

# Radio host aims to defend farming

By JENNIFER VINCENT

WHEN environmentalist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. organizes hog summits to spew criticisms about agriculture, Trent Loos is there to challenge his opinions and set the record straight. When actress Pamela Anderson speaks about the perils of innocent animals being slaughtered for human consumption, Loos counters with respect for food production. And, when actor James Cromwell says we need to eliminate animal agriculture from this country, Loos says, "Oh no, you don't."

Loos has been on a five-year, full-time crusade to return the human element of food production and rebuke the claims of animal activists and environmentalists that are clogging the minds of the general public with half-truths and flat-out lies about the industry.

Loos uses whatever venue he can to tell the tale of agriculture, including speeches, newspaper columns, the Internet and television, but he is mostly known for his radio shows.

## How it all started

In listening to a speech by Cromwell in the spring of 2000, Loos became agitated and then downright ticked off by what he was hearing. The British actor, who ironically played a hog farmer in the movie "Babe," was attacking animal agriculture, Loos says.

"Cromwell said he was riding his Harley Davidson through Oklahoma when he had to turn around because of the stink," Loos says. "He said that we don't need animal agriculture in this country anymore. And, I saw people applauding him in the audience — in western South Dakota.

"I thought to myself, if somebody like this with no credibility in animal agriculture can continue to tell this story, and unless someone is daily confronting him, he's going to be an influence on people," Loos says.

Seven days later, Loos walked



TRENT LOOS (right) poses with Jill Gevin, president of Penn State Block and Bridle Club. Loos will be the club's honoree at its annual banquet April 8.



WHEN TRENT LOOS, on his mule named Eleven, is home, he makes time with his family, which includes wife Kelli, holding 10-month-old Landri, along with Libbi, 7, holding the donkey named Hillary, and Lindsay, 3, riding Tucker.

## Key Points

- Trent Loos works as an activist for agriculture by defending the industry.
- Loos sees unity within agriculture as essential to withstanding mistrusts.
- Role models that don't respect industry are too strong an influence, Loos says.

into Jim Thompson's radio studio in Spearfish, S.D. "I said, 'Hi, my name is Trent Loos and I'm a sixth-generation United States farmer, and I want my own radio show.'"

Loos, who is an Illinois native and now a Nebraska farmer and rancher, took a seat and said he wasn't leaving until he got a show.

Three months later, they were producing a show together. Six months later, Loos started producing "Loos Tales" — his flagship radio program that first aired on KMZU Radio in Carrolton, Mo., in January 2001. The show is now carried by more than 100 stations in the Midwest, including WKZO in Michigan, and 4 million people a day listen to Loos on one of his six radio shows.

Loos says he spends a "ridiculous

amount of time" at the computer doing research on the Internet. Loos has search engines targeting keywords to locate a multitude of propaganda about agriculture circulating on the Web. He takes those stories to the airwaves and gives his version of the facts.

## Tackling the issue

Agriculture is being compromised by special interest groups, Loos says, and "influenced by people who don't have agriculture's best interest at heart."

He particularly worries about young people and their role models. "We have parents out there giving their daughters breast implants as a high school graduation present," he says. "We've lost core family values. And people are being influenced by the Pamela Andersons of the world, who also promote the need to eliminate animal agriculture and get all of our dietary protein from soy."

But, what he finds most disturbing in agriculture is the lack of unity. "Whether it's organic vs. conventional food production, or beef that's natural, grass-fed or organic, agriculture is sometimes its own worst enemy," he says. "Animal-rights activists wouldn't have a chance

if agriculture would stay united."

National animals-rights conventions always have on their agendas, Loos points out, factory farms vs. family farms and checkoffs within the industry. "That's because they know those issues are the most divisive in agriculture.

"The problem I see in Michigan is people moving out to rural America, buying 40 acres and a horse, and then wanting to tell the dairy down the road how to run its business."

Loos is not only an activist for agriculture, but also an advocate for rural America. "I think we need to pull everyone in rural America into the mix," he says.

Creating unity is Loos' mission this year, although he admits to not having a clear vision on how to do that. "I think it will take fear of losing what we have — to be part of food production at any level. How much we'll give up before we come to that realization, I don't know."

Consolidation and outsourcing are not just an automotive problem, he says. "Eighty percent of all our clothing in America is imports," he says. "Do we want to rely on other countries for food?"