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American Bankers Association

Journal of Agricultural Lending

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Winter 1997



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The Chicago Mercantile Exchange

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Reader,

Washington is a great town in many ways, but one of my favorite things is the lunch-time briefing. Usually you get some interesting information, and you get a fairly good free lunch out of the deal. Sometimes you really are reminded that there is no free lunch, and after hearing someone yak for a half an hour or more you wish you had hit the local McDonalds.

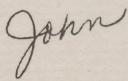
I attended one last week that was very interesting because of what it offers to the agricultural community and because it involves some people that have been true friends of American agriculture.

Orion Samuelson and Max Armstrong are quite possibly the most familiar faces in American agriculture due to their long association with U.S. Farm Report on WGN in Chicago. Orion and Max, along with others, have formed a new company, Channel Earth and will start broadcasting agricultural and rural related programming on Directv sometime this spring.

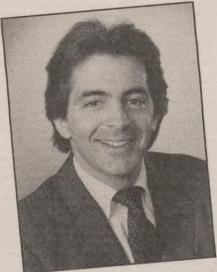
They hope to broadcast 13 hours of programming a day, and in Orion's words, "It isn't going to be reruns of Green Acres." The programming will go to all subscribers of Directv, the nation's first high-power digital direct broadcast satellite television service. I know that a lot of you have seen these mini discs at many of your customer's homes and businesses. The fact that rural Americans have embraced direct satellite TV was a signal to Orion and his group to launch the new network.

I'm positive about any new way to communicate with farmers and rural residents and I am convinced that Orion and Max will do an outstanding job. Channel Earth starts this spring on Directv channel 280.

Sincerely,



John Blanchfield
Publisher



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