

## AgChat: Agriculture Meets Social Media

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Nashville and it's strong roots in country music. Just as country music has it roots in Nashville, so does AgChat. This is the same city where AgChat was born.

As I arrived on Sunday, a number of us went out on the town to *downtown Nashville*. We went to The [Wildhorse saloon](#) and [Tootsies Orchard Lounge](#).

Due to scheduling conflicts, I attended the conference for one day only. But even my one day's schedule was packed--and well worth my time.

But first, I need to tell my story of trying to "carry on" 36 containers of Martin County Magic Seasoning. You may be asking yourself (just like the TSA) why am I carrying on 36 containers of a seasoning. But first as a disclaimer, I did look on the Internet prior to my flight and seasoning was listed as an okay item to carry. But evidently 36 is just too many . . . or maybe . . . the word "Magic" had them a little nervous.

Here's why I brought them: A tradition at AgChat is the swap meet where people bring items from their home area to share with others. And for me, my county sells nearly 2,000,000 pigs per year so, of course, a pork seasoning is the perfect item to swap. But the TSA had to open the seals of every. single. container. And test them. How long did it take? About 1/2 hour. Thank goodness for arriving at the airport early!

I think what makes AgChat valuable to me is a combination of unbelievable networking opportunities, new friendships and reconnecting IRL with others who share the same goal, learning new skills and new ways to reach outside our comfort zone and the inspiration you only receive when you are with other passionate agvocates. It's no secret that I started blogging because I was *inspired* from attending my first AgChat conference. My circle is now larger due to AgChat. And I am thankful for that.

A shoutout to a couple "new agvocate friends" from Minnesota - Janet Bremer of [My Barnyard View](#) and Brenda Rudolph of [Raising a Farmer](#). So glad to know these fellow Minnesotans and agvocates! Please follow their blogs!

I know I am going to get in trouble (hoping I didn't forget someone) here but a shoutout to new and IRL people I met: Alicia Schmitt of [Fit and Farm](#), Brandon Whitt of [Batey Farms](#), Matthew Boucher of [Boucher Farms](#), Lela Perez, Melissa Woolpert, Jennie Hodgen (meat scientist for Merck Animal Health) Janeal Yancey (another meat scientist-eeek!) of [Mom at the Meat Counter](#) Keith Roach,

Ken Bluier of "[Farm Hats](#)." And a special shoutout to my friend Krista Stauffer from [A Farmer's Wifee](#). This girl has so much energy--I don't know where she gets it. Please follow them!

My takeaways and things I WILL start to implement:

Finding ways to reach outside the choir:

- **Thanks to Sara Broers, I WILL be helping/starting a Social Media breakfast** in my area. I have already contacted the Chamber of Commerce and will meet with them in January. This will be a great way to continue building on my social media tools and skills as well as another way to reach outside the choir.
- **I will be working with my twitter a little more intently.** I need to create lists and also target specific people I want to know or meet. More interaction and conversations on twitter. Thanks to Janice Person for this nudge. And, by the way, here are some great [twitter tips](#).
- **Banquet in the Field.** It will happen in Minnesota this next year. Thanks to Katie Pinke and Katie Pratt for their breakout session and for their insights. [CommonGround Minnesota](#) is taking the lead on this but we will also bring other stakeholders as we progress through the planning stage. Check out this [banquet in the field video](#).

A number of us from "[Ask the Farmers](#)" were in attendance and had our picture taken. Nice to see everyone IRL.

All in all, it was a great conference. And the conference has changed significantly from the first time I attended. No longer is the conference's concentration on just the basics of social media. The conference is adapting and changing just as social media is changing. And as a fellow advocate, I appreciate that.