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by Larry A. Quinn



**OPTIMISM FOR TEXAS AGRICULTURE IN 2018** – Tony Purcell (Texas State Networks, Dallas, TX) reports, “The 2018 agricultural outlook for Texas is good. There is a lot of potential for Texas Agriculture. With nearby cotton futures over 80 cents on a big crop, and fed cattle cash over \$120, this could likely be a turn-around year.” Tony cautioned, “Wheat is the big question mark. The freeze hit at a time of very little snow cover so we know there will be damage. What we don't know is how much. We'll just have to wait for it to come out of dormancy.” He noted, “A lot of wheat growers already had begun transitioning wheat acres to cotton. Depending on what happens in Congress and how the Farm Bill shakes out, it appears cotton could be the money crop in Texas for the next few years. Prices are getting better and the export market is strong. Another question mark is the cattle market. So far, big supplies have been met with strong demand, so there is a lot of optimism out there. Bottom line is, barring something totally unexpected, there is a lot of optimism in the Lone Star State.” On the broadcast operations side, Tony said, “The Entercom/CBS merger is complete and going well. So far the transition has been seamless with only a few bumps in the road.”



#### WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT FARM BROADCASTING –

“Telling the story of farmers, ranchers and their families is what I love most about farm broadcasting,” said **Juli Mauch** (KBMW, Wahpeton, WI). “With 18 radio stations in the Dakotas and Minnesota, being a part of the new Ag Central radio network gives me a great opportunity to do just that.” Juli grew up on a small family farm in southeast North Dakota. “I didn’t understand things like commodity prices, input costs, etc., but I did know that everyone in our small family played an important role in the success, and sometimes failures, of the operation.” Her favorite part of living on the farm was working cattle. “That may sound crazy, but I loved the ‘organized chaos’. It was a time when my whole family had to work together to get the job done. I heard my first cuss words working cattle and was quickly told that whatever words are said during cattle working time ‘don’t count’.” When a heifer was having trouble calving, her brother and Juli were allowed to watch the veterinarian conduct a c-



section, but they had to sit quietly in the hay barn and watch through the floor boards. “It was the sitting quietly part that I had a hard time with.” After graduating from high school, she wanted to “go somewhere and be somebody.” Juli got a degree in broadcast journalism from Minnesota State University in Moorhead and was going places or so she thought. “I came back to KBMW AM 1450, our local radio station in Wahpeton, ND. I worked in advertising sales but just didn’t feel like I was making my mark so to speak. I took a break from radio for a while and got married and have three daughters. Two of them are in college and one in high school.” They live on her husband’s family farm and are fifth generation farmers. They farm corn, soybeans, and sugar beets. “Back in 2008, I began co-hosting the morning show on KBMW with a long-time colleague, **Rollie Lipp**. I continue to co-host the mornings with him, but my role has expanded now to Farm Director. Working with **Terry Loomis** and **Mick Kjar** at Ag Central has taught me so much about farm broadcasting. Being a part of NAFB and the resources that it provides has made my job so much easier!” She said, “I can’t imagine not being an NAFB member and being able to tell the story of agriculture to our listeners. The amount of mis-information/fake news that’s out there today about agriculture, farmers and their way of life is frustrating to see both from a farming perspective and a broadcaster perspective. I feel the best way for farmers to combat that is for me as a broadcaster tell their stories. Whether it’s a story about a farmer making their planting decisions for the coming year, or the farm wife whose running things behind the scenes, it’s all important in the operation and telling the story of their farm.” Concluding, she said, “So maybe I did ‘go somewhere and be somebody.’ I’m a farm wife, mother, horse owner, and farm broadcaster and love every minute of it because I don’t have to sit quietly.”



#### **HOOSIER AG TODAY EXPANDS BROADCAST**

**STAFF** – Hoosier Ag Today announces the addition of **Eric Pfeiffer** to their experienced farm broadcast staff. “Having Eric on our team will allow us to position HAT to expand its services to farmers, radio affiliates, and sponsors while maintaining our commitment to quality and innovation,” said **Gary Truitt**, President and founder of Hoosier Ag Today. A native Hoosier educated at Purdue University, Eric has extensive experience in radio and communications technology. He will manage the news gathering operation for both radio and digital distribution and will work closely with the award-winning broadcast team of **Gary Truitt** and **Andy Eubank**. Eric said, “I look forward to continuing HAT's tradition of providing credible and timely news. As media and agricultural landscapes change, my goal is to make sure we are prepared to serve Hoosier farmers for many years to come.” He has served as News Director for WSAL/WLHM

(Logansport, IN) and, most recently, as Telecommunications Systems Specialist at Purdue University. Pfeiffer will be based in West Lafayette, IN. 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 website, a smartphone app and publishes a daily email newsletter. In 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2016 Hoosier Ag Today was rated the most listened to farm radio network in Indiana by Ag Media Research.

