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by Larry A. Quinn

**ORION'S BIRTHPLACE IS SITE FOR DAIRY EVENT...** Little Ridge Dairy near Ontario, WI, hosted the 35th Vernon County June Dairy Month Breakfast on the **Eirik** and **Cheryl Eness** family farm on Saturday, June 20. The Vernon County, Wisconsin, Dairy Promotion Committee asked the **Eness** family to host this year's breakfast on what was, until 1963, the **Samuelson** dairy farm. **Orion Samuelson** (WGN Radio, Chicago, IL) was invited to attend and speak to the guests. Despite a light rain for the first two hours, 2,500 people showed up to see a modern dairy farm operation and enjoy a good farm breakfast, including ice cream. Orion said he was no stranger to

inclement weather since there was a blizzard the day he was born that left 14 inches of snow on the ground. The doctor never made it to the farm in time for his birth and his aunt saved the day serving as a midwife. Orion said, "For me and my sister, **Norma (Samuelson) Haakenstad**, it was a trip down memory lane because we were both born in a bedroom in the farm house, March 31, 1934, for me and May 24, 1939, for her. The house has been totally remodeled, but the barn that I helped my Dad build



in 1948 still looks the same." Orion sits behind the wheel of a Farmall F-20 tractor (photo taken at another event) that his Dad bought in 1939. It was rescued from a farm equipment graveyard without an engine or wheels and has since been restored by an Illinois tractor club. The restored tractor was on display at the dairy breakfast for everyone to enjoy. When speaking to those attending breakfast (including Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture **Ben Brancel**), Orion recalled his own years growing up on the farm from his love for the land to his dislike of the family's team of work horses, Buster and Blackey. He was grateful when horsepower was replaced with diesel. Among his best memories on the farm were during threshing days and silo filling, when 14-plus neighbors would all share the load and work as one to get everyone's crops harvested and stored before winter. He said the biggest change for the Samuelson family came on April 11, 1947, when the days of oil lanterns ended and electricity came to their farm.

His childhood memories combined with his decades of success as a broadcaster led Orion to write his book, *You Can't Dream Big Enough*. Despite the rainy weather, old acquaintances from his younger days growing up in Wisconsin made their way to the Eness farm to reconnect with their childhood friend, whose memory of life on the farm is intact even if he left the homestead decades ago. Before he celebrates his 55<sup>th</sup> year on the air at WGN Radio on September 26, Orion has a busy summer schedule. On August 5, he will be at Farm Fest in Redwood Falls, MN, appearing on the Linder Farm Network with **Lynn Ketelsen**. On August 18, he will emcee the Grand Champion Livestock Auction at the Illinois State Fair, which he's done for more than 40 years. On September 1-3, Orion and **Max Armstrong** will appear at the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, IL.

**RURAL TOWN HALL TO HOST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON RFD-TV...**Issues important to rural Americans, farmers, ranchers, and senior citizens will be the sole focus in a new series of live, one-hour, primetime programs featuring presidential candidates leading up to the caucus in Iowa, and New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries. In announcing this coverage on June



17, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, **Patrick Gottsch**, Founder and President of Rural Media Group, said, "Rural America's impact on national elections is undeniable. This is a tremendous opportunity for each candidate to address issues largely ignored by urban media, yet are so important to many of the citizens voting in these

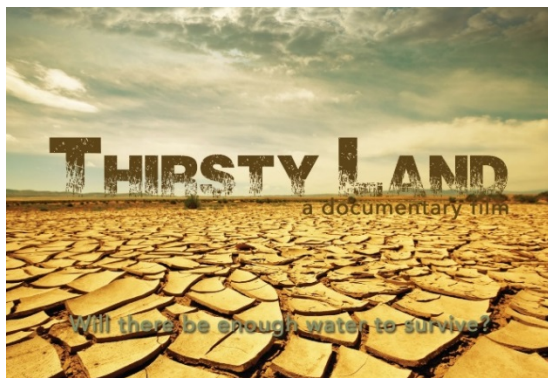
primaries." He continued, "From day one, Rural Media Group's goal has been to reconnect city with country. We believe that this nation is at its best when urban and rural America understand each other's issues and perspectives, in order to work together resulting in a solution acceptable to all." Produced by Mediacom Connections Channel in conjunction with RFD-TV News, each program will offer individual candidates the opportunity to share their vision for rural America, while answering questions submitted by rural associations, organizations, and commodity groups. Questions will be solicited from grain, livestock, poultry, fruit, vegetable, and fiber producers, rural educators, FFA, and 4-H members, along with officials from small towns who have unique concerns about rural development, healthcare, and other challenges facing America's rural communities. Veteran farm broadcaster **Orion Samuelson** will serve as host. By focusing on rural and agriculture topics for the entire hour, each candidate will have ample time to address a wide variety of subjects typically not covered on a national network. *Rural Town Hall* will premiere in July and air on Monday evenings at 8:00 p.m. ET, and Thursday evenings at 10:00 p.m. ET. The program will be delivered to almost 50 million homes through RFD-TV's distribution on cable and satellite. In addition, RURAL RADIO on SiriusXM Channel 80 will simulcast each town hall to SiriusXM's 27-million plus subscribers. Rural Town Hall production will originate from a variety of locations in the State of Iowa or the RFD-TV studios on Music Row in Nashville, TN. In addition, RFD-TV's *Rural Evening News* broadcast at 7:30 p.m. ET and repeated at 11:30 p.m. ET, will cover political issues on a daily

basis from RFDTV's dedicated news bureau located in Washington, DC, and from reporters and mobile satellite trucks positioned around the country.

