

Thankful for the Season



■ WINTER GREETINGS

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we wrap up another cropping season, one word comes to mind: thankful.

We are thankful for a great growing season and for the neighbors and partners who trusted us with their land. We are thankful for the quality and abundance of the crops we harvested, and for the dedicated teams who worked long, hard hours to bring that crop in. We're thankful for "our girls" who turn those crops into nutritious food, and for their continued good health.

While the growing season may be over, winter is anything but quiet on the farm. Planning for next year's crops began in October and continues through the cold months ahead. Machinery has been serviced, repairs made, and equipment is now tucked safely inside our new machinery storage building for the winter.

This year also brings exciting updates to our 125-year-old family farmhouse.

Mom and Dad purchased it when they bought the farm in 1947, and we're proud to preserve it for future generations. With six of their seven children born in that house, it's time to give it a well-deserved facelift—and add a small addition to help it serve the family for years to come.

In the months ahead, the Sedron VARCOR® system will come online, marking a major milestone in our sustainability journey. You can read more about this innovative system that recycles valuable nutrients later in the newsletter.

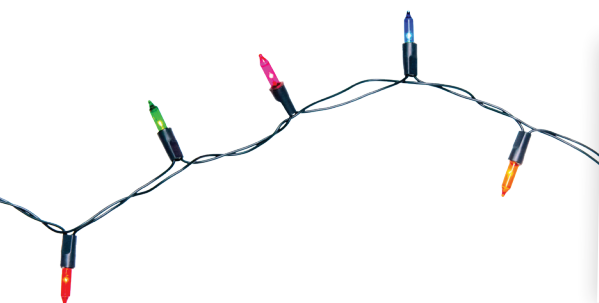
As Christmas approaches, we invite you to drive past the farm and see our holiday lights. Our team has worked hard to build the tree and stars that shine each night—a bright reminder of the true reason for the season.



From our family to yours, we wish you health, happiness, and a peaceful Christmas season filled with gratitude.



— *Lee Kinnard,
Jackie & David Stewart,
Rod & Maureen Kinnard*



From Challenge to Opportunity: VARCOR® system closes the circle

Our parents taught us that farming is about balance—between land and water, cows and crops, today and tomorrow. From the beginning, our family has looked for ways to make that balance stronger. We were among the first dairies in Wisconsin to install a liquid manure system, an early innovation that helped capture more nutrients and protect local waterways. Today, our newest project—the Sedron VARCOR® system—builds on that same foundation of stewardship, closing the circle from sustainable to regenerative agriculture.

How the System Works

The VARCOR system uses a proven process called Mechanical Vapor Recompression to separate and purify the water from manure. Fresh manure is pumped into large sealed cylindrical containers that are kept under vacuum. The water in the manure, which is 97% of the total volume, is efficiently evaporated using heat that is recycled from the operation of the compressors used to create the vacuum.

The process results in three pathogen-free products:

- Clean water that can be safely reused.
- An organically certified liquid nitrogen fertilizer, similar to petroleum-based 28% or 32% products used by most farmers.
- A dry 1-3-3 fertilizer that is so close to natural topsoil that it can be spread directly on green and growing crops—or stored and shipped to produce farms anywhere in the world.



LEFT: After we harvest our crops in the fall, we believe in planting cover crops – the green plants you see on the fields late fall and throughout winter. Cover crops are key to preserving our precious soil by holding it in place during the windy winter months. They also build organic matter making our soil healthier. Because the resulting VARCOR fertilizer is in a dry form, planting cover crops can take place immediately after harvest and fertilizer application, eliminating days of waiting for fields to dry.

Why It Matters

The VARCOR system greatly enhances our ability to incorporate regenerative agriculture practices.

Every drop of water on a permitted dairy must be collected and handled as manure. While this is a great rule for environmental protection, it greatly increases the volume of manure and the trucking associated with recycling that manure. Manure fresh from the cow is typically 20% solids, 80% liquids (called semi-solid manure). Manure with all of the water collected and added to it is 3% manure and 97% water. That means that for every 100 hundred loads of liquid manure, only three loads are actually manure. Because we are no longer hauling semis of water, truck traffic is reduced by more than 85%.

Storing that watery manure in open lagoons lets nitrogen escape to the air and forces us to till the soil to apply it safely. With VARCOR, we have less soil disturbance and can increase no-till planting allowing carbon to be stored in the organic matter of the soil.

