

Keynote Speaker – Mr. Orion Samuelson



Orion Samuelson is heard 6 days a week on WGN Radio in Chicago, where he has served as Agribusiness Director since 1960. Orion and his associate, Max Armstrong, present 16 agricultural reports daily on the station. Orion is also heard daily on 260 radio stations with his syndicated National Farm Report and on 110 stations with his syndicated Samuelson Sez. Orion and Max are seen weekly on RFD-TV as co-hosts of This Week in Agri-Business.

Orion's life long commitment to agriculture has been recognized by organizations in all segments of agri-business. In 1998, the American Farm Bureau Federation honored Orion and Senator Bob Dole with the AFBF Distinguished Service Award. In 1997, Illinois Governor Jim Edgar renamed the State Fair Junior Livestock Building the Orion Samuelson Junior Livestock Building as a tribute to Orion's four decades of service to the agricultural youth of Illinois. In 2001 the University of Illinois conferred Orion with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters; and in 2003, Orion received the highest award in the radio industry when he became the first Agribusiness Broadcaster to be inducted into the National Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Hall of Famer Paul Harvey presented the award to Orion on the national radio broadcast hosted by Larry King.

Orion is also in the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame, the National 4-H Hall of Fame, the Illinois Broadcasters Hall of Fame, the Scandinavian-American Hall of Fame, and the National Association of Farm Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Orion has traveled with his television crew to 43 countries to cover agriculture; four of his trips were official agricultural trade missions with the Secretary of Agriculture. During his 1989 trip to Taiwan, Orion was presented the International Communicator of the Year Award by the President of the Republic of China.

Orion is active outside broadcasting. He is Chairman of the Board of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation, a member of the Farm Foundation Bennett Round Table, a member of the Board of the Agriculture Future of America, a member of the Board of Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, a member of the Board of Directors of the Foods Resource Bank, a Trustee of the Cornerstone Foundation of Lutheran Social Services in Illinois and a newly-named member of the Board of Trustees of the National 4-H Council.