**A FACE-PLANT IN THE MUD GOT MY ATTENTION** – “On a cold, damp March day somewhere back in the 1970s, I was trying to break a stubborn 4-H steer to lead. He wanted nothing to do with it. He protested by jerking his head so hard I let go of the halter, lost my footing, and fell face-first into the mud and muck. At that moment, I wanted absolutely nothing to do with livestock anymore. But, I was devoted to 4-H and stuck it out for nine years. I’m glad I did because little did I know my future self was depending on it.” That future self belongs to **Jodi (Chapman) Henke** (Meredith Agrimedia, Des Moines, IA). She is writer/host of *Living the Country Life* and *Successful Farming* National Radio Programs. She earned her BA in journalism and mass communications with emphasis in broadcasting from Iowa State University. “My first job after graduation was reporting news for a small FM station in Ames, IA. A couple of years later, **Bob Quinn** hired me as a news reporter for WHO-AM in Des Moines. I spent many years there as a reporter, anchor, assignment editor, and assistant news director. In 2007, I got a call from Meredith Corporation, home of *Successful Farming* magazine, and just down the street from WHO. They were starting



a new radio program (radio being brand new territory for the publishing company) called “Living the Country Life”, and would I be interested?” It was to complement *Successful Farming* and *Living the Country Life* magazines as a small farm/rural lifestyle program. “I saw the job offer as a new challenge. I knew enough about farm animals, gardens, ponds,



small machinery, and other acreage topics because I grew up on an acreage. I took the job, and thanks to the rambunctious livestock and other experiences of living in the country during my childhood, I had an understanding and passion for what I’m now writing about.” In July 2017, she celebrated 10-years of *Living the Country Life* radio. “I’m proud to say we have hundreds of affiliate stations nationwide that carry the program. July also brought a new challenge to my career. Meredith made the decision to bring *Successful Farming’s* radio program in-house, after many years of being produced by a freelancer. So now, I am the writer and host of *Successful Farming* as well as *Living the Country Life*, and seamlessly weave both into my daily repertoire.” She explains, “Sometimes I write an article for SF magazine based on my radio scripts. When they talk about length, I ask, ‘how many seconds is that?’ (I know you understand.) What I do for the ag and rural lifestyle audiences is somewhat different than most farm broadcasters. I don’t do daily markets. I don’t tackle most governmental issues. I gravitate toward the common sense, new-fangled, here’s-how-you-do-it type stuff. Sometimes it’s fun and silly. Farmers like to know about those things, too.” She concludes, “My goal for these two programs is to bring information listeners can use and make a positive difference in their lives. Radio has always been first in my heart and always will be, and I am amazed at where my career has taken me over the years.

**My advice for those seeking direction: When you do a face-plant in the mud, consider it a future opportunity. What goes around, comes around.”**



**RETIREE JOHN WINFIELD LOOKS BACK** – “It seems I always knew I was going to be in broadcasting,” said **John Winfield** (Emeritus member, Madison, MS). “In the fifth grade, my teacher asked us to write a short paper on what we wanted to do when we grew up. I wrote my paper on being a radio announcer.” A few years later, he started hanging around the local radio station. “In 1965, I got my first job as the afternoon disc jockey, and the rest is history,” John said. His farm broadcasting adventure started August 15, 1982. He had been Radio News Editor at the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service for four years doing radio programs and co-hosting a weekly agricultural news and market program on the state’s ETV stations. “I started as farm broadcaster at the Mississippi Network doing programs for approximately 50 radio stations in the state. The first week I was there, the owner sent me to New York to join a group of farm broadcasters to meet with ad agency buyers to talk about agriculture. I felt ill prepared, but I survived and met farm

broadcasters from across the country. These guys introduced me to NAFB,” he added. “I joined and was a voting member until my retirement on June 30, 2017.” During those years, John attended hundreds of farmer meetings, agricultural company meetings and NAFB meetings. “There is no way to count the number of interviews, but they did fill a lot of time on a lot of programs. In the late 1980s, I decided to get more involved in NAFB and was elected Regional Vice President. Then in 1994, with the backing of my management, I ran for National Vice President, and was elected. My officer experience ended after serving as President in 1996 and Immediate Past President in 1997. I can only say that it was a great experience and honor to serve as an officer of NAFB.” During his year as President, the Executive Director resigned. That made his year even more exciting. “There are many great stories and memories from those years. Many are stories I will never tell (you know what I mean).” John emphasized, “Besides the meetings and the trips, my fondest memories of my career are the people I met and the friendships I made. NAFB is made of men and women intent on helping farmers and agriculture succeed. It is also a group of great individuals, many of whom I am proud to call friends. To those who were active during my time, it was great. To those too young, enjoy your career, enjoy NAFB. It will be a great ride.” Since his retirement last June, he says he’s done a lot of catching up on “Honey Do” items around the house and dealt with health issues. John concludes, “I am planning to find a charitable organization that works with the disadvantaged and less fortunate. My goal now is to pay back some of the many blessings I have received.” If you want to contact John, email him at [jw46@me.com](mailto:jw46@me.com).

