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Quinn

by Larry A.

HAS THE IMAGE OF FARM RADIO CHANGED?...Todd Gleason (WILL, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL), who also serves as NAFB's historian, raised that question after receiving a *tweet* from one of his listeners that read: "Nothing like family time gathered around the iPhone listening to @commodityweek podcast!" I suggest that technology has changed the delivery, but the message is still the same -- good, timely information, provided by broadcasters "airing on the side of agriculture."

WILDFIRES...are not a distant story for **Rick Haines** (Independent Ag Network, Twin Falls, ID). When we spoke to him in late August, wildfires had moved to within 40 miles of his location. Higher elevations are unusually dry and are more critically affected. He estimates that more than 1,000 head of cattle in his area had been lost to fire-related causes. Some ranchers are completely out of business, he said. Low country production agriculture crops, as well as dry beans, peas, potatoes and alfalfa, are doing well. Aquaculture fish farms in the area raise trout, sturgeon and tilapia. There's even an alligator farm in the vicinity, which makes use of excess fish. Rick owns the Independent Ag Network, which serves 17 radio stations in eastern Oregon, Nevada and Idaho, with morning and noon broadcasts, and in the 5:00 p.m. news block. He has been in agriculture broadcasting for 26 years. For the first 20 years, he was with Northern Ag Network in Billings, MT. Rick was NAFB President in 2000. In his spare time, when he is not broadcasting or managing his own ranch, Rick competes in a western-style equestrian sport called ranch sorting that evolved from the common ranch work of separating cattle into pens for branding, doctoring, or transport. Ranch sorting is an event that pits a team of two riders on horseback against the clock. Rick boasts that he earned five award checks and a belt buckle in his most recent competitive event. He has a new horse for competition, but he still has his favorite Palomino. Beyond competition, he is rounding up and moving cattle on his ranch now. Rick's son, Reid, has helped design a prototype farm machine that will be used for fumigation to treat nematodes or other underground pests of potatoes. His daughter, Erin, is a physician's assistant who is joining the New Orleans Saints pro football team as the first woman in that role. Her specialization is working with spinal injuries.

CHINA TRADE MISSION BY NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS...was accompanied by **Don Wick** (Red River Farm Network, Grand Forks, ND). "I traveled with the North Dakota Soybean Council on a trade mission, visiting Beijing, Harbin, Dalian and Shanghai," Don said. "We met with three of the four largest soybean buyers in China. While on the train from Harbin to Dalian, all we seemed to see was corn fields. Rather than small acreage, subsistence-

farming, these fields looked more like Iowa or southern Minnesota. We witnessed a vibrant economy with countless skyscrapers being built in every major city. It was an amazing experience."



Don Wick (in yellow shirt) with North Dakota farmers on Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China

A ONE MAN BAND...is how **Mike Perrine** (MP Ag Radio, Inc., Troy, IL) refers to his own farm broadcasting company that was founded as 2013 began. Mike established this new venture after ownership of AgriTalk network changed at the end of 2012. Now, he is acting as a National Ag rep for 25 stations and is doing farm broadcasting on selected stations. He does weekly reports on WVLI and WIVR in Bourbonnais, IL. Also, he broadcasts reports and interviews for several stations from farm events, like the Farm Progress Show held last week and the National Farm Machinery Show held earlier this year. He plans other coverage in the fall and in 2014. Mike says, "I've always sold Ag advertising along with farm broadcasting, so although my daily duties are different now (than during my 8+ years with AgriTalk), it's very similar to what I've done most of my 44 years in farm broadcasting." He adds, "I'm really as busy as I want to be, having some fun, so I can't complain."



Jerry Groskreutz (KDHL), Emery Kleven (MFN) and Rod Johnson were all together at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds for the Princess Kay of the Milky Way coronation on August

21. Jerry, Emery, Rod, along with the late **Dean Curtiss** (1971 NAFB President), are all the farm broadcasters who have served KDHL (Faribault, MN) since the station went on the air in 1948. Rod emceed the dairy coronation and has been public address announcer for the Minnesota Timberwolves pro basketball team for the past 18 years.

