



National Association of Farm Broadcasting  
1100 Platte Falls Road  
Platte City, Missouri 64079

April 24, 2023

Dear Senator Stabenow,

We are writing you today as the Board of Directors of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) on behalf of agricultural and rural broadcast stations and networks across America. Founded in 1944, NAFB is dedicated to serving the interests of the agricultural community. Farm broadcasters provide an invaluable service to producers and the agricultural community in rural America. Through this letter, we hope to express NAFB members' overwhelming support of broadcast radio and to cast a spotlight on the actions some automakers are taking to remove radio from their vehicles – especially AM radio.

In rural America, AM radio is critical for those without reliable cellular or broadband access. Farmers in the field and on rural roadways, not connected to cellular or broadband, also turn to AM radio for the latest weather updates, crop reports, local information, and entertainment. For farmers and ranchers, radio continues to be the primary source of daily agricultural news for listeners throughout the year. In fact, on average, ag radio consumers are listening for at least one hour on a typical weekday; more than 76% listen to the radio for agriculture markets, news, weather, and other information more than five days a week. Listeners to ag radio consistently rate their farm broadcasters high in credibility, accuracy, and timeliness for information.

Rural areas across the country are subject to extreme weather conditions such as tornados, flooding, droughts, wildfires, and hurricanes. When these extreme weather events occur and both the power and cell service are out, AM radio becomes a literal lifeline for rural Americans. As the backbone of the Emergency Alert System, the car radio often is the only way for people to get information, sometimes for days at a time.

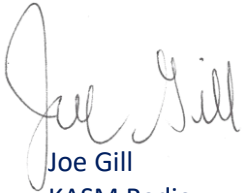
As the professional trade association representing the interests of farm broadcasters, the agricultural community, and rural America, we are deeply concerned about the action some automakers have taken to remove AM radio from their vehicles. Of the top 20 automakers producing vehicles in the United States, eight of them have already removed AM broadcast from their electric vehicles, undermining the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) system for delivering critical public safety information to the public. One major automaker, Ford, has already announced its intent to remove AM radio from their entire fleet of non-commercial vehicles beginning in 2024.

We ask you help us convey to auto manufacturers the importance of AM broadcast radio to America's farmers and Americans living in rural communities across the United States. Removing AM radio from vehicles will put into serious jeopardy an important lifeline and source of information to rural America, not just during times of emergency events but every single day.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to urge auto manufacturers to keep this vital service as part of their vehicles.

Sincerely,

2023 NAFB Board of Directors



Joe Gill  
KASM Radio  
Albany, Minnesota



KC Sheperd  
Radio Oklahoma Ag Network  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



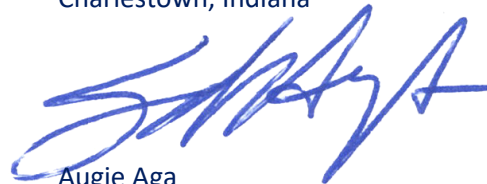
Carah Hart  
Brownfield Ag News  
Jefferson City, Missouri



Brent Adams  
Rural Strong Media  
Charlestown, Indiana



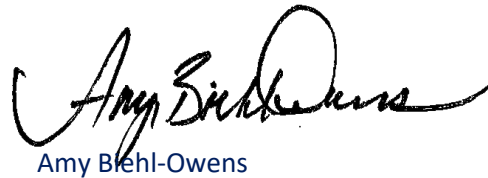
Jeff Nalley  
Cromwell Ag Radio Network  
Utica, Kentucky



Augie Aga  
Northern Ag Network  
Billings, Montana




Gardner Hatch  
Woodruff  
Cottage Grove, Minnesota



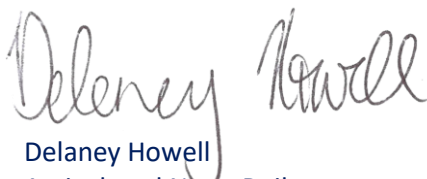
Amy Blehl-Owens  
KRVN Rural Radio Network  
Lexington, Nebraska



Shannon Yokley  
Missouri Wines  
Jefferson City, Missouri



Anita Vanderwert  
Brownfield Ag News  
Jefferson City, Missouri



Delaney Howell  
Agricultural News Daily  
Rhodes, Iowa



Tom Brand  
National Association of Farm Broadcasting  
Platte City, Missouri

# PRESERVING AM RADIO IN VEHICLES

From FDR's fireside chats to global conflicts and once-in-a-generation disasters, AM radio has transported millions of listeners to the front lines of history and has for more than a century. Local stations have been the source of entertainment and connection to our communities. And, perhaps most importantly, when tragedy strikes, AM radio serves as the backbone of the Emergency Alert System, informing Americans of impending danger and directing people to safety. With its unique ability to reach a wide geographic area, AM broadcasting offers many Americans struggling with poor, or non-existent cellular and broadband coverage a chance to stay connected. The car often is the only source of power and news for many in times of emergency.

