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by Larry A. Quinn



**KANSAS/OKLAHOMA WILDFIRE UPDATE** – “Firefighters grappling with the biggest wildfire in Kansas history got a welcome Easter assist from pre-dawn snow that blanketed the hardest-hit area,” reports **Kelly Lenz** (Kansas Agriculture Network/WIBW-AM, Topeka, KS). The National Weather Service says about half an inch of precipitation in rain and snow fell early Sunday (March 27) southwest of Wichita in Barber County. The Kansas Department of Agriculture reports the fire has burned approximately 300,000 acres in south central Kansas, more than 270,000 acres in Barber County alone. The Kansas Adjutant General’s Office says (as of March 29) 81 percent of the fire has been contained in Barber County and more than 90 percent in Comanche County. Twelve homes have been destroyed along with many outbuildings, miles of fence and an unknown number of livestock. Containment is now estimated at 98% for the portion of the fire in Woods County, OK. “Meanwhile, due to an incredible response in the first few days after the fire, hay needs of area ranchers have been met for the time being,” Kelly said. The next priority for victims of the fire is cash donations to the Kansas Livestock Foundation (KLF) for fencing supplies. KLF is the charitable arm of Kansas Livestock Association. Several KLA members are



generously donating proceeds from the sale of animals to KLF for disaster relief. **Greg Akagi** (Kansas Agriculture Network/WIBW-AM, Topeka, KS), reported (March 28), “We are headed to Medicine Lodge, KS, with 1,100 pounds of calf milk replacer to help ranchers and producers who are in need after the devastating fires. The Kansas Agriculture Network thanks Home for their generosity.”

Kansas Farm Bureau and Premier Farm and



Charred pastures near Medicine Lodge, Kansas.



**WHALEN RETURNS AS NAFB MEMBER** – Veteran farm broadcaster **TODD WHALEN** (KDHN, Dimmitt, TX) rejoined NAFB in March. He purchased KDHN in June 2015. He had been an NAFB member earlier from 1983 to 2003. Todd grew up on a central Iowa corn and soybean farm and raised purebred Suffolk sheep as his FFA project. He earned a degree in broadcast journalism in 1981, and he began his first broadcasting job in 1983 in Plainview, TX, where he worked from 1983 to 1988. He moved to a job in the farm department at KGNC (Amarillo, TX) where he worked with the late **Bob Givens** from 1988 to 1991. Also, he worked in Des Moines, IA, and came back to Plainview, TX, before moving to Floydada, TX. In 1997, Todd moved to Fort Morgan, CO, where he worked in radio for 15 years before returning to Plainview, TX, in 2012.



**NOT A LOUISIANA HURRICANE** – “It wasn’t a hurricane that struck Louisiana early in March, but some after affects were about the same,” reports **Don Molino** (Louisiana Farm Bureau Agri-News Radio Network). “Heavy and slow moving thunderstorms dumped more than 20 inches of rainfall in parts of the state, causing flash flooding and inundating freshly planted corn fields, turning them into lakes,” Don said. “Several thousand head of cattle were threatened by the fast moving water, but most of them were saved thanks to the quick efforts of Louisiana cattlemen and the Department of Agriculture.” He noted that the Louisiana Farm Bureau started a movement to find and distribute hay to livestock producers who were flooded out. “At last count, thousands of bales of hay had made it to ranchers in all parts of Louisiana. Almost 30 parishes across the state were declared disaster areas by the federal government.” **Dr. Dan Fromme**, the state corn specialist, guesstimated between 30 thousand and 50 thousand acres of the 2016 corn crop will have to be re-planted if farmers can find seed this late in the season. “Some producers may be forced to switch their corn acres to soybeans, especially if Louisiana gets more heavy rainfall this spring,” Don predicts. “Hurricane season will be here before too many more weeks. It’s been several years since Louisiana was stuck by a hurricane and hopefully, it will be at least another year before that happens again,” he said. Louisiana farmers and ranchers have responded to the call to help flooded Louisiana cattlemen by donating more than 5,000 bales of hay. The Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation set up its Hay Clearinghouse webpage and hotline number shortly after record amounts of rainfall turned many Louisiana hay fields and cattle pastures into farm ponds. Many of those pastures are still holding flood waters.



**HALL OF DISTINCTION** – In a joint venture, Louisiana Radio Network, Louisiana State University AgCenter and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry select inductees for the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction each year, reports **Don Molino**, (Louisiana Farm Bureau Agri-News Radio Network, Baton, Rouge, LA). 2016 inductees are (from left) **Willie Cooper**, **Wayne Hensgens** (accepted for his late father **Raymond**) and **Ruben Duzat** with **Don Molino**.



