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by Larry A. Quinn

FEEDING FARMERS IN THE FIELD (2014 Edition)...kicked off May 28 in Union County, OH, courtesy of Ohio Ag Net and AgriGold. Lee Farms was this spring's first farm to be selected. The 1,000-acre corn and soybean operation was provided lunch and joined by staff of the Ohio Ag Net and AgriGold Hybrids. **Dale Minyo** (Ohio Ag Net, Columbus, OH) did his midday broadcast from the farm. (Dale is shown talking with **John Brien** of AgriGold in the photo below.) Also, the broadcast included interviews with brothers, **Ryan** and **Greg Lee**, each heavily involved in the farm operation. Ohio Ag Net and AgriGold will be going out to the fields three more times in the coming weeks, joining Ohio farmers to give them lunch and to broadcast from their locations. Interested farmers apply by going to www.OhioAgNet.com for a chance to be selected as one of this spring's Feeding Farmers in the Field locations. Joining Dale in covering this first farm visit was intern reporter **Joel Penhorwood** (Ohio Ag Net). Joel said the brothers commented on the lengthy planting season and their efforts to get seed into the ground. Like many Ohio farmers, they say weather on May 9-10 really set them back. They are challenged with planting previously worked fields along with some untouched ground. Cold rain combined with standing water and low soil temperatures have been the Lee's biggest enemy this spring, stunting growth and forcing some replanting. Joel joined Greg Lee in the fields to get a planting update. You can watch Joel's cab cam video by going to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yO2-1fP4WZ0>.





Dale Minyo and **Bart Johnson** originate the midday broadcast from their trailer while farmer **Ryan Lee** and AgriGold representative **Dave Kress** listen.

Ohio Ag Net's parent company Agri Communicators was founded by the late **Ed Johnson** in 1972, to serve Ohio farm families, and is currently owned and operated by Johnson's son, **Bart**. Agri Communicators Inc. founded ABN Radio and TV. It produced daily radio reports for the ABN Radio Network and the weekly television show Agri Country. Currently, Agri Communicators publishes Ohio's Country Journal, the only farm newspaper dedicated exclusively to Ohio.



Bart Johnson has been with the company since 1984 when he started working part time in the radio studio while in college. Holding many positions and responsibilities over the years, he took over ownership of the company after his father Ed Johnson passed away in 2001. Bart is the publisher of Ohio's Country Journal and oversees the daily operation of the Ohio Ag

Net. Bart and his wife, Sheryl, have four children and reside on a farm in southwest Delaware County where Bart farms and is also a township trustee for Concord Township.

Dale Minyo is a farm broadcaster for the Ohio Ag Net serving as the anchor for the morning and midday broadcast. He graduated from The Ohio State University with a degree in Ag Economics. Dale's career in radio began in sales, and then in 1995, he joined the broadcast team working alongside Ed Johnson. Except for a five-year stretch working for Clear Channel Radio, he has worked for the Johnson Family and Agri Communicators. Dale lives in Morrow County with his wife, Cynthia, and sons, Kyle and Ryan.



MAY RAINS BREAK WEST TEXAS DROUGHT...West Texas has been stuck in a drought for 40-plus months, reports **Tony St. James** (KDDD, Dumas, TX and KFLP, Floydada, TX). Any rain across the region is usually wiped out by high winds and hot temps. "But now we may be seeing some light at the end of the tunnel." Widespread rain the last week of May filled rain gauges for the first time in four years. Some rain accumulations in the area were in excess of

six inches. The rain was slow and steady and is already improving attitudes, if not the potential for crops, Tony said. “Almost every town in West Texas has reported having a municipal water



supply of 180 days or less, and though the drought is a long way from being broken, there is hope.” The rain is too late for hard red winter wheat crops that have dried up without the moisture, but will be in time for cotton, sorghum, sunflowers and corn. One producer told Tony how he had planned to cull his herd on June 1, but with the rainfall, he thinks they'll remain in business. “Make no mistake, there is a cautious optimism among producers here. But it is optimism no less. With optimism will come cautious spending—on crop inputs and other related expenses— which will in turn start flowing (through taxes) to our local cities and counties (which have been running well under their budgets for income in 2014). A million dollar rain? Absolutely. A billion dollar rain? Possibly. An answer to prayer? No doubt,” he concludes. Tony is a 32-year radio veteran who hosts *Agriculture Today* (on 25 stations), the *Agribusiness Report* (on 10 stations), and produces *All Ag News on All Ag*, *All Day* radio stations, KFLP-AM (Floydada-Lubbock, TX) and KDDD-AM(Dumas-Amarillo, TX). He co-hosts the daily *Pam & Tony Show* on Texas Country station (106-1 Flip-FM), and he co-hosts *West Texas Friday Night Scoreboard Show* (largest high school scoreboard show in Texas with 45 affiliates). Tony is an NAFB Broadcast Council Member and serves as NAFB South Region Vice President.

THREE PAST NAFB PRESIDENTS...are currently on the air for Red River Farm Network (RRFN). They are **Mike Hergert** (2001), **Don Wick** (1997) and **Randy Koenen** (2008). In addition, **Jody Heemstra** is currently the NAFB West Region Vice President. This is the only NAFB entity with three past presidents currently on the air. “We all feel honored to have had these

opportunities to serve NAFB,” Don Wick said.



