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DOCKTER ACCEPTS POSITION AT RED RIVER FARM NETWORK — Recent North Dakota State University (NDSU) Graduate **Cierra Dockter** accepted a position with Red River Farm Network at the end of 2021 as a farm broadcaster.

Dockter majored in agricultural communications with a minor in animal science at NDSU. She said she knew she wanted to go into agricultural communications since her freshman year of high school because of her love of writing and literature but not of public speaking.

“I honestly never thought I would go into agricultural journalism because I hated public speaking so much,” Dockter said. “I actually remember telling my mom during high school I would avoid public speaking at all costs in my future career but look at me now!”

Dockter’s first time being exposed to the broadcast media side of agricultural communications was during her term as North Dakota state FFA vice president during her freshman year of college.

“Being a state FFA officer brought a lot of great opportunities and involved me in media in a way I had never been before,” Dockter said.

Dockter grew up in Medina, North Dakota, on her family’s Gelbvieh seedstock operation. She was heavily involved in 4-H and FFA, and was always trying something new. She developed a farrow-to-finish hog operation and added goats, sheep, broilers, and layers to the family farm.

“Livestock was one of my top interests during college, and that showed as I continued my livestock judging career in college,” Dockter said.

After graduating from NDSU, she worked for the North Dakota Stockmen’s Association as the special-projects director. She soon switched paths after being contacted by the president of Red River Farm Network.

“I really wanted to get a career more in the communications side of things, and **Don Wick** reached out with this position,” Dockter said.

Dockter said she is really looking forward to getting involved with NAFB, and she is honored to have wonderful coworkers and mentors beside which to work.



TRUITT TAKES A STEP BACK FROM BROADCASTING — Starting his career in farm broadcasting in 1981, **Gary Truitt** was offered a job with the Brownfield Ag Network after making a connection in his previous job at a local radio station.

“That’s where I really became familiar with farm broadcasting as a career,” Truitt said. “I was hired there to help them revamp their programming as they were expanding into other states.”

The 1980s was a tough time for farmers and ranchers. Truitt said they needed something, and he could provide it.

“In order to survive, farmers needed a lot more information,” Truitt added. “My task was to increase the amount of timely information that the network was providing their listeners in a format they weren’t used to before.”



Within a short period of time, Truitt fell in love with farm broadcasting.

“It just got under my skin and into my blood. I became excited and passionate to be involved in that industry,” Truitt said. “The loyalty that farmers had to their broadcasters was something I had never experienced in radio before.”

He knew he had a responsibility to his audience, and that is what inspired him throughout the rest of his career. In 1985, Truitt had a unique opportunity to start his own ag network in Indiana.

“We went through a number of ownership changes over the years, but we continued to serve Indiana farmers,” Truitt said. “In 2006, I decided I needed to take matters into my own hands, so Hoosier Ag Today was born. We were trying to be independent and focused just on Indiana.”

Truitt wanted to curate content for the audience that focused on Indiana agriculture since the previous ownership had covered multiple states.



“I was really fortunate to have a lot of contacts,” Truitt said. “We started with 10 stations in 2006, and we have 70 stations today across the state of Indiana.”

Over time, Truitt’s duties have shifted. Recently, he decided to take a step back to a behind-the-scenes role.

“I am not doing as many trips, press conferences, farm shows, or field days,” Truitt said. “I am focusing on keeping the business in operation and growing.”

He has expanded his business to include a network in Michigan and the Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Expo. Out of all the achievements in Truitt's career, the one he is most proud of was being inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame in 2020.

"I've been a member of NAFB since 1981, and there are a lot of major names in our business who have been inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame," Truitt concluded. "I never really thought about getting inducted. Time just slips by as you do what you love because you like doing it, and all of a sudden, you've been doing it for 40 years."

TOP PHOTO: Ken Root, Gary Truitt, Harry Martin pictured with a US ambassador on trade mission to South America in 1982

SHIPP JOINS WESTERN AG NETWORK — **Haylie Shipp** recently rejoined the world of farm broadcasting when she accepted a position with Western Ag Network in Billings, Montana. Working from home in Glasgow, Montana, Shipp does on-air content including market reports. Her reason for coming home is all very simple: farm broadcasting is where her roots are.

