

Kinnard Farms: Statement from Lee Kinnard

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As part of our ongoing commitment to implement practices that are highly protective of our region's precious water and soil resources, the Kinnard Farms family is excited about the opportunity to move forward with the installation of state-of-the-art manure management technology.

The installation of this technology, the first such in Wisconsin, is a game changer. It will transform liquid manure into three separate and pathogen-free products: clean water, dry organic fertilizer and an organic ammonia fertilizer. The technology will remove most of the truck traffic from our local roads and greatly reduce the need for long-term storage of liquid manure in lagoons. Removal of the water from the manure hastens our ability to increase our family's already extensive use of regenerative agricultural practices, allowing us to plant cover crops and eliminate tillage on an even greater number of our fields. These practices are proven to regenerate soil health, prevent erosion and sequester carbon, and are highly protective of water quality.

This settlement agreement represents a breakthrough in recognizing the benefits of accommodating farmer-led innovation to drive science-based environmental solutions on Wisconsin dairies. In facilitating this settlement, the DNR deserves credit for recognizing the potential of the technology, the value of providing flexibility within a regulatory framework and the usefulness of collaboration. We also appreciate the willingness of the other parties in this agreement to come to the table in the pursuit of the common goal of protecting our precious water and soil resources.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AGREEMENT

The farm, DNR and environmental intervenors reached an agreement in April (fully executed May 11) under which the DNR will not require groundwater monitoring of land application sites if Kinnard Farms substantially eliminates the land application of liquid manure within approximately four years (2027).

Highlights of the agreement:

- The agreement recognizes that Kinnard Farms is currently working with a partner to develop a state-of-the-art manure treatment facility to process all of the liquid manure generated at its farm.
- Recognizing the benefits of this technology and the likelihood that it will eliminate the land application of liquid manure by Kinnard Farms, the parties have agreed to resolve the underlying contested case dispute concerning modifications to Kinnard Farms' WPDES permit.

Specifically:

- DNR will not take action to enforce permit terms that are currently stayed due to the pending contested case.
- DNR will retain terms and conditions relating to groundwater monitoring of land application sites in Kinnard Farms' reissued WPDES permit, making only limited changes to provisions concerning the mechanics of groundwater sampling. However, groundwater monitoring of land application sites will only need to be completed if Kinnard Farms proposes to land apply liquid manure after the fourth anniversary of the reissued WPDES permit — the target timeframe for Kinnard Farms to effectively eliminate its need to land apply liquid manure from its dairy.

The agreement includes project milestones, designed to ensure that efforts to construct and operate the facility remain on track. Kinnard Farms also commits to provide periodic progress reports to DNR and the intervenors.