



Volume 6, Number 9, September 4, 2018

by Larry A. Quinn



MARTIN NAMED TEXAS STATE NETWORKS AG DIRECTOR – Growing up in Little Rock, AR, **Chuck Martin** harbored a single ambition: to become a broadcast journalist. While pursuing his undergraduate degree in history at the University of Arkansas, Chuck began to hone his skills at the campus radio station, KUAF-FM. Upon graduating, he went to work in the news department at KXXA-FM (Little Rock, AR). From there, he was lured across town to KARN-AM and the *Arkansas Radio Network*. In 1983, Chuck returned to northwest Arkansas to become an anchor and reporter at KHOG-TV, the ABC affiliate. After a brief stint as the news director of NBC affiliate KFAA-TV, Chuck returned to KHOG where he spearheaded the coverage of then-Governor **Bill Clinton**'s presidential run, ultimately going to Washington, DC, as lead reporter for the presidential inauguration. Three years later, Chuck would once again return to Little Rock, this time as news director of KARN and the *Arkansas Radio Network*. There, he worked alongside legendary farm broadcast journalist and past-NAFB president **Stewart Doan**. "Stewart knew

Arkansas agriculture like nobody before or since,” Chuck recalled. “No one could rival Stewart’s energy or commitment to the job.” At a 1997 conference in Baton Rouge, Chuck met **Julius Graw**, the then-news director of the Texas State Networks, the oldest and largest state radio network in the country, which just celebrated its 80th year. Julius recruited Chuck to the Lone Star State as an employee of CBS Radio. Within months of his arrival in Arlington, Julius asked Chuck to become the backup to TSN Ag Director **Tony Purcell**. Like Doan, Purcell would become a good friend. “Tony taught me everything I knew about ag around the state of Texas,” said Chuck. “From the start, I loved putting together the *Lone Star Farm & Ranch Report*. One of the things I grasped early and always enjoyed was the hourly market reports and the thrill of being able to convert the various futures in real time.” Following the death of Tony Purcell in early 2018, Chuck stepped in to anchor the morning and midday reports, which are distributed to some 80 TSN affiliates. Chuck was recently named TSN’s Ag Director. “I am delighted to bring my two decades of experience to this position fulltime and am committed to carrying on the tradition of excellence at TSN as well as strengthening the relationships with our affiliates and NAFB,” Chuck said. When not working up and delivering broadcasts, Chuck enjoys reading biographies, following Arkansas Razorback athletics and music. He lives in Dalworthington Gardens with his wife and two children. Chuck always appreciates hearing from colleagues and listeners at chuck.martin@entercom.com.



BROWNFIELD’S ANDERSON WINS MEDIA AWARD – Brownfield Ag News anchor/reporter **Ken Anderson** received the American Coalition for Ethanol’s (ACE) 2018 Media Excellence Award at the group’s recent annual conference in Minneapolis. Presenting the award, ACE Communications Director **Katie Fletcher** said Anderson “epitomizes objective news reporting, and covers the policy, markets, events and issues that the ethanol and agricultural industries need to know.” In thanking ACE for the recognition, Anderson

said, “I’m honored to receive this award from ACE, which is a great resource for ethanol-related information. Ethanol is a very important topic for our listeners and readers across the Midwest,

and keeping them up to speed on the latest industry developments is one of our priorities at Brownfield.” Brownfield Ag News creates and delivers original content across multiple media platforms. Brownfield includes the largest and one of the oldest agricultural news radio networks in the country. More than 480 affiliate radio stations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin are in a contractual partnership to carry agricultural programming created by Brownfield’s award-winning team of a dozen full-time farm broadcasters. More information is available at www.brownfieldagnews.com.



