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by Larry A. Quinn



LITTLEFIELD'S FIRST-PERSON REPORT ON NEBRASKA FLOODING – Susan Littlefield (KRVN Rural Radio Network, Surprise, Nebraska) provided this update from recent flooding in her state: “From a blizzard in the western half of Nebraska to flooding in the eastern half of the state, a lot of man-hours were spent on news coverage and volunteering. Cattle producers were trying to dig cattle out of snow drifts and account for animals, as cattlemen in the east watched flood waters take away their livelihood. For many, the watches and warnings came so fast it was hard to get livestock moved to higher ground. One producer shared a video via Facebook that said it came down to saving their lives or the cattle. The ‘girls’ (cattle) were going to have to fend for themselves. All the time she is talking, you can sense the tears that were rolling down her face. This story was played over and over. We also lost an amazing farmer, **James Wilke**, as he helped emergency personnel try to rescue a stranded motorist. James and his tractor were swept away when the bridge gave way. As we wrap up the month of March, the dollar amounts are coming in the billions as homes, farms, buildings and livestock are examined. With the help of the National Guard many cattle that would be going hungry are receiving hay via helicopter drop. Donations of hay are coming into our state from the Dakotas, Texas, Oklahoma, Montana and Minnesota. Conversations with producers have been tough as they tell the story of cow/calf pairs lost, trying to decide how they will rebuild and for some if they will. At one point more than 2,000 miles of roads in our state were under water and 70 of the 93 counties declared a disaster.”



Littlefield remembers watching the flooding in 2011 along the Missouri River and watched it come back again this year: "Never did we think that we, in the middle part of Nebraska, would be dealing with such devastation. We have roads that are gone. County and township governments are worried how they are going to get these roads back in shape ahead of spring planting. Speaking of planting, there is worry among many that it will be late if at all. That's another hit to the pocketbook for those in the ag industry and beyond. It comes as no surprise that our news coverage has had a different feel the past couple of weeks as we talk about the flooding, blizzards, and now clean-up efforts. We have added an extra program in the 5 p.m. hour just to share all the information that those in the ag industry need to know."



Littlefield added thanks to her NAFB family in the midst of this crisis: “I also want to say thank you to all the farm broadcasters who reached out to us, first to see how we were doing and then asking if we had time to be on the other side of the microphone to tell the story of what was going on. The outpouring of concern was felt and welcomed by all. As for my place, we watched the Big Blue start to come out of her banks, spent an afternoon with other fellow firefighters sandbagging our little town, and then got to spend four days of quality time with my younger two children as the river went over the roads and kept us home. We have a creek that runs through our place, and it was over its banks, so the pasture and alfalfa fields don't look so hot right now. A fence will have to be rebuilt, and we take a different route when headed east as the road is washed out, but we are safe. We didn't lose livestock, and we count our blessings as many around us are in a different boat.” Littlefield served as NAFB President in 2015 and was named Farm Broadcaster of the Year in 2016.

**FARMERS UNION HONORS
JOEL HEITKAMP**

– For well over a decade, Farm Broadcaster **Joel Heitkamp** of North Dakota has given agriculture and rural issues a significant platform on his live, three-hour radio program, *News and Views*. “For his work in elevating the issues facing family farmers, ranchers, and their communities, National Farmers Union (NFU) awarded Heitkamp with the 2019 Milt Hakel Agriculture Communications Award. Joel is a leading advocate for family farm and ranch agriculture in the Upper Midwest, and he is well



deserving of this honor,” said NFU President **Roger Johnson**. “Given his significant following in both rural and urban centers, Joel’s impact is significant. That’s why it carries so much weight that he provides farm families a voice in increasingly polarized political and social climates.” The Milt Hakel Agriculture Communications Award is presented to reporters or news outlets that demonstrate exceptional reporting of agricultural issues. The award was named in honor of Milton D. Hakel, a well- respected Farmers Union communicator. “Each year we celebrate the influencers in journalism who provide fair and consistent coverage of the issues facing our members,” Johnson added. “These communicators are awarded because of their commitment to objective and insightful media stories that promote positive public discourse. I’m proud to recognize Joel Heitkamp this year with our Milt Hakel Agriculture Communications Award.”

TAYLOR BROWN FEATURED IN MAGAZINE COVER STORY – Northern Ag Network’s own **Taylor Brown** was recently featured on the cover of *Raised in the West* magazine, a regional publication. Taylor Brown may have the most recognizable voice in Montana. Brown served as NAFB President in 1992 and was named Farm Broadcaster of the Year in 1989. He was inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame in 2010.



(Check out the excerpt below and then click on the link to read the full story and see more pictures of Brown in action.)

“During his four-decade career as a television and radio broadcaster, Taylor’s distinctive, enthusiastic voice has been heard all over eastern Montana and northern Wyoming, delivering the latest news about virtually every aspect of agriculture. As one of the most sought-after public speakers in the region, that voice has delivered countless speeches at conventions, seminars, banquets, and annual meetings. Others listened as he led farm and ranch tours organized not only by the Billings Area Chamber of Commerce, but tours to all corners of the nation and international tours in several foreign countries. He’s narrated videos made by companies, organizations, and nonprofits, spoken numerous times at the Montana Legislature, first as an advocate and then as a two-term state senator; and, for 10 years, he was the football announcer for the Huntley Project High School football team. His voice is notable for another reason. Though it carries some of the exaggerated diction and drama of the long-time broadcaster that he is, it reflects his personality, capturing the honesty, good humor, and sunny optimism for which he is

widely known. That attitude, matched with a degree of involvement that seems to be detached from the need to sleep, makes Brown unique in Montana. ‘In the agricultural community, I think he’s a household word,’ said **Jim Peterson**, of Buffalo, a former executive vice president of Montana Stockgrowers and, like Taylor, a former state senator, rancher, and entrepreneur. I mean, everybody knows him. I would guess he’s made as much of a contribution to agriculture as any individual I know.” [Click HERE to read the rest of the story on the Raised in the West Website.](#)

