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by Larry A. Quinn



**NAFB JOURNALISTS AND FRIENDS TOUR TO CHINA** – A group of NAFB broadcasters, management and affiliated industry will be leaving for China on June 21 and returning on July 4. Leader of the tour will be **John Block**, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture who will be accompanied by his wife. **Tom Cassidy**, NAFB President, and **Tom Brand**, NAFB Executive Director, will handle logistics along the way. Currently, 14 NAFB broadcasters are working to gain visas for reporting in China. Twenty related industry professionals will also be traveling with the group with the goal of getting expert reaction to Chinese markets and agriculture. The China tour group is scheduled to meet with U.S. Ambassador **Terry Branstad** at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. Senior staff of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service have been arranging the audience with Ambassador Branstad, and they plan to provide a briefing for reporters. The two-week tour will stop in several major China cities to examine the commerce conducted utilizing U.S. agricultural products. Also, there will be opportunities to visit various kinds of farms and to meet with business owners. **Ken Root** and **Rich Hull** have been helping to coordinate the trip. Rich is working with the travel company, and Ken is coordinating arrangements with USDA and Secretary Block. About the trip, Ken said, "Neither Rich or I are going, by choice. We agreed that we've been many places, and there is a new generation of broadcasters who need to see things firsthand. They need to understand how the cultures and economies of trading nations relate to U.S. agriculture. It was a great experience to travel with Secretary Block in the 1980's (Korea, Japan, China, Central America, Brazil and Argentina) and with Secretary **Mike Johanns** to Iraq." The NAFB Foundation is providing support for broadcast members to defray some costs of

the tour. Broadcasters among early registrants for the tour include: **Greg Akagi** (Kansas Ag Network/WIBW), **Steve Bridge** (WFMB and coverage for *This Week in Agribusiness*), **Spencer Chase** (Agri-Pulse), **Joe Daughhete** (WITY), **David Geiger** (Agribusiness Association of Iowa), **Monte James** (Your Ag Network), **Phyllis Parks** (WITY), **Roger Ward** (WLDS), and **Shannon Yokley** (Brownfield Ag News).



**PENNSYLVANIA ICY WINTER CAUSES DAIRY BARN FIRE – Dave Williams** (Pennsylvania Farm Country Radio Network, Honesdale, PA) reports, “Winter brought record low temperatures along with high winds exceeding 60 miles per hour and heavy wet snowfalls. All this added together



toppled many trees making for large power outages throughout the northeast as well as the state.” Pennsylvania implemented a state of emergency throughout Dave’s area. “In our area there was a dairy barn fire that started from thawing frozen water pipes for their cattle, and around 100 milk cows perished in the fire which was devastating for the family.” But in January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, Dave’s county received good news in the form of a new certified FFA chapter for the first time in more than 40 years. “The chapter started immediately to put together a fund raiser for the family whose barn burned, and they raised almost \$70,000. I took great pleasure in helping to advertise this event and later to air a show with the new FFA teacher.”

This is Dave's 19th year of broadcasting in Pennsylvania. He is on-the-air six days a week for 30 minutes and reaches more than 2 million people a week. "I was raised in the dairy business and have farmed most of my life, and I feel humbled to serve the people I respect so much through Pennsylvania Farm Country and American Farm Country Radio Networks."



### **COLD NEW YORK WINTER MAKES GOOD MAPLE SYRUP –**

To watch the weather on a national news outlet, one would think that the Northeast suffered a terrible winter. But **Tom Cassidy** (Ag Radio Network, Inc., Barneveld, NY), who has lived in the Northeast for nearly 50 years, thinks that it was as typical as could be. Big snows early, an early thaw that left communities under water, a bitter cold snap, a few big snows and an unusually long, drawn out maple season has characterized the winter of 2018 for Tom. "Farmers in New York are prepared for the wild variations in weather that a typical winter can bring. Livestock is taken care of no matter what, then the rest of the farm is tended to as best as can be managed," Tom explained. "Though Northeast agriculture is overwhelmingly livestock-(dairy)based, it is very diverse when it comes to secondary products. The heavy

hardwood forests and hilly terrain along with good, consistent cold winter temperatures make it ideal for maple syrup production," he adds. "The mild end to the winter this year has led to an unusually long and very productive maple season. Night time temperatures below freezing and day temps above make for an ideal sap run and a high sugar content syrup." **The machine at right is today's maple syrup evaporator.**

"When I was a boy, we used a 4' x 12' pan in the barnyard, and we burned old fence posts to heat it. Our family of six spent two hours every evening during the season collecting the sap in old milk cans from about 250 taps," Tom said. "My mother tended the fire during the day while we were at school and Dad was at work. We took turns tending the fire at night. It



takes 40 gallons of raw sap from the tree to make one gallon of syrup. Today's evaporator makes about 200 gallons per day, collecting 8,000 gallons from 4,000 taps every day.