## THE ISSUE

As auto brands introduce more electric vehicles (EVs) into the market to meet growing consumer and clean energy demands, the availability of AM radio is declining or being eliminated altogether. This is due to electromagnetic interference causing static and limited coverage with AM radio in EVs. Despite well-known mitigation solutions, some automakers have stopped putting AM radios in their dashboards. Among them so far are Audi, BMW, Porsche, Tesla, Volvo, Volkswagen, and Ford.

## AM RADIO ESSENTIAL FOR CRITICAL EMERGENCIES

AM radio is one of the critical ways federal, state, and local officials communicate with the public during natural disasters and other emergencies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stated the success of the national public warning system hinges on the use of AM radio due to the distances its signal carries and its resiliency during catastrophic events. Although many automakers suggested other communication tools like internet radio could replace broadcast AM radio, in an emergency, drivers might not have access to the internet and could miss important safety information and updates.

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*AM radio serves a vital role in our nation's emergency infrastructure as the backbone of the Emergency Alert System. When the power goes out and cell networks are down, the car radio often is the only way for people to get information, sometimes for days at a time.*

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## IMPORTANCE OF AM RADIO TO THE AG COMMUNITY AND RURAL AREAS REMAINS HIGH

Radio is the most used source of daily agribusiness information. Farmers and ranchers depend on AM radio to obtain information about topics such as weather, markets, ag news, ag commentary, and local events. AM radio is especially critical in areas where reliable broadband has yet to be deployed as well as in areas where FM signals don't extend. AM radio gives a larger coverage area and is often the only stable form of communication for rural areas.

## AM RADIO MATTERS TO ALL COMMUNITIES, IS STILL VALUED BY AUTOMOTIVE CONSUMERS

There are more than 4,470 licensed AM stations across the country. Of those, 1,500+ provide agriculture programming. It is clear AM radio plays a vital role in connecting communities with stations that serve these audiences with niche and in-language programming. Urban and suburban residents rely on AM radio for news, weather, sports, and more. Consumers still desire AM in-car listening. Thirty-three percent of new car buyers say AM radio is a very important feature in a vehicle — higher than dedicated Wi-Fi (31 percent), SiriusXM satellite radio (27 percent), and personal assistants such as Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa.

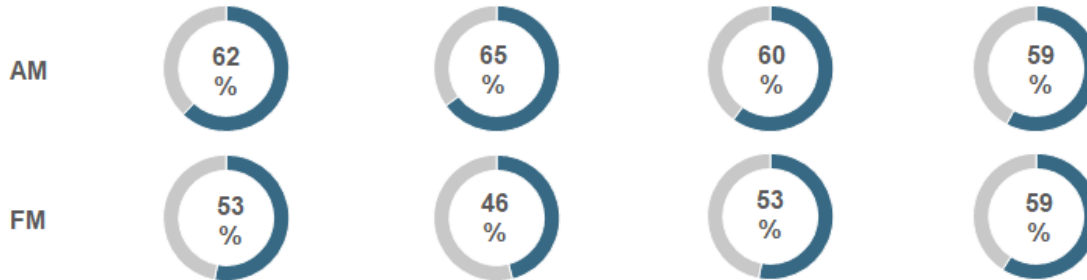


## THIRD-PARTY RESEARCH PROVES RADIO IMPORTANCE TO FARMERS, RANCHERS

In 2021, the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) partnered with Aimpoint Research to execute a nationwide, year-long tracking study of approximately 800 farmers across four waves (quarters) throughout the year who listen to ag radio programming.

### Ag radio listeners most often listen to AM and FM radio for ag information.

#### Radio bands



Source: Total farmers who listen to ag radio: Wave 1 (n=202), Wave 2 (n=197), Wave 3 (n=200), Wave 4 (n=195)  
On which of the following radio bands do you listen to farm news, weather, markets, and ag information during this time of year?

Listeners report receiving a variety of topical information from ag radio; however, they are primarily listening to/for **agricultural markets, commodity prices, weather, and local/regional ag news.**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
Ag markets/commodity prices	93%	92%	95%	89%
Ag weather	72%	77%	78%	70%
Local/regional ag news	50%	53%	67%	61%
World ag/trade news	47%	32%	62%	49%
Farm commentary	43%	48%	54%	51%
Insights from Washington, D.C./policy updates	40%	31%	45%	37%
New products: seed, equipment, technology	36%	32%	40%	42%
Agriculture innovation	30%	26%	37%	33%
Other	3%	6%	11%	19%
None of the above	1%	1%	1%	1%

For those farmers and ranchers who listen to ag radio, it continues to be the **primary source of daily ag news for its listeners throughout the year.** Listeners most often are listening to AM and FM radio.

On average, ag radio consumers are listening for **at least one hour** on a typical weekday.

Ag radio listeners consistently rate their farm broadcasters **high in credibility, accuracy, and timeliness** of information.