



Our life. Our work. Our home.

## Quarterly Moos - Winter 2017

*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

Growing up as the youngest of seven children in a farm family of faith, Christmas has always been a magical time of the year. Our parents' and grandparents' love of the holiday was clearly evident and quite contagious.

Christmas decorations, great food shared with family and friends, and the possibility of presents for those children who managed to make it onto the "nice" list all conspired to make Christmas a highly anticipated time of the year for the entire family.

Christmas is also a great time to reflect upon the previous year and look forward to the endless possibilities of the soon-to-be new year. We are extremely thankful for all of the moments shared throughout the past year with everyone in the Kinnard Farms family. To our neighbors, friends, land owners, employees, and consultants: we thank you for your support throughout 2017 and look forward to a great 2018!

From our family to yours, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year filled with blessings. May the Christmas Spirit live within you throughout the year!

**Lee Kinnard**

*Merry Christmas  
from all of us!*

*Joe Rod Maureen*

*Jackie Jan*



David, Jackie, Lee, Maureen, Rod,  
and Holly the calf

*Merry Christmas to all,  
and to all a good night!*



# Amanda Barta

## Meet our newest team member



Amanda Barta, Office Manager

Amanda Barta's passion for agriculture started when she was 12 years old, working on the farm of a family friend. At a young age, she learned how to bed calves, milk cows, and perform many other daily chores around the farm. Today, she works for Kinnard Farms as our Office Manager.

Amanda grew up in Algoma and graduated from University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a major in animal science and minor in crop science. She worked at Rio Creek Feed Mill, her husband Adam's family business, and a few other jobs before realizing she is happiest when she is connected to dairy. In April, she joined the team at our farm and is responsible for accounts payable and receivables, along with many other duties.

Amanda's knowledge of crops helps her apply fresh thinking to the corn and alfalfa harvest. "Having the knowledge and understanding of what a good yield actually is helps our managers," says Amanda. But, pushing numbers isn't her only talent. Always looking for new challenges, Amanda learned to fly our drone and likens it to playing a video game. If you've seen any of our Facebook videos this fall, they were likely shot by her.

"Before harvest, Amanda revamped procedures for the scale shack," says Lee. "She incorporated a sampling and testing method to allow us to see weights coming off of the fields on a daily basis. Each sample was tested onsite to measure the moisture. Immediately, we knew the yield coming off each field, which allowed us to calculate the exact amount of nutrients to apply following harvest. It helps us to be even more sustainable."

"I love working in agriculture," says Amanda. "There's always something different going on. And, the people are good to work with."

Amanda's quest for information doesn't stop at the office door. "I want to have more knowledge about the farm. I'm looking forward to learning about all of the other areas of the farm to determine how I can contribute."

Amanda and Adam live in the township of Lincoln, only eight miles from the farm. They have a four-year old daughter, Lainey, and keep busy training an 11-month old Fox Red Lab.

### Kinnard Farms Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship

We are now accepting applications for our 2018 Kinnard Farms Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship! Please visit [kinnardfarms.com/scholarships](http://kinnardfarms.com/scholarships) to learn more about the entry qualifications and how to apply.

Applications are due on March 15, 2018

### Renting or Selling Your Land to Kinnard Farms

Mom and Dad taught us that caring for the land is the foundation of everything we do. We apply their values not only to the land we own, but also to the land we rent.

If you are interested in renting or selling your land to Kinnard Farms, please contact Jackie Kinnard-Stewart at 920-837-7644 or [Jackie@kinnardfarms.com](mailto:Jackie@kinnardfarms.com).

To learn more, please visit: [kinnardfarms.com/renting-or-selling-your-land](http://kinnardfarms.com/renting-or-selling-your-land)

# Cover Crops

## Protecting our precious resources



Tillage radishes are one of our favorite cover crops

This fall marks our family's 31st season of cover crop planting. Over the years, we have often been asked why we choose to grow cover crops; after all, at first glance it would seem there is little sense in growing a crop that you don't intend to harvest. And yes, the cost of the seed, the expense of the planting machinery and fuel, and the time commitment to plant this crop are quite significant. In order to answer the question about why we grow cover crops, a little tutorial on soil biology, environmental science and our area's history is necessary.

Much of Wisconsin was heavily forested when it was originally settled by our European ancestors. The settlers realized their new home was blessed with very rich and productive soil. Though there were no scientific tests for soils at the time, scientists today believe organic matter in the soil was in the six to ten percent range when the land was originally settled.

Organic matter is the living and breathing portion of our soil, responsible for recycling nutrients, and capturing and filtering rain water. It is the lifeblood of our soil, and is also responsible for protecting our precious water resources. In order to provide for their families, early settlers cleared the trees and began intensively tilling the empty woodland. Unfortunately, the intensive tillage had some unintended consequences. With each tillage pass, a little bit of organic matter was destroyed. The intensive tillage also left the surface of the soil bare and quite exposed to rain and wind erosion. This method of soil management has resulted in soils that today contain only about one third of their original organic matter.

This trend was first recognized as non-sustainable in the 1930s when huge dust storms engulfed much of our nation's Great Plains. Science first began to question tillage as a sound agronomic practice in the 1950's, citing declining organic matter in soils as a reason to look for a better way of doing things. With the development of no-till, which uses a specialized machine ready to plant a crop without tillage, the problem of organic matter destruction could be halted. Unfortunately, just stopping tillage is not enough to rebuild organic matter back to Mother Nature's original condition.

This is where cover crops come in to play. By planting the crop at the time of the year when soils would traditionally be exposed to the elements, we can actually grow new organic matter. In the process, many other benefits take place. First, the growing crop safeguards the soil from wind and water throughout the winter months. Second, the growing crop does an excellent job of harvesting and holding nutrients that have been applied to the soil. These nutrients are released in a slow-release fashion during the following growing season. The most important thing that a cover crop can do however, is to rebuild organic matter. And in the spring, the decaying plant material is converted into new organic matter ... literally building new soil.

On the fields where our family has done little or no tillage over the past 30 years and grown cover crops, we have seen some incredible improvements in our soil health and organic matter content. These fields are able to grow a crop with substantially less fertilizer than traditionally managed fields, and erosion is nonexistent.

For many generations, our family's goal as stewards of the soil has been to always leave our land in a condition better than it was when it was originally entrusted to our care. Our cover cropping program is allowing us to do just this, not only practicing sustainable agriculture, but actually regenerative agriculture. We have been steadily increasing our cover crop acreage every year over the last 30 years, and going into winter this year, we have soil covering over two thirds of the acres we farm. What is even more exciting to us is the number of acres farmed by others that are beginning to use the same practice.

Cover cropping requires intensive management and an entirely new science-based skill set. Our family has found that the rewards are certainly worth the effort.



*Christmas decorating was always fun on the farm. When we were little, there were two huge pine trees in front of the farm house. Dad would get the Allis Chalmers tractor with the bucket out and somehow get lights to the top of those trees. Our job was to run strings of lights out to him. Mom always had a pan of hot cocoa ready for us when the tree trimming was done. So rich and creamy!*

## Mom's Hot Cocoa (1 serving)

### Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. Hershey's Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup whole milk, divided
- 1/8 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. salt
- Whipped cream

### Directions:

In small saucepan, whisk cocoa, sugar, salt and 1/4 cup of milk over medium-low heat until cocoa and sugar are dissolved.

Stir in remainder of the milk and heat over medium heat until hot, but do not boil.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.

Pour in warm mug and garnish with whipped cream.

