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## **New series of short films and blog posts profile young, innovative grain farmers**

*America's increasing demand for organic and sustainably grown grains coincides with a shortage of young farmers*

**HUDSON, NY** — The National Young Farmers Coalition and King Arthur Flour present a new blog and film series profiling three pioneering young grain farmers. While all farmers face challenges, the high start-up costs associated with grain farming can make it an especially difficult field to enter for new and young farmers. With a focus on small-scale and sustainable grain producers, the series chronicles the journey of three innovative farmers who are cutting their own paths in American agriculture.

The featured farmers—John and Halee Wepking in Wisconsin, Andrew Barsness in Minnesota, and Mai Nguyen in California—are pursuing creative and innovative growing and marketing methods, such as converting acreage to organic; experimenting with heritage seed varieties; and direct-marketing their grains to mills, restaurants, and bakeries. The future of high quality, sustainably grown grains in the United States depends on the success of young farmers like Barsness, Nguyen and the Wepkings.

America is facing a shortage of young farmers: farmers over 65 outnumber farmers under 35 by a margin of 6-to-1. At the same time, demand for organic and sustainably grown food is on the rise.

“Farmers are at the heart of baking and vital to who we are as a company,” says King Arthur Flour’s director of mission driven partnerships and programs, Carey Underwood. “The need for sustainably grown grains is increasing, and we’re dedicated to helping the next generation of U.S. farmers not only meet this demand, but thrive as well. King Arthur Flour is excited to support the Heart & Grain series, which highlights the challenges and rewards that come with growing grains.”

The National Young Farmers Coalition is a membership-based organization that advocates for young farmers and promotes policies that will make it easier for young people to enter the field of agriculture and build successful farm businesses.

“Young farmers bring new ideas to the table and they are often leaders in sustainability,” says NYFC’s executive director, Lindsey Lusher Shute. “But young farmers today face new challenges, including historically high land prices, student loan debt, and lack of access to capital. By ensuring young farmers receive the support they need to launch their businesses, we will lay the foundation for the future of American agriculture.”

**NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION**

PO BOX 1074 HUDSON, NY 12534 | 518-643-3564 | [YOUNGFARMERS.ORG](http://YOUNGFARMERS.ORG)

The first film in the series, which profiles John and Halee Wepking, is live now, and new films will follow in May and June. Each of the farmers profiled in the films will also be blogging throughout the growing season. Follow their stories at [youngfarmers.org/heart-and-grain](http://youngfarmers.org/heart-and-grain).

*Founded in 2010, the [National Young Farmers Coalition](http://www.nyfc.org) (NYFC) is an advocacy network of farmers and ranchers working to ensure that all young farmers have the chance to succeed. Visit NYFC on the web at [www.youngfarmers.org](http://www.youngfarmers.org), and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).*

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