**FOUR NEW BABIES AT BROWNFIELD** – **Cyndi Young-Puyear** (Brownfield Ag News, Jefferson City, MO) announced, “We’ve been blessed with four new babies at Brownfield in the past 13 months.” Parents are **Meghan Grebner**, **Nicole Heslip** and **Mark Dorenkamp**, who are all Broadcast Council members of NAFB. Cyndi adds, “As I write this, **Ken Anderson** is welcoming his 8<sup>th</sup> grandchild, a boy, into the world.”



**Meghan Grebner-Conant** and her husband **Brian** welcomed identical twin boys at 9:42 a.m. and 9:43 a.m. on January 18, 2018. **Ronan Earl** (left) weighed 6 pounds 3 ounces and was 20” long, and **Hank Allen** weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces and was 19” long.



**Haley Marie Heslip**, left, daughter of **Nicole** and **Kyle Heslip**, was born August 8, 2017. **Declan Robert**, son of **Mark** and **Melissa Dorenkamp**, celebrated his first birthday on December 20.





#### **LEMKE JOINS LINDER FARM NETWORK – Dan**

**Lemke** is the newest addition to the Linder Farm Network (Owatonna, MN) staff, reports General Manager **Lynn Ketelsen**. Dan's duties include on-air broadcasts with **Lynn** and **Linda Brekke** in addition to covering major ag events across Minnesota and the nation. Also, Dan operates Spirited Communications (Eagle Lake, MN). He has more than 30 years' experience in broadcasting, agriculture communications and public relations. Currently, Dan writes for multiple farm publications, produces ag-based videos, as well as recently joining the Linder Farm Network broadcast team. Also, Lemke was the voice of the *Minnesota Soybean Update* for several years heard on stations across the state. He holds a degree in speech communications

from Southwest Minnesota State University (Marshall, MN). "Dan is the perfect person for the Linder Farm Network. He is a great journalist, strong-on-the-air, and knows all the major players in agriculture in the state," Lynn said. "As our network has grown, we simply need more people for the many appearances we make and the quality shows we produce."

#### **DAVIS SERVES HIS COMMUNITY IN RETIREMENT – Skip Davis**

(Emeritus Member, WASK retired, Frankfort, IN) says, "Since October 2016, I've accepted more responsibility. That was when the Clinton County Commissioners and Council decided to take apart the fair board and appoint a new body focused on reviving the present county fairgrounds." Skip made it known he was interested in serving. He pointed out, "I've attended a few fairs in my earlier times." The County Council appointed him to be their representative on the Clinton County Fair Council. "My job is to be their eyes on the budget and help seek out contributors to help rebuild the fairgrounds. To date we've invested more than \$100,000 in the 4-H Community Building. It was the easiest problem on the grounds to address. We've almost completed that task." Now, they are in the middle of hauling in 90 truckloads of soil. "The half-mile harness racing track, perhaps the fastest in Indiana, has had a severe flooding problem over the years. We hope this situation is corrected by this year's county fair," he said. Next, a contracting firm will study all the buildings on the fairgrounds and tell what needs to be done with each. Repair or Replace. "We



expect some major construction during the coming years. I am extremely proud I was chosen to serve.” He asks, “Do you know of anyone with a few million dollars they would care to share?” To retirees he advises, “Don't stop. If an opportunity presents itself, and you feel you can help get things started, do so!” When he's not working, he said, “Susan and I have been doing a little traveling. We have visited, via ship, up the eastern seaboard into Quebec City, then to Hawaii and Vancouver.”

**HEEMSTRA RETURNS AS FARM DIRECTOR** – **Jody Heemstra** has returned to broadcasting as News and Farm Director for Dakota Radio Group (Pierre, SD) at KGFX. She had been a Broadcast Council member from 2006-2015 before she became a communications specialist for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA). She was NAFB's West Region Vice President for 2014-15. Her first year with SDDA, she was on the Allied Industry Council. During her second year, she was on the Non-commercial Broadcast Council. “Being back in radio full-time after a two-year hiatus, I'm on the Broadcast Council again,” Jody said.

**WE WANT YOUR NEWS** – Send us 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***.