

Volume 10, Number 11

November 8, 2022

ELLIS WINS EXCELLENCE IN MEDIA AWARD — For Illinois Agricultural Communicator **Stu Ellis**, being presented with the 2022 Excellence in Media Award is both an honor and fitting of his career.

Beginning as the farm broadcaster at WSOY Decatur and retiring from WCIA 3 and WCIX 49 in Springfield, Ellis has proved his commitment to Illinois media and agriculture time and time again. During agricultural extension, governmental relations, and public relations initiatives, Ellis has expanded his service to Corn Belt farmers through radio, television, newspapers, newsletters, and online offerings.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) presented him with the 2022 ISA Excellence in Media Award. According to the ISA website, “The Excellence in Media Award recognizes a member of the media who promotes Illinois soybeans and Illinois agriculture through his/her coverage in print, broadcast, social, and beyond.”

“I’ve had a very enjoyable career, touching many aspects of agriculture,” Ellis said.

Ellis has nothing but praise for the ISA.



“The ISA really promotes a lot of things for the betterment of the soybean industry,” Ellis added. “They provide educational programs for farmers; they promote soybean oil as a fuel and as a healthy food. They assist farmers with agronomic education, services, advice, and counsel. They do a lot with conservation, helping farmers better themselves with more conservation information, and that helps soil health.”

“I’m very honored the ISA picked me. I had nominated somebody else, and I thought he really should have gotten the award, but I am very honored to receive this, and the Soybean Association can be guaranteed that I’m still going to work for them.”

Ellis has played his own vital role in the soybean industry over the years. As director of marketing for the American Soybean Association, he was responsible for launching soybean ink into national use by thousands of newspapers and commercial printers. The Illinois Farm Bureau hired Ellis to create an educational curriculum for farmers on marketing, financial management, and risk management; and he conducted seminars throughout Illinois and other states.

Still to this day, Ellis does daily radio segments, writes a newspaper column, and provides farm news video programs. These programs reach thousands of farmers daily with the information they need to increase



profitability. Ellis also has accepted an additional farm news job with the farm department of WITY radio in Danville.

At 74 years old, Ellis may be the most senior agricultural communicator in Illinois, but that has not slowed his involvement in the industry. His reach to Illinois farmers via television, radio, newspapers, and newsletters, helping them “make more money and stay out of jail,” has truly earned him the ISA Excellence in Media Award.

MEYERS EXPERIENCES AUSTRALIAN AG UP CLOSE AND PERSONALLY — Getting the chance to research agricultural communications in another country is a dream for some; but for **Courtney Meyers**, it is a reality.

Meyers, a professor in agricultural communications at Texas Tech University, recently traveled to Australia as a Fulbright Scholar. She left the U.S. in July 2022 and will return in January 2023.

“It’s really been a wonderful project and a lifelong goal of mine to be a Fulbright Scholar. I’ve always wanted to travel and live somewhere else to explore what agricultural communications looks like in another country,” Meyers said.

Meyers currently is in Wagga Wagga New South Wales, Australia, at Charles Sturt University, as a part of the Fulbright Scholars Program. This program provides opportunities for university students, faculty, administrators, and researchers to complete international experiences to encourage a cultural exchange that leads to mutual understanding.

Meyers set three main research goals for her five-month Fulbright research program.

Her first objective is to write case studies about agricultural issues in Australia and how they are being communicated.

“The agricultural enterprises here are extremely diverse, and they are very export minded. They export a lot of their crops and animals to other countries,” Meyers said.

According to Meyers, there are interesting examples of storytelling where buying Australian products is a sense of pride. She explained it’s a part of the national identity to support local and prioritize sustainability.

“There’s a lot of unique issues and topics here and to see how those are played out in communication efforts is interesting,” Meyers added.

The second objective of Meyers’ research is to complete a content analysis of how the media -- mainstream and agricultural -- present issues, such as climate change.

“Australia is a land of extremes, where there are bushfires one year and extreme flooding the next,” Meyers said.





The third objective of her research is to explore the potential for agricultural communications as an academic discipline.

“Ag communications currently is not offered in the sense as we have in the United States,” Meyers said. “When I talk to people who work in agricultural-communications roles, they are always excited about what that could look like and the potential to prepare more people for the industry who could communicate to the variety of stakeholders we need to reach.”

Meyers has enjoyed getting to interview Australians who work in agricultural-communications roles and those who work in higher education about the potential to introduce the subject at a collegiate level.

While in Australia, Meyers has attended several different farmer-focused events, such as field days where machinery and equipment dealers brought their latest innovations to producers. She also has attended research updates where she heard from researchers and experts who

were providing information directly to farmers.

“They talked about the latest findings and trends they were noticing, giving advice and answering questions farmers had,” Meyers said.