**HOOSIER AG TODAY LAUNCHES VIDEO SERIES WITH PURDUE UNIVERSITY** – Gary Truitt (*Hoosier Ag Today*, Zionsville, IN), left, hosts Purdue experts **Dr. Shawn Casteel** and **Dr. Jim Mintert**.

*Hoosier Ag Today* is partnering with the Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture to produce a series of video reports designed to improve farmers' productivity and profitability. Sponsored by the Indiana Soybean Alliance, the series will focus on research-based techniques that will allow growers to improve yields and, in many cases, reduce their cost of production. Called the *Better Farming Report*, short video presentations will be accessed online on the HAT website (<http://www.hoosieragtoday.com/better-farming-report/>) and on the Purdue Center for

Commercial Agriculture website (<https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/Pages/default.aspx>). In addition, short radio features from these presentations will be aired on the Hoosier Ag Today radio network. The first program, now online, features **Dr. Shawn Casteel** from the Purdue Department of Agronomy and **Dr. Jim Mintert** from the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture. **Gary Truitt** is the program host. The program covers how soybean growers can hit their yield goals for 2016 while reducing their per bushel production costs. Based on his extensive field trials, Dr. Casteel demonstrates how growers can reduce their seeding rates without impacting yield. Dr. Mintert says the cost of seed represents 35 percent of a grower's cost per bushel, so reducing seed costs can significantly improve a grower's profit margin. He explained that this is groundbreaking research that shows farmers can reduce production costs without reducing yields. Future programs will cover planting dates, soil fertility, price outlooks, and other timely topics. A new program will be posted online each month. "We started out in the studio, but once we get crops in the field, we plan to take this program out to the Purdue research farms and to farming operations around the state," Gary said. *Hoosier Ag Today* was founded in 2006 for the specific purpose of serving the informational needs of the Hoosier agricultural community. HAT currently has 65 radio stations broadcasting its programs. In addition, HAT operates a multi-media web site, smartphone app, and publishes a daily e-mail newsletter.



#### **CHAD MOYER RECEIVES NEBRASKA PORK AWARD**

– **Scott Spilker**, President of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA), right, presents the 2015 Industry Outreach Award to **Chad Moyer** (KTIC, West Point, NE) during 2016 NPPA Annual Meeting, February 17, in Lincoln, NE. His award was one of the Outstanding Pork Service Awards given annually to recognize exceptional work by an

individual, company, or organization that has advocated the fundamental efforts of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association. Chad said, "I am humbled and thankful for this recognition. It is truly a joy to work with them and I enjoy every minute of it!" Chad visited with their communications coordinator and asked if he could help with their Nebraska Pork Industry radio report, diversify the voices on the report and give it a professional sound, but still get the good information out to the producers. Chad took over producing their reports in January 2015. "We expanded it from two to three minutes and began interviewing board members and newsmakers to fill the content. We've also broadened the subject matter covered in the reports, and also include updates from the National Pork Board and National Pork Producers Association." He

adds, "I am very satisfied with how the reports have turned out, and based on their reactions, so are the board members. We get together once every two to three months and brainstorm topics for upcoming programs based on current news or happenings in the pork industry." Chad was born and raised on a dairy farm in southeast Minnesota. He was active in FFA throughout high school. His FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project was ag mechanics and involved restoring an Oliver 66 and a McCormick Deering W-30. "I studied radio and TV broadcasting at Brown Institute in Minneapolis, MN, and with a love for agriculture, set out to be a farm broadcaster. I worked for eight years at KWAD in Wadena, MN, and then moved to West Point, NE, in 2007 to become a part of the Nebraska Rural Radio Association and have been working here at KTIC ever since. My wife, Alicia, and I have two beautiful daughters, Jo and KD. We are very active in our church at St. Paul's in Norfolk, NE. My interests are historic steam engines, old tube radios, Minnesota Twins baseball, and we're happy to call Cuming County, NE, home."



**NEW NAFB MEMBER – Bryant Gill** (Wisconsin Farm Report, Madison, WI) was born and raised in the Platteville/Belmont area in southwest Wisconsin. He grew up raising and showing purebred Berkshire hogs, and he was very active in 4-H speaking contests. He went to Southwest Wisconsin Technical College in Fennimore, WI. "I had the best instructors. They were great and still serve as a resource to this day. This is truly where I realized that speaking and communicating was so important." After graduation, Bryant went into livestock procurement and moved off the farm. "I didn't know exactly what I wanted or just how much I loved the farm yet." He attended the Leadership institute with Wisconsin Farm Bureau and it got him thinking. "I have to do more with the gifts that God has given me, and I have to tell the story of agriculture."