The resulting fertilizer is in a dry form, which means cover crops can be planted immediately after harvest and



Kinnard Farms has partnered with Sedron technologies to install a VARCOR system at the farm. This is the first in Wisconsin and is a very exciting and innovative way to recycle manure nutrients.

fertilizer application, without waiting for fields to dry. The VARCOR system removes that challenge entirely.

Because manure is processed as it is made, lagoon storage and odor are greatly diminished.

This project continues the innovation our dad started decades ago with his first manure pit. What began as a way to manage nutrients responsibly has evolved into a closed-loop system where nothing is wasted. The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin said the VARCOR system “is a nature-based solution to mitigating climate change.”

Looking Ahead

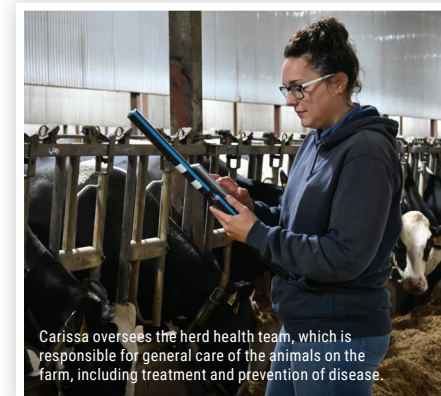
Construction began in 2024 with new gas, electric, and fiber-optic lines to support the facility. (If you are enjoying a stronger Internet in your home, thank Sedron.) Operations are expected to begin early 2026. There are only four other VARCOR installations around the United States.

Innovation has always been our way forward. It’s how we care for our cows, our community, and the land that feeds us all. We are excited about this innovative way to recycle nutrients.

Caring for Cows and People: Meet Carissa Koepfel

As Herd Manager at Kinnard Farms, **Carissa Koepfel** oversees the herd health team responsible for the care, treatment, and prevention of disease for the farm’s cows. Her journey began in her hometown of Mishicot, where she started milking cows as a teenager and discovered a deep love for animal care.

An apprenticeship at a small animal veterinary clinic during high school confirmed her calling. “I loved every part of it—watching surgeries, giving vaccinations, listening to diagnoses,” Carissa said. She went on to become a Certified Veterinary Technician from Madison Area Technical College, completing rotations in both small- and large-animal medicine. During her large-animal rotation in Casco, she visited Kinnard Farms for the first time.



Carissa oversees the herd health team, which is responsible for general care of the animals on the farm, including treatment and prevention of disease.

She walked up to Lee, shook his hand, and introduced herself. A few weeks later, Lee called to offer her a position as a herds person. In 2020, she became Herd Manager.

Carissa has a great attitude, and her positive approach to leadership is an inspiration. She takes time to know her team as individuals, which helps her guide them toward both personal and professional growth. The cows—and the people who care for them—are better for having Carissa in their lives.

– Lee Kinnard

Carissa’s grandfather once told her to find a job you love and you’ll never work a day in your life, advice she’s carried with her ever since. “I feel accomplished knowing we provide a great life for the cows,” she said. “I like



ABOVE: Carissa was invited by the Dairy Girl Network to speak on a panel at the World Dairy Expo in Madison. The topic was “Becoming an Employer of Choice: Strategies for Hiring and Retention.” Carissa addressed how Kinnard Farms has implemented policies that drive job satisfaction and retention and created pathways for employees to thrive and grow in their roles.

to think my job is half cows, half people. I love being able to make a difference for both.” As a bilingual leader, Carissa’s favorite days are when she’s working side by side with her team, teaching, helping vaccinate, and spreading positivity in the barn.

Outside the barn, Carissa is a busy mom to two energetic boys, Jackson, 5, and Levi, 3. When she finds a quiet moment, it’s usually spent with a cup of coffee and a good book. Her partner, Luke, owns a local trucking farm, and, fittingly, they first met at the farm. Good things just seem to happen at Kinnard Farms.

Our family’s goal is to keep farmland producing as farmland for future generations. The beauty of green and gold crops growing in a field preserves our soil, builds soil health, and provides a home for wildlife. Communities thrive when agriculture grows.

If you are interested in preserving and protecting your land as farmland for future generations, please contact Jackie to have a discussion about selling or renting your land. Jackie can be reached at Jackie.Stewart@KinnardFarms.com or call our office at 920-837-7644.



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Casco, WI 54205

Interested in life on our farm?
Like us on 

■ We're grateful for another successful harvest!

Over 450 neighbors, friends and members of the cropping and harvest teams joined us for our 2nd annual Harvest Appreciation Celebration, a day of food, fun and gratitude for everyone who helped bring in the crops that will feed our girls. **Thank you!**