### **HIS LOVE FOR RADIO BEGAN IN THE SIXTH GRADE –**

“When I was in sixth grade, I told a friend that I wanted to someday be on the radio,” said **Mike Adams** (*Adams on Agriculture*). “Of course, back then my concept of radio was music and ball games. I didn’t even know there were farm broadcasters on the radio. Also, I didn’t know that working on a farm would be the best education and career preparation I could get.” While attending junior college studying broadcasting Mike got a part-time job at WLDS (Jacksonville, IL) primarily as a DJ and a sports announcer. **Mike Perrine** had started doing farm programming at the station, and Adams would often be operating the control board for his shows. “Unlike most of the other people at the station, I had some idea of what he was talking about and soon Mike asked me to join him in the farm department. By then I was tired of playing records and



ready to try something else. Little did I know that I was starting on an amazing journey that continues 44 years later. Together we covered agriculture on a local, state and national basis with two hours of programming a day,” Adams said. “I was fortunate to work at a station that even allowed me to travel internationally and see agriculture beyond my local area. They also supported my involvement in NAFB.” In 1999, Mike Adams was elected to serve as NAFB President. “In 2001, after 27 years at WLDS, I had the opportunity to become host of the nationally syndicated program *AgriTalk*. Following my friend **Ken Root** was a big challenge but fortunately listeners were patient and for the next 16 years I was able to have a daily conversation with people all around the country on a wide variety of topics. Highlights included a live broadcast from Cuba and a meeting with **Fidel Castro**. I took the local radio concepts I was familiar with and applied them on a national level. Our ethanol pump tour and hometown tour helped me meet and establish relationships with listeners and our affiliate stations while promoting renewable fuels and rural communities. When my time at *AgriTalk* came to an end last December I wasn’t sure what my next step would be,” Mike admitted. “Although I had gone through numerous ownership changes over the years, I only had two jobs. This was new to me. I believe when God closes one door He opens another. I was waiting for that next door when **Lance Knudson** (American Ag Network) called and asked if I would like to start a new show focusing on ag policy and issues using my contacts and experiences. Starting a new show is both challenging and exciting but is proving to be the perfect next step in my career. *Adams on Agriculture* went on the air in March, and I am thankful to be part of a great team and to be able to do something for a living that I love to do.” Yet another door has opened for Mike as he has had the opportunity to work with **Max Armstrong** and **Orion Samuelson** on their TV show, *This Week in Agribusiness*. Mike concludes, “Over the years in farm broadcasting I have made many friends, worked with talented people and traveled around the world meeting Presidents, a Pope and a dictator along the way. Not too bad for a kid that thought radio was only music and ball games!”



## **MARTIN FILLS DUAL ROLE AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND FARM DIRECTOR – Greg Martin**

(WJBC, Bloomington, IL) said, "It has been an interesting road that has led me from Kansas to Illinois back to Kansas to Washington State and finally back to Illinois. Such is the life of a radio personality." He explained, "In a way it's a full circle for me since my first program director job was in Bloomington, IL, some 32 years ago for WIHN 96FM. The year I spent at WIHN I was up against the number one radio station and morning show in the nation that year across town at WJBC-AM. I just could not beat them as a neophyte program director. Now, I've been picked up by Cumulus/WJBC-AM to help that station