**Bryant is shown with Teyanna Loether, the 68<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland.** He began blogging and talking about on-the-farm experiences. "I applied for a position with **Pam Jahnke** (the Fabulous Farm Babe), and even though I had zero radio experience Pam took a chance on me and began teaching me the radio business. I thought I knew a lot about Wisconsin agriculture, but wow, I have learned so much more." He adds, "Now, I get to talk with 'our' people every day and bring the great story of agriculture to hundreds of thousands of people every day. Check out the show early mornings, and you'll hear me do market commentary throughout the day." Bryant concludes, "I am so blessed to have been born a farmer in an area where agriculture is so diverse. I love my land. I love my livestock, my family, and my great farm friends. I get to live out my dream every day. The best stories and the most fun I have ever had all include showing hogs or making hay or even spreading manure. A lot of people might smile and laugh about that. I'm sure most of you agree. A farm is more than just where the animals live and the crops are stored. It's home no matter where your career may take you."



## **KYLE HILL NAMED AG COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR**

—New NAFB member **Kyle Hill** (KRES, Moberly, MO) was named 2015 Ag Communicator of the Year by the Missouri Department of Agriculture this past December. “I'd like to believe that my willingness to learn on the fly and persistence in having our farm families' stories told has been of benefit for our listeners. To wit, my regular visits with extension agents, state agriculture officials, and commodity groups culminated this past December when I was named recipient of the award.” How did he get into farm broadcasting? “I initially didn't have designs to go into farm broadcasting. I grew up in suburban Kansas City and attended a high school with a graduating class of 493. (Our school's FFA

chapter had lapsed a decade prior.) However, some of my fondest childhood memories involved trips east to the family farm, where *Paul Harvey's Weekend Magazine* aired as we approached the exit leading to it. On several weekends we'd help my great-grandparents with their day-to-day operations.” Kyle had initially enrolled in Truman State University in Kirksville, MO, to become a high school journalism teacher, but the radio bug bit him about halfway through, and he started focusing primarily on broadcasting. “At Truman I was news director of college radio station KTRM and also wrote for the campus weekly newspaper, specializing in covering campus and state politics. While most of my peers were focused on campus issues, my family connections around the surrounding region led me to write about some of the surrounding communities,” Kyle said. His first radio job was in Northwest Arkansas at news/farm/talk radio station KURM. “Despite the rapid urbanization of the region, my first real taste of farm radio was here, as I covered meetings in far-flung corners of the listening area and visited with farm families. This was actually the first of two stints I had in Northwest Arkansas.” In between those stints, Kyle had the opportunity to spend some time in southeast England's Kent, a county nicknamed the *Garden of England*. “I returned to Missouri in June 2013 when an opening occurred at KRES, and the following April, I was named farm director. Away from the farm mic, he's heavily involved in Missouri's scholar bowl circuit. He's assisted his brother's efforts to improve the circuit in the state, organizing tournaments and encouraging area teams to increase their participation. “As northeast Missouri has a strong history of quiz bowl, I've had the chance to host a weekly show during the winter highlighting area programs and conference tournaments.” Kyle looks forward to expanding his talents as a farm broadcaster as a member of the NAFB.



**NAFB WELCOMES CHRIS WALLACE AS MEMBERSHIP MANAGER –**

**Chris Wallace** has joined NAFB as Membership Manager. She was most recently the Customer Service Manager and Circulation Systems Administrator for the *News-Press & Gazette*, St. Joseph, MO. Chris managed multiple aspects of the Customer Service department, including employee training, circulation audits for the newspaper, and monthly billing. Her NAFB responsibilities will include serving as the main contact for all membership inquiries, maintaining the membership database, convention registrations, and more. NAFB Executive Director **Tom Brand** said, “The Membership Manager position plays a vital role in day-to-day operations at the NAFB office. Chris’ customer service and extensive database background make her a perfect fit for the position. As the association continues to offer more membership opportunities, and increasing our footprint, Chris’ qualifications and

experience make her the ideal candidate for the position.” She earned a BS in Business Management and Marketing from Missouri Western State University. Please help welcome Chris to NAFB. Chris can be reached by calling 816.431.4032, ext. 101, or by email at [chris@nafb.com](mailto:chris@nafb.com).

**WE WANT YOUR NEWS** – We'd like to receive your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at [larryaquinn@outlook.com](mailto:larryaquinn@outlook.com) 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). For an archive copy of any past issues, go to *Membership* and click on *Airing on the Side of Agriculture*.