From left: **Randy Koenen**, **Don Wick**, **Jody Heemstra**, **Jay Rehder** (RRFN sales), and **Mike Hergert**

KNOW YOUR FARMER TOUR...by Red River Farm Network (Grand Forks, ND) is being planned for mid-July. For the second straight year, RRFN will invite agency representatives to their

region to tour farms and meet with growers. **Don Wick** said, "The goal is to provide a first-hand look at modern-day agriculture and exposure to some of the most progressive producers in the world. We had a very successful event last year and look forward to another great tour this year." On-air, RRFN is spending a lot of time focusing on the late spring and the 2014 growing season. Each Tuesday, RRFN airs special in-field reports, providing listeners an update on field conditions and planting progress.

IN HIS FIRST YEAR IN PEORIA... AgriBusiness Director **DeLoss Jahnke** (WMBD/WIRL, Peoria, IL) began his work there last August. DeLoss said, "I do short-form programs for our news/talk station, WMBD, and I have a half-hour morning show and an hour-long noon show on WIRL."



He was a 1993 NAFB Foundation scholarship winner, and he worked in Topeka, KS, at WIBW/Kansas Agriculture Network from 1994 to 1996 and at Brownfield Network from 1997 to 2002. He left Brownfield when he married and moved to Indiana. DeLoss had several different sales jobs and resumed his communication career in 2011, when he went to work for the National FFA organization. "It was great getting back in touch with so many of my NAFB friends

and colleagues. I love being back in farm broadcasting and am grateful to renew relationships with so many colleagues that I admire and respect. I appreciate the camaraderie within the organization and especially within the Illinois members." His eight-year-old son, Joseph, just finished 2nd grade, and his three-year-old daughter, Savannah, is excited about her first gymnastics class.

GROWING UP ON A SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO FARM... **Lory Williams** (KBUF, Garden City, KS) said her early lifetime experiences included working the milo and alfalfa fields with Papa and Grandpa Clayton. Her variety of farm chores included helping with flood irrigating crop fields and setting canvas dams, gathering cows on horseback, milking cows daily, churning butter, and cleaning up after straining milk and churning. She was actively involved in 4-H and regularly participated in sewing and cooking activities. She eventually became a 4-H leader. She had a full scholarship to Lamar Community College for music, but when she couldn't take that she decided her best choice to stay close to music was to pursue radio. Beginning her radio career in Lamar, CO, in 1970, she began work at KBUF Radio (Garden City, KS) in 1986. During her years at KBUF, she served as music director, operations manager and became farm director in 2000, replacing long-time farm broadcaster **Hap Larson**. During her agricultural reporting at KBUF,



she has won several NAFB and Kansas Association of Broadcasters (KAB) awards for ag news

stories and market reports. Lory was certified and trained by NAFB, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Dairy and Pork Industries as an Emergency Response Communicator. A friend of 4-H and FFA, she was the first inductee into the Miss Rodeo Kansas Pageant Hall of Fame in 2009. Lory and her husband, Roy, own approximately 900 acres of land in several counties in western Kansas and eastern Colorado. They live on the Lane County, KS, property where they have horses, cows and working cow dogs. Lory is on-the-air on KBUF, Monday through Friday, beginning at 6:00 a.m., and she can be heard by audio streaming at www.westernkansasnews.com. Also, she hosts a half-hour worship and praise show on Sunday mornings at 8:05 a.m. Lory's other interests include spending time with Miles of Smiles Therapeutic Riding kids, church activities, and helping with music at the Rodeo Bible Camp.



40 YEARS IN BROADCASTING...Ag News Director **Craig Mead** (Mid America Ag Network, Wichita, KS) began his radio career in 1974 at KNIC (Winfield, KS). "I well remember the 'Stockman's Advisories' issued by the weather service in those days. Back when more people were on the farm than now," he said. Stations served by Mid America Ag Network include KGYN (Guyton, OK), KIUL (Garden City, KS), KQAM (Wichita, KS) and KGSO (Wichita, KS). "I've worked at stations in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, so I've never been far from the agricultural end of broadcasting. Often times, I was asked to 'fill in' at a sister station when someone in the ag department was sick or on vacation." Both his mother and father's families farmed and ranched in Kansas so he grew up understanding the importance of the markets, agriculture news and politics as it related to the farm. He lives on five acres just outside of Belle Plaine in Sumner County, KS. Besides having horses and chickens, he's also a third generation beekeeper. His father and his grandfather kept bees. When he's not on-the-air for Mid America Ag Network, Craig is the Pastor at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Haysville, KS. Craig adds, "So, I stay pretty busy!"



NAFB FOUNDATION PRESIDENT...is **Ken Root** (Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network, Dyersville, IA/WGFA, Watseka, IL). He's busy drafting the entry and judging qualifications for the new **Doan Award** that will be presented to NAFB members who attain a high-level of journalistic excellence as recognized by their peers. Announcement of the criteria will be made at the NAFB Convention in November. The first winners will be recognized at Washington Watch 2015. When not doing NAFB Foundation work, Ken has been a busy agricultural journalist for 36 years. Currently, he writes a weekly column called *The Root Zone* for the *High Plains Journal* and does ag programming for WGFA and the Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network. He has experience as a broadcaster in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa. Early in his career, he

worked with **Russell Pierson** (retired, WKY, Oklahoma City, OK). Ken reports that he called Russell in late May and learned that he is okay and “sharper than we will be at 102!” Russell was NAFB President in 1973. Ken was NAFB President in 1986.

PAST ISSUES...of *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* are now archived on the www.nafb.com website. Click on the Membership tab. Then, click on the listing for the “Airing...” newsletter.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU...We’d like you to share your experiences when “airing on the side of agriculture.” Send us your stories and photos. Contact me at larryaquinn@verizon.net or call me at 703-819-6532.