**SUMMER INTERN AT KRVN...Bryce Doeschot** of Hickman, NE, joins the KRVN/Rural Radio Network team as the summer farm broadcast intern. Doeschot is a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) where he is pursuing a degree in agricultural and environmental sciences communications. On campus, Bryce is active in campus activities, serves as an executive officer of the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and is president of the UNL Collegiate Farm Bureau. Growing up on a family farm has



inspired him to pursue a career in agricultural communications. Bryce said, "I am passionate about sharing the message of agriculture to those who are uninformed, all while continuing to keep farmers and ranchers up-to-date on agriculture news." About the internship, **Joe Gangwish** (KRVN/Rural Radio Network, Lexington, NE) said, "Throughout this summer, Bryce will work with our farm broadcasters to cover agriculture stories, travel to events, update social media sites and the network website and gain valuable experiences to use in the future." He added, "We put the interns straight into action with all we do around here, including news gathering and reading markets on-the-air to helping produce video and updating our social media." He continued, "Bryce came to us with extensive experience in video which is really serving us well. With his background in agriculture and in FFA, he's really shown he has what it takes to be a valuable part of our network team."



**THIRSTY LAND FILM...**Will there be enough water to survive? *Thirsty Land* is a new documentary that tells the story of the water crisis and drought in the Western U.S., its impact on agriculture, communities and the global food supply. "The story of drought needs to be told! Our global food supply and our very survival of humans depend on clean, abundant fresh water. I want to make the audience think about it every time they

take a drink of water, enjoy a shower or water their lawn," says **Conrad Weaver** (Allied Industry Member, Conjostudios, LLC, Emmitsburg, MD), who is producer and director of the film. The Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute (DWFI) at the University of Nebraska is partnering with Weaver in the production of *Thirsty Land* film. DWFI, along with the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) at the University of Nebraska-





Lincoln, have provided startup sponsorship funds for the project to move ahead. “We are very pleased to participate in this important documentary about the challenges of drought and climate change,” said **Roberto Lenton**, founding executive director of the Water for Food Institute. “It supports our mission by educating people about the threats, as well as the opportunities, to achieving water and food security for generations to come.” Conrad said, “I’m thrilled to be able to partner with DWFI. The University of Nebraska is well known for being a leader in research in the areas of water, hydrology, and drought mitigation. DWFI has access to world-renown researchers dealing with drought issues so it’s exciting to be able to talk with them to see and experience what they are doing to help farmers solve some of these complicated issues in providing more food for a growing global population.” Conrad recently announced a collaboration with the AgChat Foundation as the in-kind “fiscal sponsor” and fundraising partner of *Thirsty Land* film. The Foundation will provide fundraising support as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, enabling Conrad to receive grants, and other tax-deductible donations for the film project. Production on the film began in April 2015, and is expected to be completed by November. The film will be released in theaters around the country after its initial screenings in the spring of 2016. For more information, and to view the film’s trailer, visit [www.thirstylandmovie.com](http://www.thirstylandmovie.com).



**JESSE HARDING**

**JOINS TRADE MISSION...**Nebraska Governor **Pete Ricketts** plans two international and two domestic trade missions a year as part of his mission to grow Nebraska. **Jesse Harding** (KRVN/Rural Radio Network, Lexington, NE) traveled with the first mission hosted by Nebraska’s Department of Agriculture and Department of Economic Development. For the Governor’s first international trade mission, the delegation went to Italy, Belgium and Denmark. The goals were to meet with companies who already use Nebraska products, have trade talks and to hopefully bring business into the state. Jesse was invited to join the mission as the only media participant. She said her most interesting takeaways came from talking with European officials about American and Nebraska agriculture. “Much of their misconceptions

are much like American misconceptions. They think that American agriculture is all corporate farming. But, a lot of those ideas stem from the fact that the average European farm is only about 20 acres. A public misconception is that GM crops are bad.” A recent proposed rule to allow member states to make their own decision to allow or deny GM crops isn't exactly what the producers want, Jesse said. If the rule goes through, it will make it difficult to export livestock to a country that has denied GM crops. “While on the livestock topic, they still seem against antibiotics/vaccines.” She concludes, “It was a wonderful experience and the Governor and the Directors of Agriculture and Economic Development seemed to already be hearing feedback before we returned. Read more about the Nebraska trade mission at <http://ruralradio.com/agricultural/governors-europe-trade-mission/>.