NUELLE RETURNS TO AG NEWS – Ben Nuelle

rejoins the agricultural broadcasting and news community as an associate editor for Agri-Pulse Communications in Washington, D.C. He began working for the company in December. “It’s great to be back,” the Higginsville, Missouri, native said. “**Sara Wyant** and **Al Johnson** are great to work for and the thrill of reporting on agricultural policy from Capitol Hill is exciting.” Before joining Agri-Pulse, thinking he wanted to work in politics and government, Nuelle spent roughly a year working for **Senator Joni Ernst** as an agriculture assistant in Des Moines, Iowa. He visited almost all of the state’s 99 counties, helping the senator with agricultural and press duties as she traveled across the state. Nuelle said he “had a great time working for the senator and doesn’t discount a single moment,” but

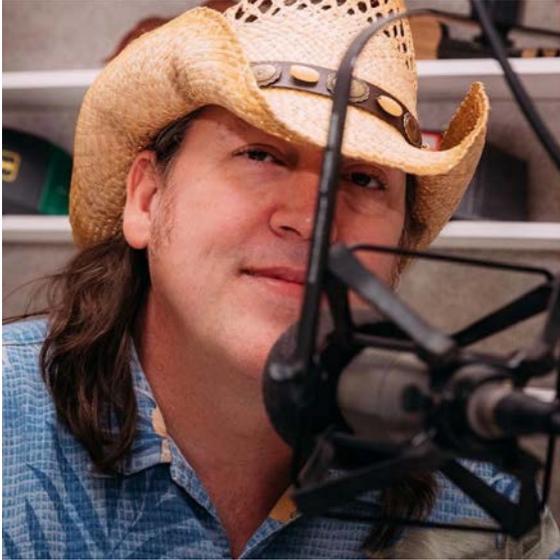


knew telling other people’s stories was what he enjoyed most. “I am so excited to have Ben on board,” Agri-Pulse President Sara Wyant said in a December release. “He was a freelancer for us while he worked at the Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network, and we’ve continued to be impressed by his interest in the intersection of policy and politics.” Nuelle began his broadcasting career with 100.7 “The Farm” KMZU Radio in Carrollton, Missouri, as an overnight and weekend disc jockey. There he met RFD-TV’s **Janet Adkison**, then a farm broadcaster at the station. After attending college, Adkison encouraged Nuelle to move to Iowa and meet **Ken Root**, who runs Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network (IARN). While at IARN, Nuelle learned from Root the ins and outs of covering Iowa agriculture while knowing how to ask the right questions. “You’ll be drinking out of a firehose the first year, but keep at it,” Nuelle recalls Root telling him as they talked almost every weekday morning about the news of the day and what to follow. To follow, Nuelle received the coveted Doan Award presented by Agri-Pulse and NAFB later that year. As a triplet, Nuelle grew up on a hay-and-cattle farm and studied multimedia journalism at Northwest Missouri State University. While attending college, he worked for KXCV/KRNW radio as a morning news anchor and reporter. He also studied economics at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, and interned for Radio America. You can hear Nuelle on Agri-Pulse’s DriveTime podcast released at 5 p.m. Eastern Monday through Friday as well as read his stories at Agri-Pulse.com.

CUNNINGHAM RECEIVES ILLINOIS COUNTY FAIR AWARD – Gale Cunningham (WYXY, Champaign, Illinois) was presented the 2019 Friend of Illinois County Fair Award at the fair association’s 109th annual conference in January. “It is one of the most cherished awards I have received, and I’m very honored to receive such an award from the peers who listen to ag radio on WYXY Classic 99.1 FM,” he said. Congratulating Cunningham after the presentation is Illinois State Representative **Tom Bennett.**



Cunningham was described as the farmers’ friend and advocate for agriculture for more than 50 years. Every day, he talks to the movers and shakers in the agricultural industry. On Saturday mornings, he has guests, from brokers to traders, to elevator managers and university marketing specialists and agricultural economists. The county fair association also noted that he continually introduces listeners to young persons who will make an impact on the future of agriculture and the future of America. Finally, the association noted Cunningham can be found locally, at the State Fair, and at numerous farm shows in the Midwest. His personality, dedication to agriculture, and promotion of youth have earned him the title of “2019 Friend of Illinois County Fair.” He currently is serving as NAFB National Vice President.



FROM INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING TO FARM BROADCASTING – After growing up on the East Coast of the U.S., **Pete Cato** spent a decade abroad working for English language radio stations in Russia and Europe. Cato decided it was time to head back to his home country and joined KSJB 600AM in Jamestown, North Dakota, in September 2017. He made the decision to come to the Heartland of the U.S. because he felt radio is still an important part of peoples’ lives there. “People tune in for news, weather, ag reports, and entertainment. Listeners around here have their ears to the radio from the time they wake up until they go to bed. I got into radio because radio is life.

Farming is the backbone of America, so what is better in broadcasting than farm broadcasting?” Cato is a new member of NAFB.



WE WANT YOUR NEWS – Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at larryaquinn@outlook.com or call me at **703-819-6532**. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of NAFB.com. For an archive copy of any past issues, go to **Membership** and click on *Airing on the Side of Agriculture*.