FROM SPORTSCASTING TO FARM BROADCASTING – Leif Bakken (Northern Ag Network, Billings, MT) is a new farm broadcaster and NAFB member who grew up on a small cow and wheat operation north of Lemmon, SD, where they also raised sheep until recently. His parents, **DeJon** and **Jeri Lynn Bakken**, currently run around 120 head of cattle and grow wheat. From a very young age, Leif was involved in agriculture especially in 4-H and FFA. He showed chickens, sheep, and steers almost every year of his 4-H career. “In North Dakota 4-H, there was a communication arts program where I started doing public speaking, demonstrations, and a broadcasting event. That’s when I was starting to realize this might be what I wanted to do. As an FFA member in South Dakota, the fall Career Development Events have a competition called Ag Broadcasting where the judges hand you a stack of papers with

weather, markets, and ag stories that you must compile together to make a three-minute ag cast.” The participant must also create an original ad for an agriculture product or business to insert at any point in the broadcast. “I competed in this event for three years in high school. Between my freshman and sophomore years in high school, I produced an ad for the local Farmers Market that was starting up. Afterwards, the radio station manager, **Mike Schweitzer**, asked Leif if he was interested in a job. Leif took the application and pleaded with his parents to allow him to work for the station. He created a presentation for his parents to show benefits of his working on the ranch and on the radio, and his parents let him apply.

Leif Bakken interviews Dan Kolar of Northern Seed.



Leif worked for KBJM (Lemmon, SD) as a DJ, reading sports, news, and weather along with playing programs from the *Northern Ag Network*, *Farm Progress America*, and others. “This is when I fell in love with radio and knew this is what I wanted to do.” He quit the basketball team in his junior year and approached Mike about producing a junior varsity basketball game of the week for the basketball season. Mike said if Leif could get the sponsors to pay for the phone line and his time that he could do it. “I went across town asking businesses to sponsor games and came up with the money to do it. I was the only one in the state of South Dakota announcing junior varsity athletics on the radio. I was lucky enough to get sponsors through my senior year and the program continued for another year after I graduated.” From his love for broadcasting, he decided to go to college to become a broadcaster. He attended Minot State University in Minot, ND. “I went to the athletic department and asked if they had a play-by-play announcer for their sports. They asked if I had ever done volleyball. I told them, no, but I could try. I watched a couple hours of volleyball on YouTube and then did my first volleyball game. They gave me the job. I then was approved to announce basketball in the winter and softball and baseball in the spring.” He continued, “My sophomore year, we added women’s soccer to the list. My junior year, they let me do football. I was officially the online-voice of the Beavers. While at Minot State, I learned the radio and TV sides to broadcasting.” He earned his degree in broadcast production with a minor in marketing and a concentration in sportscasting. In the spring of his senior college year, he was looking for jobs and saw a Facebook post that a farm broadcasting position was open at the *Northern Ag Network*. “I applied since I was searching for a job. I did not want to return home and ranch right after college and this seemed like a great opportunity to work for a company I had grown up listening to my whole life.” He applied, interviewed, and was hired. He concluded, “Now I’ve been working here (*Northern Ag Network*) for two months and I’m loving it. As many people know, you can’t truly get out of agriculture, no matter what you do.”

LIVING HER CHILDHOOD DREAM: AGRICULTURE AND AG NEWS – Sarah Heinrich (KFGO, Fargo, ND) grew up on a ranch south of Mandan, ND, raising purebred cattle and small grains. “As a small girl, I grew up on a farm where my uncle and longtime farm broadcaster, **Al Gustin**, would spend every afternoon helping and working alongside my dad, who is a full-time farmer to this day. I always thought Uncle Al had the best job. He could do ag news in the early morning hours and then be out raising cattle in the afternoon. My mom has been a 4-H leader for more than 40 years, so 4-H and FFA were a natural fit for me to be involved in during my entire school career.” After attending Mandan



High School, Sarah attended North Dakota State University, majoring in agriculture communications and public relations and minoring in animal science. In 2007, she started her broadcasting career at KXMB-TV (Bismarck, ND) where she spent 7 ½ years serving as the noon show anchor and farm director. “During my time at the station, I received the NAFB’s highest reporting honor, the *Oscar in Agriculture*, three Associated Press Awards and an *Eric Sevareid Award of Merit*. In 2015, Sarah made the move from TV to radio, beginning her career as Farm and Ranch Director for KFGO-AM (Fargo, ND). “My broadcasts are currently aired on 11 stations throughout North Dakota and South Dakota, including KFYZ and KBMR in the Bismarck area. These farm reports can be heard from Minnesota to Montana and from Winnipeg, Canada, to Sioux City, IA.” She emphasizes, “I guess you could say I’m living my childhood dream, reporting ag news in the morning and raising cows and crops in my afternoons and evenings. When I’m not on air, you’ll typically find me in the corral.” Sarah and her husband operate a farm and ranch north of Medina, ND. They raise purebred cattle, hosting a production sale each year. They also



raise small grains, row crops and operate a feedlot. “We have a little boy, **Luke**, who's nearly 2 years old. He loves to help feed cows and ride in the tractor.” Her passion lies in the cattle industry, being a member of the American Gelbvieh Association, North Dakota Gelbvieh Association and North Dakota Stockmen’s Association. “I’m grateful for the opportunity to live out my childhood dream, I can’t think of anything else I would rather do with my life than ag news and agriculture,” Sarah said. **Contact: Sarah Heinrich, KFGO 790 Farm & Ranch Director, sarah.heinrich@mwcradio.com.**



