushrooms and shallot into food processor; pulse on and off about 10 times until finely chopped. Do not overprocess. Heat remaining ½ teaspoon oil in

same skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add mushrooms and shallot; cook 4 to 6 minutes until tender and all liquid is evaporated, stirring often. Add wine; cook 2 to 3 minutes until all liquid is evaporated. Stir in mustard, thyme, remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cook 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from skillet to medium bowl; cool.

Cook's Tip: Mushrooms and shallot may be finely chopped by hand.

Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and place in oven. Unfold pastry dough on lightly floured cutting board. Roll pastry out to 12 x 9-inch rectangle; lay dough with shortest edge toward you. Spread mushroom mixture onto pastry dough, leaving ½-inch border around edge of dough. Place roast in center of mushrooms. Fold pastry dough neatly around roast, stretching dough if necessary. Cut off excess pastry

dough; press dough together to seal overlapping edges. Remove baking sheet from oven and dust lightly with flour. Place pastry-wrapped roast, seam-side down, on baking sheet. Cut 4 (2-inch) vents in top of pastry.

Cook's Tip: Use any excess dough to decorate Wellington.

Bake in 425 degrees F oven 35 to 50 minutes or until golden brown and instant-read thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 135 degrees F for medium rare; 150 degrees F for medium. Transfer Beef Wellington to carving board. Let stand 10 minutes. Temperature will continue to rise about 10 degrees F to reach 145 degrees F for medium rare; 160 degrees F for medium. Carve into slices and serve with your favorite vegetables.

Serves 4

Photo and recipe credit: Iowa Beef Industry Council

CLASSIC BEEF

GROUND PORK PROTEIN BOWLS

- 3 cups peeled and diced sweet potatoes (about ¾ inch cubed)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 packet (1 ounce) taco seasoning
- 1 cup fresh-cut sweet corn
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1 avocado, diced
- 2 tablespoons hot honey
- Red pepper flakes, optional

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and grease a sheet pan; set aside.

Add the diced sweet potatoes to a large bowl; drizzle with oil and sprinkle with salt, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and paprika. Stir to combine.

Spread out evenly on the prepared pan and bake for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, brown the ground pork while stirring in the taco seasoning until completely cooked, then set aside.

Remove the sweet potatoes from the oven and use a spatula to make some room for the corn. Add the corn and bake an additional 5–10 minutes or until the sweet potatoes are tender and the corn is hot.

To assemble the bowls, divide the sweet potatoes, corn, ground pork, cottage cheese and avocado between the four bowls. Drizzle with hot honey and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, if desired. Serves 4

Photo and recipe credit: Iowa Pork Producers Association



SKINNY EGGS CONTINENTAL

- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or margarine
- 4 eggs, hard-cooked and sliced horizontally
- 1 cup turkey ham, diced
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt, plain
- 1 tablespoon nonfat milk
- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ cup low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

in olive oil or margarine; divide breadcrumbs into 4 buttered 10-ounce baking dishes, then layer egg slices on top of the crumbs.

Combine turkey ham, yogurt, milk, onion, and seasoning; spoon mixture over eggs, dividing evenly. Top with cheese. Bake uncovered for 10 to 15 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Serves 4

Photo and recipe credit: Iowa Egg Council

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Toss breadcrumbs

Soy’s Place at the Table

FOR 27 YEARS, LINDA FUNK HAS HELPED SHOWCASE SOY’S VERSATILITY, CULINARY POTENTIAL AND VALUE TO IOWA FARMERS.

By Gretchen Westdal-Centers



Oatmeal cookie made with textured soy protein.



Chicken marsala made with soy flour, soy milk and tofu.



Chocolate pudding pies made with tofu.

Photos courtesy of The Soyfoods Council

Linda Funk knows soy. She’s in her 27th year with The Soyfoods Council, where she currently serves as executive director. In that time, she’s seen the industry evolve and grow. Soyfoods, once celebrated only by a small group of health-conscious plant-based consumers, have now become a powerhouse staple in many households, restaurants and even on farms.

