

Why farm?

Providing state news was the subject of my master's thesis. "So why farm?" is a question many asked.

You have to understand radio in the 60s and 70s to answer this question. Major markets all had "boomers"; usually 50,000-watt AM stations that dominated their communities: KMOX, St. Louis; WGN, Chicago; KCMO, Kansas City; WCCO, Minneapolis; KOA, Denver; WHO, Des Moines. Of course they had the major sports franchises, hefty news departments but they also all had large farm departments. All of them profited hugely from their morning and noon-time farm reports: news, commodity prices, and hog and cattle market reports. Their advertisers were seed-corn companies, animal health and herbicide manufacturers, and implement manufacturers and dealers. The advertisers wanted their copy read by the personality farm broadcaster—each a member of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters.

And while certainly farmers in the rural communities could hear these metro radio stations, they also listened to their local stations for local news and weather. Why not provide farm markets, farm news and commodity reports directly to these small town stations via a network and use an NAFB personality to deliver these reports?

Derry was a strong personality; hugely gifted behind the microphone AND, a full-time farmer. In those days he was more believable and trustworthy than most of the big-city guys who weren't farming anymore—and some never had. From day-one our affiliates knew they had something special—and sellable. And, so did our advertisers.

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