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by Larry A. Quinn

PASSIONATE “AGVOCATE”...is how a blog from National Western Stock Show (NWSS) describes **Brian Allmer’s** (Brian Allmer Radio Network, Briggsdale, CO) work as the voice of Stadium Arena Cattle Shows. For the third year, Brian was the "official announcer" for all cattle shows in the stadium arena during the 2015 NWSS in Denver, January 10-25. The 16-day show serves as an entertainment arena, hosting one of the world’s richest regular season, professional rodeos, the “super bowl” of livestock shows, nationally recognized horse shows and Colorado’s largest Western Trade Show. Brian said he truly enjoys announcing the shows. “My favorite part is the tradition and history that’s in



this building, the Stadium Arena,” he said. His advice for young exhibitors: “Do the best you can. Take the chances to get in the ring and do it. Don’t be scared. Do it.” Brian has a long history at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS). He and his brothers showed at the NWSS for many years, and he grew up near Greeley, CO, on a farm his great-grandfather homesteaded. He’s been there ever since. His family had a registered Angus operation before transitioning to commercial beef. Although he doesn’t have cattle anymore, he still has the farm. The family farm is pushing more than 100 years old. **Brian** and his wife, **Connie**, have two children, **Samantha** and **Tucker**. A strong advocate for 4-H and FFA, Brian and his children were actively involved in both. He serves on both the State 4-H and FFA Foundation boards. His previous work included working for John Deere and Animal Health International. From his strong background in 4-H and FFA public speaking, he became an announcer. This led him to starting his own radio network, BARN Media, which consists of The Brian Allmer Radio Network and the Colorado Ag News Networks. He does radio broadcasts and live audio and video webcasting work for numerous Colorado events. Brian’s work truly shows him to be an

advocate for agriculture. Barn Media was recognized by the Colorado Corn Growers Association in late December as the "Business of the Year" during the 2014 Colorado Ag Classic in Loveland, CO. The National Association of Conservation Districts has asked Brian to be part of their annual meeting in New Orleans, LA, February 1-4. He will be covering the event for NACD and supplying audio and video for NAFB, too.



Brian Allmer is visited at the NWSS cattle show by Colorado Senators **Jerry Sonnenberg**, left, and **Randy Baumgardner**. Both are freshman Senators. Sonnenberg is Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Baumgardner is Chair of the Transportation Committee.

RURAL RADIO NETWORK ADDS TWO NEW EMPLOYEES...The New Year brought two new staff members to the farm department at KRVN, **Jesse Harding** (front) and **Trey Blomenkamp**. They



both hit the ground running through producing reports and traveling the coverage area to meetings and conventions. **Jesse** is a native of south-central Illinois, where she grew up on a five-acre hobby farm. She was active in 4-H, where her passion for agriculture grew. After high school, she attended Kaskaskia Community College, where she became active in the Post-secondary Agriculture Students (PAS) Organization. She served as a state and national officer in the group. Jesse is a graduate of the University of Illinois where she earned a degree in agricultural communications. During her final summer at the university, she was a farm broadcasting intern with WYXY (Champaign, IL).

She gave market reports, produced agricultural news and interviews and attended several

events on behalf of the station. After graduation, Jesse accepted a position as Assistant Farm Broadcaster with the Wisconsin Farm Report (Madison, WI) where her duties included doing market reports, including dairy prices, and interviews. She also updated the website and social media sites. Her background and network experience made it a seamless transition to KRVN/Rural Radio Network. Now, she is focusing on agriculture interviews, reports and field work. Also, she does video interviews for their website. Her knowledge of agriculture is diverse, ranging from crops to dairy to cranberries, and now she is learning about Nebraska's agriculture. **Trey** is a native of Nebraska and grew up on a farm near Broadwater. He was active in 4-H and is now a senior attending the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). He is studying sports administration with a minor in broadcasting. During his time at UNK, he was an audio engineer, which sparked his interest in radio. Prior to being an intern at KRVN, he hosted and co-hosted his own radio shows at UNK. Also, Trey did play-by-play announcing for football, basketball, and baseball games. His main passion is sports broadcasting, but having grown up on a farm means that farm broadcasting is an interest for him, too. Trey's knowledge of agriculture is diverse in crops and cattle. He will graduate after his internship and plans to work in radio doing either sports or farm broadcasting. **Photo: Jesse Harding interviews Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts.**



IN TEXAS...2015 is starting out very interesting, reports **Tony Purcell** (Texas State Networks, Dallas, TX). "First, we have a new Texas Commissioner of Agriculture. **Sid Miller** is a working farmer and professional roper." In late January, he was competing at the Ft. Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. Between rodeo performances, he made the rounds as Ag Commissioner. "I think it will be good for Texas to have an Ag Commissioner who not only occupies the office, but lives the



life." After 4 years of drought, Tony said, "There is now optimism in the cattle industry. Going to the State Fair and the major stock shows is very encouraging in that the unbridled enthusiasm just makes you feel good."