“Vegetarians and health advocates already knew about soy protein because it was a complete protein, but it was limited to plant-based eating routines,” explains Funk. “The mission for The Soyfoods Council was to start talking about soy protein for mainstream consumers and showing how easy it was to add to everyday diets.”

And that’s exactly what they did. In 2000, the FDA authorized a landmark health claim linking daily soy protein intake to a reduced risk of coronary heart disease. The Soyfoods Council used this accolade and did extensive media outreach in Iowa and nationally, working with chefs to build awareness about how soy could be incorporated into everyday diets.

“Tofu has always been a staple, but people were nervous about preparing it,” recalls Funk. “So, we educated consumers on how to add flavor to it.”

Protein Powerhouse

Today, soy has stepped fully into the culinary mainstream. As Fresh Pickings launches a four-part series highlighting The Soyfoods Council and its ongoing initiatives, Funk

reflects on a quarter-century evolution defined by culinary innovation, consumer education and an unwavering commitment to Iowa’s soybean growers.

Over time, food manufacturers and the public responded positively to soy. New products hit the shelves — everything from soy nut butter and meat alternatives to edamame, soy sour cream and soy cream cheese. Yet, the Council’s most transformative strategic shift wasn’t positioning soy against traditional animal agriculture but bringing it right alongside it.

Recognizing that the vast majority of Iowa soybeans support livestock production, Funk created collaborative partnerships across the state’s agricultural commodity



“THE MISSION OF THE SOYFOODS COUNCIL IS TO TALK ABOUT SOY PROTEIN AND SHOW HOW EASY IT IS TO ADD TO EVERYDAY DIETS.”

LINDA FUNK

groups. Over a decade ago, the Council partnered with the Iowa Restaurant Association and the Iowa Beef Council on a chef competition where beef took center stage, and soy was featured as the complementary side dish. Joint media tours brought national journalists directly to Iowa farms, showcasing pork, beef, turkey and soy as a unified agricultural front.

More recently, the Council partnered with the Iowa Turkey Federation to train high school culinary students at the Iowa Culinary Institute, demonstrating how soy and turkey complement the same plate.

“I always tell farmers that they represent one of the few commodities capable of serving both meat consumers and plant-based eaters,” Funk notes. “Their soybeans work

seamlessly for both, and that versatility is something to celebrate.”

Rooted in the Field

For Funk, driving value back to checkoff-investing farmers remains the core mission. Farmers are integrated directly into public outreach and high-profile industry events. At the World Food Prize, leaders like Jeff Frank, a farmer from Auburn, take the stage alongside Funk to perform live cooking demonstrations, showcasing how neutral, high-performing soy oil elevates everyday cooking for an international audience of delegates from over 20 countries.

These efforts reinforce agriculture’s broader narrative: sustainability, nutritional density and global food security. Whether demonstrating soy oil at international summits or introducing culinary students

to complete proteins, the farmer’s work remains front and center.

The Next Horizon: Foodservice and Modern Health

Looking ahead over the next three to five years, The Soyfoods Council is setting its sights on expanded foodservice integration and targeted health outreach. As families navigate diverse dietary preferences, restaurants increasingly rely on soy to offer flexible, high-quality menu items that satisfy everyone at the table. As new medications change the way the public eats, soy remains a common thread.

The Soyfoods Council continues to bridge the gap between farm fields and consumer plates — proving that thoughtful innovation yields lasting benefits for Iowa growers. 🌱

IOWA SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION
IS DRIVEN TO INCREASE
BOTH DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL SOYBEAN
DEMAND BY POSITIONING
U.S. SOY AS FIRST CHOICE
AROUND THE WORLD.

IOWA FARMERS PRODUCE
A SUCCESSFUL AND
SUSTAINABLE SOYBEAN
CROP; WE HELP GROW
ESTABLISHED MARKETS
AND DEVELOP NEW
WAYS TO USE IT.

IOWA SOYBEAN
Association ✓

IASOYBEANS.COM