BACK IN MINNESOTA...where he began his 26-year career in farm broadcasting is **Emery Kleven** (Minnesota Farm Network, Minneapolis, MN). In February 2013, he replaced **Tom Rothman**. Tom was hired by University of Minnesota Extension as their new director of agricultural stakeholder outreach. After years of running the family farm, Emery rented the farm out and started farm broadcasting at KDHL (Faribault, MN) in 1987. In 1990, he moved to KMNS (Sioux City, IA) where he was farm director until 1997, when he moved to KTIC (West Point, NE), a part of the KRVN/Rural Radio Network. He joined the Waitt Farm Network (owned by Gateway computer founder **Norm Waitt, Jr.**) in June 2001, serving in both Yankton, SD, and Omaha, NE. Also, Emery served as NAFB President in 2005. After Waitt Farm Network was sold in 2006 to Brownfield Network, Emery and **Col. Jon Phillips** partnered to establish the Price Discovery Report, a 20-station radio network that broadcasts in South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. In his current position as Director of the Minnesota Farm Network, Emery serves 28 Minnesota radio stations, delivering 16 daily ag programs via satellite. Emery's wife, Mary Pat, is an active "old time fiddler." She is President of the Minnesota State Fiddler's Association. When she's not fiddlin', she works for a company that does day programs for disabled adults, and she teaches an online medical law and ethics class for Metropolitan State College in Omaha, NE.



Emery Kleven and Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton at Farmfest, Minnesota's outdoor ag show, held in early August.

FUTURE FARM BROADCASTERS...have been apprenticing this summer thanks to NAFB Foundation's internship program that provided \$1,000 stipends for 10 appointments. Since many of these students will be at the 70th National Convention in November, we are listing them along with their mentors: **Lacey Koontz** (Virginia Tech University) with

Cyndi Young-Puyear (Brownfield Network); **Janet Seay** (Western Kentucky University) with **Bill Baker** (DairyLine Radio); **Anissa Zagonel** (Kansas State University) with **Kaylin Parsons** (KKOW-AM); **Brad Kubat** (Owatonna, MN) with **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network); **Stacie Sager** (The Ohio State University) with **Dale Minyo** (Ohio Ag Net); **Liz Koehler** (University of Illinois) with **Rita Frazer** (RFD Radio Network); **Rachel Hoeft** (Illinois State University) with **Carrie Muehling** (WJBC Radio); **Leslie McGhee** (Murray State University) with **Alan Watts** (WKDZ-WHVO); **Elizabeth Stayton** (Western Illinois University) with **Roger Ward** (WLDS); **Tanna Petersak** (Illinois State University) and **Jesse Nosbaum** (University of Illinois) with **Gale Cunningham** (WYXY). Gale split the funding so two students could perform at his station. **Bill Holst** (WNAX) also funded an intern at his station. **Gena Olson** from Missouri will be attending the convention, too.



Liz Koehler, RFD Radio Network intern, left, takes a break with her bosses, Alan Jarand, RFDRN Director, and Rita Frazer, RFDRN anchor and industry relations manager on Liz's final day at the network.

RFD RADIO NETWORK... chose University of Illinois senior **Liz Koehler** for their summer intern. Liz grew up on a farm in north central Illinois, so her knowledge of agriculture and broadcasting courses she'd completed equipped her well for this experience. With its 80 affiliates throughout Illinois, the network had never had an intern. **Mike Orso**, Director of News & Communication, Illinois Farm Bureau, said Liz helped on remotes, traveled to events for solo coverage and helped with digital audio offerings on the FarmWeekNow.com website. Mike added, "She set up our Twitter feed and proved you could teach old dogs new tricks by training several of our veteran content providers on utilizing this social media tool to drive listenership to the RFDRN, on the air and on the web." Liz also helped with the promotion plan for overhaul of the FarmWeekNow.com website and introduction of a new mobile app, which includes network programming. Knowing several of the network affiliates would be at the Farm Progress Show, she also helped design and build the RFDRN Farm Progress Show survival kits, which included Illinois-made pork and beef jerky, batteries, Kleenex, mints, Tums, sunscreen, band-aids, ear buds, hand-sanitizer and other trade show essentials.