2015 is also bringing changes in our programming, he added. "The Lone Star Farm and Ranch Report has been on the air continuously since 1938. Over the years it has evolved and been tweaked many times. This year we have done some major tweaking including more audio teases, bumpers and rejoinders. We have added audio segments to the market reports and added a general news segment."



Tony explained, “The thinking is farmers are consumers, too. I am excited about the way it is going. We are expanding our social media presence on both Facebook and Twitter. You can Friend us on Facebook. Search for tsn ag. Follow us on Twitter @farmguy.”

RETIREMENT...Bruce Kayser (WSBT-AM/WHFB-FM, Mishawaka, IN) has announced that he will be retiring this year. He grew up in South Bend, IN, surrounded by corn and soybean fields. At the time, he never gave it much thought. His broadcasting career started in the early ‘70s as a part-time announcer at WSBT in South Bend. “In the mid-70s, I took a full-time position as a radio morning show host in Columbia, TN. Little did I realize this would be an introduction to the world of agriculture. At that time, growing tobacco was big business in the Middle Tennessee area. I soon found myself assigned to covering tobacco auctions for the radio station.” He reflects, “Through interviewing farmers on an almost daily basis, I soon realized how weather, insects, government rules and regulations and many other factors affect the income of that crop.” In the late ‘70s Bruce met and married his wife, **Jade**, who was living on her family farm with her mother and father. “The farm has been in her family for well over 100 years. It sits on roughly 130 acres. Her father raised cattle, grew tobacco, and various crops. I learned much about what was involved with his operation and grew to appreciate what effort and dedication it took to make a farm work.” Continuing, he said, “After a number of years, my wife and I moved back to my hometown of South Bend, IN, where I took a full-time position on Sunny 101.5 as a co-host of the morning show and eventually became the Farm Director for WSBT 96.1 and WHFB 99.9 for these last 5 years.” About NAFB, he said, “Becoming a member of the NAFB was great. I met people in all areas of agriculture, and it was apparent to me that all were passionate about their involvement in this extremely important business. Meeting in Kansas City each year for the NAFB Convention has been a great opportunity to meet my counterparts in the broadcasting field as well as representatives from the different companies involved in agriculture. It all made being a Farm Director easier and fascinating. What I learned the most is that you can never learn it all.” Bruce added, “I enjoyed working with **Megan Grebner** and **Dave Russell** from Brownfield Ag News concerning their Ag Youth Awards at our local fairgrounds each year. The future of agriculture is in good hands if it involves award winners like I met each year. It is proof of the importance of 4-H.” Bruce concludes, “As I approach my retirement from broadcasting, I will truly miss my five years with the NAFB. I will miss those who I interacted with in the industry. They are all truly are dedicated. I feel honored to have played a very small part in the huge field of agriculture.” As for his future plans, Bruce offered, “Stay up a little later. Sleep in a little longer. Ride my bicycle more. Run in races. Take my wife on vacations. Grow and cultivate a vegetable garden.”





TOM STEEVER HONORED...Anchor/Reporter **Tom Steever** (Brownfield Ag News, Jefferson City, MO) received the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Farm Broadcaster of the Year Award at the Governor's Conference in December 2014. Also in December, Tom received the 2014 Excellence in Agriculture Award from the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council and South Dakota Soybean Association.

Ken Struempf (far left) and Missouri Ag Director **Richard Fordyce** present **Tom Steever** the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Farm Broadcaster of the Year Award at the Governor's Ag Conference at Lake of the Ozarks.