Meyers is grateful for all the support she has received and for the ability to connect with people who are both within the industry and those that have a shared appreciation for agriculture.

“I’m really excited to get to bring this experience, and what I have learned, and the perspectives I’ve gained back to the classroom at Texas Tech to benefit my students and hopefully motivate, encourage, and inspire them to go after some big goals they have in their own lives,” Meyers concluded.

KETELSEN INDUCTED INTO MINNESOTA BROADCASTERS HALL OF FAME — Lynn Ketelsen,

Linder Farm Network, was inducted into the Minnesota Broadcasters Hall of Fame in September 2022, recognizing his dedication to broadcasting and his impact within farm broadcasting.

“I was honored to open the door and have our industry recognized,” Ketelsen said.

Ketelsen is the owner-operator of Linder Farm Network, which began 45 years ago. Today, it includes more than 30 stations and is the most-listened-to farm broadcast in the state of Minnesota.

“People who are inducted have made a significant impact in the broadcast industry, and Lynn’s niche is extremely unique and influential,” said Gwendolen Nystrom, executive director of the Pavek Museum, home of the Minnesota Broadcasters Hall of Fame.





Linder Farm Network has a particular approach to broadcasting, balancing on-air radio personality with business. Ketelsen grew up on his family farm in eastern Iowa and worked for newspapers and radio through college. Ketelsen knew he wanted to be innovative, and audiences have loved it.

Reflecting on Ketelsen’s tremendous impact, “the Minnesota Broadcasters Hall of Fame has been for the best of the best in the broadcasting world since its start in 2001,” Nystrom said.

“We put the business of farming in farm broadcasting. I’m not afraid to speak out on issues when I don’t think agriculture is being treated fairly,” Ketelsen affirmed.

Ketelsen looks forward to continuing his career in broadcasting because he simply enjoys what he does. He says as long as he is still having fun bringing information to farmers, he won’t stop.

“Farm radio is still the number-one source of information for farmers, and I don’t see that changing,” Ketelsen said.

HAYS REFLECTS ON THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF FARM BROADCASTING — Growing up on a farm in central Kentucky, **Ron Hays’** agriculture journey began at a young age. On their farm, his family raised duroc hogs and tobacco crops, but he was able to find his niche in agriculture when he entered junior high.

“I got bit by the radio bug in junior high because of my interest in listening to radio signals from around the world and country,” Hays said.

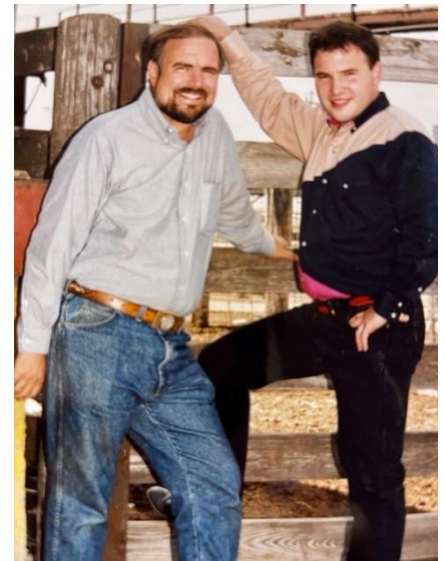
“When I started high school, I joined my FFA chapter. This is where I got to work on my speaking skills,” Hays added. “I then got the job of being public address announcer for the Woodford County High School basketball games and wrestling matches in Versailles, Kentucky.”

After graduation, Hays went to work for an FM radio station in his hometown.

In 1974, he traveled to Wichita, Kansas, for the opportunity to merge his two passions -- agriculture and radio -- by working as the farm director at KFH Radio. Since then, Hays has worked at the Oklahoma AgriNet and the Radio Oklahoma Ag Network.

Over the last 15 years, Hays has experienced the growth and change of the Radio Oklahoma Ag Network while working as the director of farm programming.

“When I first joined the network, we had about 18 radio affiliates,” Hays noted. “Within the next year, we had grown to more than 40 radio affiliates.”



Aside from the number of affiliates at Radio Oklahoma seeing a significant increase, the network also has seen substantial growth in the number of subscribers for its daily email that contains the state’s top agricultural news.



“Our daily email has grown from only just a few hundred subscribers to about 5,300 subscribers today,” Hays said.

Throughout his career, Hays has been inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Additionally, Hays is one of the few farm broadcasters who has been given the National VIP Award by the National FFA Organization.

“The people we work with at the network, as well as the many wonderful folks that we serve in the world of farming and ranching here in Oklahoma, are the most enjoyable part of my job,” Hays added.

“I love that -- although we have many things we do that we repeat daily -- the stories, events, and people with whom we get to interact are ever-changing,” Hays concluded.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS —Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact Erin Nash at erin@nafb.com or phone 816/431-4032, x 107. *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*.

#