**Jesse Harding** interviews U.S. Ambassador to the European Union (EU) **Anthony L. Gardner** during the Nebraska Governor’s trade trip.



**THREE FARM BROADCASTERS WORKING TOGETHER IN ILLINOIS...**“Titles have changed this past year for the three of us that make up the RFD Radio Team,” reports **Rita Frazer** (RFD Radio Network®, Bloomington, IL). “In January, I became the Director of Network and Audio Services as **Alan Jarand** (seated) transitioned from Director to Part-time Audio Specialist. We feel very lucky to have Alan remain on the team with his golden voice, wisdom and institutional knowledge.” She added, “Kansas native **DeLoss Jahnke** joined our team in March of this year. It has only been a few months since he joined us here in Bloomington, but it feels like we have worked together forever. DeLoss and I have so much in common, including a love for farmers and agriculture and a passion for farm broadcasters and NAFB. Sharing a vision to serve Illinois Farm Bureau membership and all of Illinois Agriculture makes us a powerful duo.” A voice well-

known across Illinois, **Rita Frazer**, as RFDRN Director of Network and Audio Services, she will oversee all RFDRN operations, including programming and affiliate relations for the network and FarmWeekNow.com/RFDRN digital platforms that include its [mobile app](#), [daily e-newsletter](#), and [website](#). With more than two decades of experience, Frazer joined the network full-time in 2011 after serving as farm director for WSMI-AM/FM in Litchfield, and helping produce RFDRN's daily *RFD Illinois* morning program and *RFD Livestock Report*.

"January 2015 marked my 25th year as Farm Broadcaster and voting member of NAFB," Rita said. "I feel blessed to have the honor of serving farmers and agriculture and I'm grateful every day to have a job that I love. I grew up on a small diversified farm in Jersey County, IL. I always had an interest in the farm and agriculture and discovered the field of farm broadcasting while I was a radio broadcast student." She continued, "I went to work for WSMI (Litchfield, IL), in 1990 and there worked for an audience that allowed me to learn and grow while I talked to them every morning. I was so lucky that the late **Hayward Talley** took a chance and hired me to be his Farm Director on a 50,000 watt FM Radio Station. I worked hard and at the end of my 22<sup>nd</sup> year with Talley Broadcasting I accepted a position here at the RFD Radio Network. I know hard work has paid off, but along the way it hasn't felt much like work because we are all a part of this agriculture industry we all call home."

Veteran farm broadcaster **DeLoss Jahnke** joined the network as Network Anchor and Editor. His experience includes service as agribusiness director with WMBD-AM/FM and WIRL-AM/FM in Peoria, communications specialist with the National FFA Organization and as a farm broadcaster with the Brownfield and Kansas Agriculture Networks. WMBD/WIRL now broadcasts RFDRN's Illinois-focused farm and rural issues programming. Jahnke grew up on a grain and livestock farm and holds a master's degree in business administration from Butler University and a B.S. in agricultural journalism from Kansas State University.

**Alan Jarand**, a three-decade veteran farm broadcaster with RFDRN, will serve the network part-time as he transitions to retirement. Jarand helped build RFDRN from a handful of affiliates and programs to more than 80 stations and more than 20 long- and short-form programs broadcast Monday thru Saturday. Jarand continues to help produce and serve as lead host of the network's hour-long "RFD Today" talk show and provide content for other network programs and digital platforms. Illinois Farm Bureau started RFDRN more than 40 years ago as a service to Illinois farmers and rural Illinoisans.



**VETERAN ILLINOIS BROADCASTER DIES...Hayward Talley**, longtime Illinois broadcaster, who with a partner put WSMI (Litchfield, IL) on the air in 1950, has died at age 91. His son Brian is running the show now, but Mr. Talley was active in the station's management and operation until late 2013. He began his working career at WOKZ in Alton. Two years later, he founded WSMI Radio Station in Litchfield and on November 2, 1950, WSMI made its inaugural broadcast. He hired farm broadcaster **Rita Frazer** in 1990 where she served 22 years. Hayward was a member of Illinois Broadcasters and The National Association of Broadcasters. Also, he was former owner of KSMN and KLSS in Mason City, IA,

and KBKB in Ft. Madison, IA. In 2002, he received the Vincent T. Wasilewski Illinois Broadcaster of the Year Award. About him, it is said: "A true radio broadcaster, he was the model for "small town radio" in these parts."

**WE WANT YOUR NEWS...**We'd like to hear your stories and receive your photos to share your experiences when *Airing on the Side of Agriculture*. Contact me at [larryaquinn@verizon.net](mailto:larryaquinn@verizon.net) or call me at 703-819-6532.

*Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of [NAFB.com](http://NAFB.com)