IOWA FARM BROADCASTER INSPIRES CAREER – Anna Hastert (Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network, Des Moines, IA), a recent Northwest Missouri State University (NWMSU) graduate, kick-started her broadcasting career early with help from an Iowa farm broadcaster. Anna competed and placed in the Iowa FFA Agricultural Broadcasting Career Development Event. “My junior year of high school, I competed in the Agricultural Broadcasting Career Development Event on behalf of the Harlan FFA Chapter. To be honest, I wasn’t any good then,” she said. “I received a bronze rating at the sub-district level, barely making it onto the district competition. But, with the help of **Tom Robinson**, a farm broadcaster from southwest Iowa, I am now able to make a living out of reporting.” Hastert started working part-time for Robinson at KSOM/KS957 (Atlantic, IA) as a Sunday morning news broadcaster. She thanks Robinson, an NAFB member, for most of her success. She makes note of his positive, nurturing demeanor and credits these qualities for



helping shape who she is as a farm broadcaster today. “Tom is such a gem,” Anna said. “He was always a warm person, and oftentimes gave positive reassurances. I’m a perfectionist, which I always thought to be my greatest weakness. However, Tom embraced my attention to detail and made me feel comfortable in my early broadcasting career. This led me to a mission to make my interviewees, as well as colleagues, feel appreciated. I get to know each person I contact and make sure they feel comfortable to share their information with me.”

Anna Hastert interviews Brooks Reynolds, co-founder of the Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival, and Iowa U.S. Senator Joni Ernst at the Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network's booth at the 2018 Iowa State Fair.



REDWOOD FALLS AG DIRECTOR – The road to farm broadcasting was full of twists and turns for **Scott Colombe** (Alpha Media-Redwood Falls, Redwood Falls, MN). Scott started his broadcast career as a senior in high school, but he didn't decide to pursue broadcasting until after he inquired about a part-time board operator position with Little Falls Radio Corporation (LFRC) in Little Falls, MN. He grew up on a commercial poultry operation that also included producing corn, soybeans and alfalfa and cattle. Scott graduated in 2012 from St. Cloud State University with a BS in radio broadcasting and political science. Colombe began his farm broadcasting career as farm director at LFRC while also working in sales. Eventually, he was promoted to full-time at LFRC and expanded the company's farm coverage from several short daily updates to a full 30-

minute program Monday through Friday along with a weekend summary and variety programs. In June 2018, Scott joined Alpha Media-Redwood Falls' KLGR station in Redwood Falls as the station's Ag Director. "I consider the position at KLGR to be a dream position," he says. You can call Scott at (507) 637-2989 or by email him at scott.colombe@alphamediausa.com.

FROM PRODUCTION DIRECTOR TO FARM DIRECTOR –

Raised in Janesville, WI, **Craig Dillion** graduated from Janesville Parker High School in 1999 followed by University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2003. He interned in Madison at WIBA/WTSO-AM until being hired as production director at WCUB (Manitowoc, WI). After working mostly in production and doing part-time voice tracking and on-air work, he then graduated to the Farm Director position two years ago. "This new position has not only offered me an expanded role in the company (including much more on-air experience) but has only given me the chance to get to know many new people throughout the county and community. It has been a real treat to go behind the scenes at various farms and farm related activities and see the equipment and procedures that make it all possible." He adds, "The best part though, is meeting the hard-working people and hearing their unique stories of their family and farm operation. They are some of the best folks you could ever hope to meet." Craig's spare time interests include fishing, campfires, and hanging out with friends, family, and dog Chuck. Also, he is anxiously awaiting another Badger/Packer football season this fall.



WE WANT YOUR NEWS – Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at [**larryquinn@outlook.com**](mailto:larryquinn@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***.