NEW STUDENT MEMBER GETS WASHINGTON ASSIGNMENT...with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. **Leann Fox**, senior agriculture communications student at Utah State University, attended the NAFB convention in Kansas City and decided to become a student member. We met her in Kansas City and invited her to contact us when she began her assignment. **Christine Quinn** and I hosted her for dinner at the National Press Club in Washington. She applied and was selected for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's public policy internship. She has been in Washington, DC for almost a month now and has been doing research on the policy side of NCBA. In early February, she will attend the NCBA national convention in San Antonio. How did she find out about the NAFB? "My mentor, **Dr. Kelsey Hall** (Utah State University), has really been a guide for me on my professional path. She emailed me about the NAFB convention, and I knew I couldn't pass that opportunity up. That convention was one of the impactful experiences for me. I knew I wanted to become a student member right away."



"As a generational farmer and rancher from Thatcher, ID, I quickly learned that raising cattle and crops were more than just the way we earned money. My love for the land and our livestock was inborn. The values passed on by my family encouraged me to pursue an education in agriculture and sustainability. I served as a chapter officer in FFA for four years and a district officer for one. Participating and competing at the state and national levels in FFA brought about so many opportunities for me. I actively served as our student body vice president my senior year and chose to attend Utah State University majoring in agriculture communications and journalism. This major brought my two passions together, it was perfect for me. My experiences at USU have made me aware of issues in agriculture that producers cannot resolve

on their own. I started writing the agricultural beat for the school newspaper, writing press releases for the college of agriculture, and participating in club activities.

“Last spring, I competed in a scholarship ambassador program for the Utah Cattlemen. I took first place and became the first Utah Beef Ambassador in 12 years. Educating the consumer about this industry was fun. Using my background and education in agriculture helped me sympathize with those who may not view things the way I do, and then share my story.” Right before she moved to her Washington internship, she was sworn in as president of the Utah Cattlewomen’s Association. “It will be nice to connect with them while in San Antonio.”

“For the last four summers, I have worked for the U.S. Forest Service as a wildland fire fighter. Working for them has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have traveled all over the country, following the fire. People ask me how I do it, and I just reply I grew up with three brothers. Gaining this experience with public lands has been beneficial in DC. Cattle have to graze, and a lot of times on public forests. It has been fun connecting the two experiences while interning here.”



NAFB INTERN...with **Bill Baker** (Dairy Business Communications and DairyLine Radio, Bend, OR) is **Cassie Olson**. She is a senior at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. She is studying agricultural education with emphasis in leadership and communication and minors in animal science and mass communications. The daughter of **Leonard** and **Jan Olson**, she was born and raised on a dairy farm in Black River Falls, WI. When her family sold the dairy about a decade ago, she became active in FFA, which helped her stay involved with the dairy industry and agriculture. At the University of Minnesota, she became active in Beta of Clovia sorority, Agricultural

Education Club, Collegiate Agri-Women, Undergraduate Student Advisory Board, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, and Gopher Dairy Club, in which she currently serves as the club's reporter and editor of *The Topline* yearbook. “I am very fortunate to have been selected for an internship with *DairyBusiness Communications*. As the intern, I am supporting the various platforms the company has to offer, DairyBusiness Radio/DairyLine, DairyBusiness East magazine and social media,” Cassie said. “I have been developing content related to the dairy industry and provide production assistance, with the opportunity to contribute in other areas where needed. She attended World Dairy Expo, and worked on features based on her experience there.

FINAL RADIO MARKET REPORT...was voiced by **Denny Banister** as 2014 drew to a close. He joined Missouri Farm Bureau in 1976 as a communications specialist producing daily radio news stories and farm market reports. Denny has been called the “voice of Missouri Farm Bureau.” Born and raised in St. Louis, he experienced farm work in his childhood with his grandfather in Kansas. Denny earned a degree in mass communications from the University of Central Missouri in 1966 and six days later was married to his childhood sweetheart, **Madelyn**.



FOLLOW-UP ON SENATOR TAYLOR BROWN...As the 64th Legislative Session in Montana entered its third day, the one thing no one had to worry about was lunch. Legislators were provided a free lunch by Montana's major agriculture organizations, including the Montana Department of Agriculture, Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, Stockgrowers and Grain Growers. The event was emceed by Senate Agriculture Chairman Taylor Brown (Billings) with House



Agriculture Chairman Alan Redfield (Livingston). It was a first of its kind opportunity for agriculture organizations to meet with legislators early in the session, and provide them with an opportunity to get know agriculture.

Senate Agriculture Chair Taylor Brown and House Agriculture Chair Alan Redfield address legislators at 2015 Ag Welcome Luncheon.

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LET US HEAR FROM YOU...Share your experiences when "airing on the side of agriculture." Stories and photos are welcome. Contact us at larryaquinn@verizon.net or at **703-819-6532**.