

FARM BUREAU® Connection

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From Our Farm to Your Table: A Tradition We Share

By Brad Olson, Wisconsin Farm Bureau President



The holidays are a time when family and traditions take center stage. From picking the perfect Christmas tree to preparing passed-down recipes, these moments are deeply rooted in the season.

For my family, much like many others, traditions extend beyond the holiday season—they're a part of who we are as farmers. For over a century, generations of my family have farmed in rural Polk County, growing not only crops but a way of life that's proudly

passed down. Like many Wisconsin farmers, our land is more than a livelihood; it's a cherished legacy.

From daily chores to fall harvest, traditions are all around the farm, woven across generations much like a cherished holiday recipe or ritual. Just as a favorite dish brings memories of loved ones to the table, every season revisits lessons and values passed down from parents and grandparents who understood the land and its rhythms. These are rituals that honor the land, animals and crops, sustaining not only our family but our surrounding community.

For farmers, each season brings a cycle mirroring the values everyone cherishes during the holidays: commitment, gratitude and togetherness.

The resilience and stewardship that guide farmers through challenges are what make the harvest, and ultimately the holiday table, so rewarding.

Staples you enjoy alongside your family during the holidays are tied to farms, too. Fresh vegetables, meats, cranberries and dairy products originate from family farms across Wisconsin. Farm families take pride knowing they play a role in holiday feasts across the country.

There's a shared appreciation that extends to everyone who sits down to a holiday meal, knowing it's the result of dedication from field to fork. This connection between food and family is a reminder of the mutual gratitude we all feel during the season.

There's a hope in every farmer's heart that their farm will remain a part of your future holidays, continuing to bring wholesome food to tables across their community. It's a legacy that nurtures the bond between those who grow the food and those who enjoy it, generation after generation.

As you gather with family and friends this holiday, I hope you find joy in revisiting the traditions that make the season special and, perhaps, feel a bit more connected to the farmers helping bring your holiday meal to life.

Seasons greetings from all of us at Wisconsin Farm Bureau.

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Wisconsin Farm Grows Trees and Your Holiday Spirit

By Rachel LaCount

Visiting Inspiration Acres is like stepping into a Christmas movie. Sisters Krista Peterson and Kara Kasten-Olson created a Christmas experience inspired by their family's dairy farm, honoring the legacy of their late parents while inspiring future generations to create their own holiday traditions.

"Our parents have both passed away and that was a little bit of our inspiration in starting the tree farm was how do we keep the farm and legacy going for the next generation," shared Krista.

Krista and Kara started their tree farming journey in 2020. The sisters learned the value of hard work and community growing up on their family's dairy farm near Richfield.

The sister duo manages 60 acres of crops at the home farm. The land at the home farm is not ideal for growing Christmas trees but they were still determined to create an on-farm Christmas experience. They had to get creative to bring together the land and the legacy on their family farm.

They were able to purchase some land from a retired Christmas tree grower and mentor in Redgranite. They are proud to carry on the previous owners' 60-year tradition of growing trees on the land. The sisters are in the process of rehabilitating the land and planting more trees for generations to come. They are hopeful that someday soon the space will reflect the Christmas movies they love, but for now they are learning about soil science and weather patterns to help their trees thrive.

Working with the land is a privilege and opportunity, but more importantly it is a responsibility that Kara and Krista take very seriously. They want to make sure they do the right thing to protect their neighbors and community.

The Christmas market is located in Slinger near the original family farm. Inspiration Acres is a pop-up market in Slinger open for just three weekends during the holiday season. Visitors can find Wisconsin grown Christmas trees and a variety of handmade holiday decor like porch pots, wreaths and centerpieces. The market features more than 30 local vendors, transforming the space into the downtown square of your favorite holiday movie. The sisters also offer classes so guests can build their own creations.

"It's all about the art of the possible," shared Krista. "I think that's the pretty cool thing, when you look around we just have branches here but what people gather around is the tree and that's where they make those memories with their families."



Krista and Kara feel very fortunate to work together as sisters and business partners. They have each fallen into roles with the businesses that play to their strengths. Krista gravitates towards the outdoors and working with the trees, while Kara manages inventory and logistics at the market.