Lacey Koontz, Brownfield Ag News intern

COFFEE STOPS TOUR...sponsored by Brownfield Ag News and Case IH was one of the major summer assignments for Brownfield intern **Lacey Koontz**, a senior at Virginia Tech University majoring in agriculture and applied economics. Lacey was born and raised in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia on a dairy, beef, poultry and crop farm. She said, "My passion and knowledge about agriculture, combined with my love of radio, led me to choose an ag broadcasting career." Brownfield Ag News reporters, **Dave Russell** and **Meghan Grebner**, and special guests, presented a hot topics program while farmers and Case IH employees enjoyed coffee. Lacey was one of the two interns in the background of each event during the two-week tour. "As a farm kid, I was ready to see the countryside and corn fields along the way. I looked forward to conversations with Ohio and Indiana farmers and learning tools of the trade from state broadcasters," Lacey wrote in a blog about the tour. "The Coffee Stops were a hit with local farmers, and the programs gave everyone insight to national and local agricultural issues." **Cyndi Young-Puyear** (Brownfield Ag News, Jefferson City, MO) said, "Lacey spent two weeks of her eight-week internship 'on the road' with another intern in Ohio and Indiana where Brownfield has farm broadcasters."

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN BROADCASTING?...Did you have an internship, an apprenticeship, or a mentor that gave you the nudge to get into broadcasting? My hometown radio station (KGYN, Guymon, OK) took a chance by hiring me as a 17-year-old high school graduate who needed to earn money for college. After my first summer, KGYN continued my employment throughout my four years as an agronomy student at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. It was the "tipping point" that changed the direction of my career into one spanning more than 40 years in agricultural broadcasting and communications. Behind the mic experience for NAFB Foundation interns gives them a head start for their career of "airing on the side of agriculture." Consider hiring them if you have an opening at your station or network.

NO MORE 3:00 A.M. ALARMS...is one big difference for retired farm broadcaster **Skip Davis** (formerly with WASK, Lafayette, IN). He admits to going back to the station a few times to check on what kind of legacy he left. He's glad that he can go on a Farm Tour now without having to file any follow up reports. He uses skills he perfected as a broadcaster to produce Sunday morning worship services for his church for access on the

Internet. He's also taken up photography and formed a camera club at his church. His wife, Susan, joined him in retirement last year. She worked in the front office of Frankfort High School for 27 years. Farm broadcasters are so accustomed to providing a public service to their communities that they keep on giving in their retirement years.

STILL WRITING...about agriculture for WKZO, the station he retired from as a farm broadcaster, is **Karl Guenther**. He retired from WKZO (Kalamazoo, MI) in 1998. Karl's predecessor, **Carl Collin**, was the station's first farm broadcaster starting in 1947. When Carl retired in November 1972, Karl had already worked for 10 years in the Radio/TV news department of the station. Everyone knew that Karl had been raised on a farm east of Grand Rapids, MI, so he was the logical choice to replace Carl. In 1995, before Karl retired from WKZO, he began writing an agriculture column for the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. "Two years ago, the newspaper fell on hard times, cut way back, and I was to be out of a job," Karl said. But, the new ownership of WKZO invited Karl to "write the same column for WKZO.com," and he's still at it.

REGISTER BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30...for the 70th NAFB National Convention to be held at the Westin Crown Center, November 13-15, 2013, and benefit from an early registration discount. Plus, you may win one of five \$100 gift cards offered by NAFB as an incentive to beat the early registration deadline. To register and to learn more details of this year's convention, go to the NAFB website: www.nafb.com .



FEEDBACK...came from the Vice-President of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, **Owen Roberts**, who is with the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Regarding this column, Owen said, "I think it's a great round-up. Our industry is all about people, and your column encapsulates that very well."

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU...so we can share your stories of service to listeners. Contact me at larryaquinn@verizon.net or call me at 703-819-6532.

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