

Orion Samuelson



Orion Samuelson is one of the best-known agricultural broadcasters in the U.S. His weekly "*U.S. Farm Report*" is carried on 190 commercial television stations from coast to coast. He has traveled to 38 countries carrying the message of the American farmer. His secret may be that he makes his viewers feel he never left the farm himself.

Born on a small dairy farm in Ontario, Wisconsin, Samuelson came to his career through a terrible illness. While he was bedridden as a young teenager, all he could do was listen to the radio. Throughout his convalescence, one teacher came to his house to work with him 3 times a week for 2 years. It was his vocational agriculture teacher, the one who ran the Future Farmers of America. When young Orion returned to school, this same teacher got him into public speaking. Samuelson's career was firmly in place.

He had no interest in a college classroom, and instead found a radio job in Sparta, Wisconsin. That job led him to Green Bay and his first television work. It was an hour-long, live program at noon that brought tractors, and livestock into the studio. In 1960, Samuelson joined WGN-TV in Chicago. His "*U.S. Farm Report*" first went on the air 25 years ago, and they are celebrating that anniversary with 1300 programs broadcast-without a single repeat. The program provides information for farmers and ranchers, education for consumers on food, legislation, the environment, and other agricultural issues.

Mr. Samuelson has been awarded the National 4-H Alumni Award, and other honors from the Future Farmers of America and the American Farm Bureau Federation. He is the only broadcaster to win 2 'Oscars in Agriculture'—one in radio, one in television. In 1997, Governor Jim Edgar honored his 40 years of service to agricultural youth by naming the Illinois State Fair Junior Livestock Building after Orion Samuelson. He has always helped them, because someone helped him when he was a young man on a farm.