After losing their parents, the sisters were determined to keep the farm in the family. The farm has given the family something to rally around. Located just 20 miles north of Milwaukee, there is some pressure to sell the land so it can be developed into housing.

The main goal of Inspiration Acres is to bring people together on the home farm. They want to pass on the legacy for generations and bring their community together.

"There is something special about the idea of bringing people to where we grew up and making moments into memories in the holiday season," shared Krista.

Find more information about their farm by visiting [InspirationAcresWI.com](https://www.InspirationAcresWI.com).

What To Do If You Are Stranded This Winter

Wisconsin winters can be extreme, with an average of 3-5 winter storms per season in northeast and north-central Wisconsin. It's important to be aware of winter storm warnings when planning road trips and daily activities. After all, getting stranded in cold weather or a snowstorm can happen to anyone. If a storm is coming, the best thing to do is to stay home.

Here are a few tips if you find yourself stranded this winter, whether from a car breakdown or hike gone wrong.

WHAT TO DO IF CAUGHT OUTSIDE IN A STORM

If you plan to hike this winter, it's important to dress in multiple warm layers and bring along gloves and a hat. Always let people know your route and estimated time of arrival. If you get caught in a storm, cover any exposed skin, find shelter, hydrate, and stay moving to keep warm.

WHAT TO DO IF STRANDED WHILE TRAVELING IN WINTER

It is important to be prepared in winter when driving in case you are stranded while traveling during a storm. Before the cold season, replace your car battery if it's older than five years as low temperatures have an impact on your battery life. In case of a breakdown, carry an emergency kit in your car, draw attention to your car for visibility, and stay in your vehicle while you call for help.

WHAT TO DO IF SNOWED IN AT HOME

Being in your home doesn't exempt you from an emergency. It's recommended to get a tune-up of your furnace in the fall so you're not surprised with issues come winter. Also stock up on furnace filters and make sure they are changed routinely. The standard recommendation is to change filters once every 90 days. If your furnace does go out or there is an unexpected power outage, stay warm by adding extra clothing layers, use blankets and towels to seal window and door leaks, and congregate near south-facing windows to soak up any sunlight.

PROTECT AGAINST FROZEN PIPES

If your furnace goes out, a main concern is pipes freezing. To prevent against frozen pipes, shut off the valve that allows water into your house. After shutting off the valve, open the drain valves and faucets to run out any water left in the pipes. It's helpful to know where this valve is before the heat goes out.

Being prepared for winter weather is the best thing you can do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

Scan the QR code to read more winter safety tips from Rural Mutual Insurance.



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For nearly a century, it's been our mission to protect and rebuild families, farms and businesses across Wisconsin. We're here for you.



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gather AROUND THE TABLE

Recipes and photos courtesy of the National Pork Board, Des Moines, Iowa and John Van Lieshout. Visit gatherwisconsin.com for more recipes.

Holiday Cranberry Sangria

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Bottle Red Wine
(*Garnacha recommended*)
- 1 ½ Cups Cranberry Juice
- ½ cup Simply Syrup
- ½ cup Triple Sec
- 1 Orange Sliced
- 2 Cups of Cranberries
- 1 Apple Sliced
- 2 Cinnamon Sticks or Rosemary

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix wine, cranberry juice, simple syrup and Triple Sec in pitcher.
2. Add cranberries, sliced orange, sliced apple and cinnamon sticks.
3. Mix well and refrigerate 24 hours before serving.

**1st Place Winner of 2024 Wisconsin State Fair
Cranberry Juice Jamboree competition**



Warm Holiday Ham Crescents

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb. fully cooked ham brown-sugar, shaved
- 8 oz. crescent dinner rolls refrigerated
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese OR Swiss, cut diagonally
- 3 Tbsp. mayonnaise OR salad dressing
- 1 Tbsp. dijon style mustard

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Separate package of crescent rolls into triangles; place on waxed paper.
2. Place cheese triangle over each dough triangle.
3. Divide ham among the 8 dough/cheese triangles.
4. Beginning at widest end, roll up to form a crescent. Place on baking sheet that has been coated with cooking spray.
5. Bake at 375 degrees F for 13 to 15 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, in small bowl, stir together mayonnaise and mustard; serve with Ham Crescents.

