



PHOTO: WALLACE CENTERS OF IOWA

WALLACE CENTERS OF IOWA ORIENT

When chef Katie Porter started hosting Thursday dinners at the Wallace House in Des Moines about 10 years ago, the resurgence of farm-to-table meals was still relatively new, said Ann Taylor, vice president of marketing and development for Wallace Centers of Iowa. But the public was quick to embrace the idea, and farm-to-table concepts filled restaurant menus over the next decade. That's exactly what the centers set out to do: "to connect Iowa's food, land and people."

Pizza on the Prairie started in much the same way at the Wallace Farm in Orient, where Vice President Henry A. Wallace was born. In 2019, a "pizza farm" sprung up with a brick oven to bake pies topped with ingredients grown right on the farm. Whatever isn't grown on site is typically sourced from other Iowa producers like Milton Creamery and Graziano Brothers. House-made sides and desserts are also crafted from farm produce. This year's series runs Fridays from May 31 through Sept. 27. Reservations for the first few dates open in mid-May, with

more dates opening as the season progresses.

"It's really a whole property experience," Taylor said of the farm's 9 acres of restored prairie. During the pizza nights on Fridays, guests can walk the prairie paths to see Iowa-made artwork and get a sense of where their pizza came from. Signs explain the site's history, the Wallace family's legacy and their worldwide impact on agriculture. As Taylor put it, "It's deeper than just coming out for pizza." ■