

## Justamere Tree Farm in Worthington

Kim Trust, Kelly Auer, Deb Rocque

Kim Trust, Kelly Auer, and Deb Rocque – friends who met while working in Alaska and found they shared a passion for farming – made a dream come true by purchasing Justamere Tree Farm in Worthington in April 2020. Helped by the advice of the previous owners, they've mastered a steep learning curve and today produce delicious maple syrup and other products from their beautiful maple trees. The purchases made possible by several Local Farmer Awards have helped Justamere introduce efficiencies out in the woods and in their commercial kitchen, maintain safety and worker morale, and increase output.

### Data Monitoring System - Quickly identifies vacuum leaks, enabling farmers to limit loss of sap (2022)

For every degree of vacuum lost, the amount of sap collected is reduced by 5%. Workers used to be sent into the woods day and night to listen for a hiss indicating vacuum loss in the "spaghetti of sap lines," then walk the entire line to locate the area needing repair. Instead, the **Data Monitoring System** does the task quickly. It detects vacuum loss in the lines that carry the sap and sends a signal to the farmer's computer and cell phone. The device then directs workers to the specific location of the problem, speeding response time for a crew to get to the scene and eliminate loss of vacuum. "We knew we needed the monitor but didn't realize how much," laughed Kim. "It's invaluable!"

### Releaser - Maintains constant vacuum in lines while draining and separating sap from air (2023)

Lines in the woods carry sap to a main collection point where the **Releaser**, acquired with the support of a Local Farmer Award, separates sap from air that the vacuum pulled from the lines. While the sap is drained into a large holding tank, the Releaser enables the vacuum in the lines to stay constant, a critical condition for continued maximum production of sap in the woods. Later the sap is pumped into another tank on the back of a large truck and transported to the sugar house where the next important boiling and evaporation steps take place.



Kim Trust with maple sap releaser

### Maple Cream Machine - Produces one of the most profitable and best-selling products (2021)

Maple cream accounts for more than 30% of Justamere Tree Farm's revenue. They appreciated the Local Farmer Awards more than ever when a grant enabled their timely purchase of a new **Maple Cream Machine** after the motor in one of their two machines burned out. Today, Kim confides, they call the new machine the "diva" because it's fast, able to produce delicious cream, yet sometimes temperamental!

Kim is a recent appointee to the 13-member Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, which has members representing every class of agricultural knowledge in the state. Extolling the benefits of new machines and technology Justamere Tree Farm has acquired, Kim and partners Deb and Kelly feel they owe a lot to the Local Farmer Awards and the donors who make them possible. "It's very hard for maple farmers to get grants other than the Local Farmer Awards," said Kim, "and we really appreciate the fact that you've come through for us."