"I started in 2006 with Northern Ag Network, and I worked with them for around a decade," Shipp said. "I was in college at the time I started for them, getting my degree in mass communications. I was born and raised on a ranch, so I have the agricultural background, and I always knew that I loved journalism."

She had a decision to make in college, and it was between agricultural journalism or vet school. For her, it was about open opportunities.

"I had contacted a couple of entities that were in Billings to see if anyone had an internship opportunity," she said. "Northern Ag Network did, and they brought me in as an intern. I was able to start doing some evergreen stories and eventually got into doing some of the more hard-hitting news stories."

After graduating from college with her bachelor's degree, Shipp transitioned into a full-time role at Northern Ag Network. She started working with the small team to produce daily stories along with some other new projects.



"At the time, we didn't have a website presence, so we started working as a team to develop that," Shipp said. "That evolved into social media too."

During her time at Northern Ag Network, Shipp traveled the four-state area the network covered. She attended events like grower meetings and connected with her audience on a personal level.



“I did a lot of general networking,” Shipp added. “I was brand new to the industry of farm broadcasting, but I have a background in cattle. I understood a lot of that information and knew those grower groups fairly well, but I was also getting into different areas of agriculture that I had no idea about nor did I know the players in them.”

Shipp felt a call to come back home to Glasgow, so she took a hiatus from farm broadcasting to accept a position at her local radio station, KLTZ/Mix-93. She started out as a sales associate with some broadcasting responsibilities.

“Eventually, I got back into the farm broadcasting, and I now serve as the assistant manager/sales manager,” Shipp said. “I’ve expanded my clientele base so that I now represent more than 200 advertisers. I’ve also expanded my on-air stints to add a three-time weekly talk show that focuses on local issues.”

Her time in NAFB impacted her career in radio broadcasting, even when she was not directly involved in farm broadcasting. In 2010, Shipp was awarded the Horizon Award from NAFB, and it was a great honor for her.

“It was the same year that **Jeff Nalley** was named Farm Broadcaster of the Year,” Shipp said. “I think realizing that I could share the stage with that level of a broadcaster was a very humbling experience.”

ADAMS RETIRING FROM A DEDICATED CAREER — Most would agree doing anything for 48 years requires a high level of dedication. Dedication is the definition of **Mike Adams**, recently retired national farm broadcaster and previous host of *Adams on Agriculture* (now *Agriculture of America* with **Mike Pearson**).

Adams said he always knew he wanted to work in radio broadcasting. He also worked on a grain and livestock farm growing up, but he had no idea how much that would impact his future.

“Growing up, radio to me meant ball games and music. I had no idea farm broadcasting was a thing,” Adams said.

As he thought growing up, Adams did work as a DJ and a sports announcer. However, when the local station he worked at started expanding the agriculture programming, he did not hesitate at the opportunity to become an assistant in the farm department there.

“It just exploded after I started working in the agriculture department. Doors started opening for more farm broadcasting opportunities, and I became the farm director at that local station where I worked,” Adams said.

After getting more ingrained in farm broadcasting, he joined NAFB in 1978. Adams said his NAFB membership opened even more doors and provided new connections around the country.

“It was fascinating to hear my fellow broadcasters’ stories and watch them work, and I learned a lot from them,” Adams said. “Watching them allowed me to grow and develop my own style.”

With those opportunities, he became a host of the nationally syndicated program, *AgriTalk*. After 17 years with *AgriTalk*, he started *Adams on Agriculture*.



“The goal of the new show was to inform farmers and ranchers of issues impacting them and their operations but also to educate our rural, non-farm listeners about why the same issues affect them,” Adams said.

Adams recently decided to retire. In doing so he has handed over the reins. He said Mike Pearson, host of the newly named *Agriculture of America*, is already doing a great job.

Although many start traveling after retirement, he said he plans to stay put for a while after a long career full of travel.

“I really enjoyed traveling and meeting so many people I never thought I would, but it will be nice to be home a little now,” Adams said.

Adams said the people he has met and the friends he has made have been nothing short of incredible, and he said those memories will stay with him for a lifetime.

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