try to recapture some of that glory against other great Cumulus FM CHR and Country stations." Greg said, "I'm thrilled to be at WJBC and back in Bloomington and equally thrilled to be back as part of NAFB after a 10-year stint as the news director and Vice President of Programming for the *Northwest Ag Information Network*. Radio has always been my first love ever since I was a child listening to my RCA transistor radio that my grandfather gave me. It was very liberating while growing up in a very small town in Kansas to be able to listen to great radio stations like KOMA (Oklahoma City, OK), KOA (Denver, CO) and WLS (Chicago, IL). I knew I wanted to be a part of this incredible industry." One day when Greg was traveling through Junction City, KS, listening to KJCK it solidified. "The afternoon announcer (DJ) was interviewing actor **Burt Ward** from the TV series Batman. I thought, any job where I can sit and talk to Robin, the Boy Wonder, is for me. Oddly, even though I've interviewed hundreds and hundreds of celebrities, musicians, politicians, authors and just plain folk, I've never interviewed Burt! (Might have to remedy that!) 2019 will mark Greg's 40th year in broadcasting after starting with the Sunday night 6-midnight shift on Salina, KS, rock station, 99 KSKG. The Mighty 99KG was a great place to cut my teeth, and I learned a great deal. Like many of you in NAFB, I've done pretty much every job there is at a radio station including copywriting, sales and even a little engineering. But the place I love is in a studio with a mic." Greg is excited about his new position at WJBC as Program Director and with the added benefit of also being the Farm

Director. "We don't do a lot of ag, but it is crucial to the station. We rely on the RFD Network also located in Bloomington as well as reports from **Kent Casson** at the Central Illinois Farm Network. I will also be back behind a mic with various reports as we progress with changes to the WJBC format clocks and, of course, I will be there with mic in hand for Trade Talk at this year's NAFB convention." Greg concludes, "My broadcast career has been a wonderful trip with incredible highs and some devastating lows. Everything from singing a duet with the incomparable **Julio Iglesias** in front of 8,000 people to having to break the tragic news to thousands of listeners about John Lennon, the space shuttles Challenger and Columbia, the attempted assassination of **Ronald Regan** and others. It's been a blessed life and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. **Don Imus** was recently asked how he considered himself. DJ? Announcer? His reply was, 'I'm a radio guy'. Ditto! All of us in broadcasting, whether it's rock, news/talk, country or the farm report should be grateful for this opportunity to communicate to the world! It's a power that few people will ever have. Hope to see you all soon! **Greg Martin** (Radio Guy)."



#### **HOFFMAN JOINS IOWA AGRIBUSINESS RADIO NETWORK**

– On March 28, Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network announced an addition to its team of farm broadcasters. **Dustin Hoffmann** will serve as the network's Broadcast Services Supervisor and Farm Broadcaster starting on April 2. Dustin comes to the network from Redwood Falls, MN, where he served as Farm Director for KLGR. His credentials include a degree in network communications from DeVry University, winner of the Ag Communicator of the Year from the Minnesota Farmers Union, *Hot Shot Award* winner from the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association and the 2017 winner of the *NAFB Doan Award*. Dustin will join fellow NAFB broadcasters **Ken Root**, Senior Broadcaster and Content Manager, **Anna Hastert**,

broadcaster and digital editor, and **Emery Kleven**, the network's markets programming expert. Dustin will be based out of the Network's main office, located at 900 Des Moines Street, Des Moines, IA. Dustin's email address is [dustin@iowaagribusinessradionetwork.com](mailto:dustin@iowaagribusinessradionetwork.com). His phone number is **515-262-5054**. Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network started in 2010 and offers programming to nearly 60 affiliates in Iowa and northeastern Missouri. The network produces

nine programs per day and a daily eNewsletter. Their main studio is located at the Ag Association of Iowa building in Des Moines, IA. A satellite studio is located in Dyersville, IA. More information is available at [www.iowaagribusinessradionetwork.com](http://www.iowaagribusinessradionetwork.com) or calling 641-946-7646.



**MAX ARMSTRONG NAMED HONORARY MASTER FARMER BY PRAIRIE FARMER** — For the first time in eight years, *Prairie Farmer* has named an Honorary Master Farmer. They chose **Max Armstrong** (WGN, Chicago, IL, and Penton Agriculture, Aurora, IL). **Holly Spangler** wrote Max's story which looks at his work from Indiana farmstead to global voice of agriculture. Go to:

[http://www.prairiefarmer.com/master-farmers/max-armstrong-farm-boy-heart?NL=FP-004&Issue=FP-004\\_20180309\\_FP-004\\_416&sfvc4enews=42&cl=article\\_5\\_b&utm\\_rid=CPG02000000672772&utm\\_campaign=25587&utm\\_medium=email&elq2=e266f8c448ed4e54b245857b3582f408](http://www.prairiefarmer.com/master-farmers/max-armstrong-farm-boy-heart?NL=FP-004&Issue=FP-004_20180309_FP-004_416&sfvc4enews=42&cl=article_5_b&utm_rid=CPG02000000672772&utm_campaign=25587&utm_medium=email&elq2=e266f8c448ed4e54b245857b3582f408)

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