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## An iPhone in a Haystack: The Uses and Gratifications Behind Farmers Using Twitter

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AN IPHONE IN A HAYSTACK: THE USES AND  
GRATIFICATIONS BEHIND FARMERS USING TWITTER

by

Sarah Van Dalsem

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: Journalism and Mass Communications

Under the Supervision of Professor Sue Burzynski Bullard

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2011

AN IPHONE IN A HAYSTACK: THE USES AND  
GRATIFICATIONS BEHIND FARMERS USING TWITTER

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University of Nebraska, 2011

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The fast-growing social media site, Twitter, is growing in popularity among Americans from all walks of life, including farmers who are using it to share information with other farmers and consumers. This thesis expands on Uses and Gratifications Theory by looking at how farmers are using the social media site to promote agriculture and reach out to others. Based on a qualitative analysis completed on 22 interviews with farmers, four major purposes for using Twitter came to light: (1) Farmers are using Twitter to seek information; (2) they are using it as a tool to lead others within the agricultural community, and (3) they are using it as a way to build community and (4) build their businesses. This research is important because it builds on a limited amount of research on how a niche group of people uses Twitter and contributes to research on how farmers are receiving news and information.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank Sue Burzynski Bullard, Dr. Linda Shipley, and Dr. John Bender for all of their advice on this research and assistance in writing the thesis. I'd also like to thank the College of Journalism and Mass Communications for funding the project through the Hitchcock Fellowship.

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Twitter, a 140-character micro-blogging social media site, was launched in 2006 and became one of the fastest-growing social media tools in the world today. Currently, about 8 percent of Americans, which is a little over 24 million people, have a Twitter account (Smith & Rainie 2010, Webster 2011). Different kinds of people – from celebrities and athletes to politicians and farmers – use it in different ways. Businesses use it to promote their brands, moms use it to share recipes or child-rearing techniques and students use it to make job or career connections.

Little research exists on how Twitter is used, particularly by niche groups, but some quantitative research has documented how many people use Twitter. In order to expand on the limited body of research, this thesis looks specifically at why farmers in the United States use Twitter and expands on Uses and Gratifications Theory, which states that there are certain uses of media which satisfy a person's social and psychological needs (Ruggiero 2000).

News outlets across the United States have reported that farmers are using social media to share their personal stories with the world (Barbassa 2010, Hest 2010, Karstans 2010, Knutson 2011, Monteith 2010). Farmers use Twitter for a multitude of reasons as agriculture-based organizations are teaching more farmers how to use it and an AgChat Foundation has been created to promote the use of social media among the agricultural community (AgChat Foundation 2011).

After scouring numerous article databases including Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, no academic research on farmers' use of Twitter was found, and there was very little academic research found on Twitter usage in general (Chen

2011). This thesis could be an important contribution to micro-blogging research for a few reasons. First, the agricultural community is working to empower farmers through social media, and they believe Twitter is one tool to achieve that empowerment (AgChat Foundation 2011). Second, this research provides many examples of how farmers have benefited by teaching themselves how to use social media. It provides examples of how people have connected and shared ideas through Twitter to change a policy they didn't like or to promote their idea of the truth about the agricultural community. Finally, the Smith and Rainie study (2010) said the most likely people to use Twitter resided in urban areas. Therefore, this research could be a building block to studying the usage gap of social media tools between rural and urban areas in the United States.

Chapter 2, which summarizes the literature review and provides the theoretical framework, focuses on the ways farmers have used Twitter. It looks at how farmers have organized via Twitter against organizations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). It also examines how they are using the medium to discuss agricultural policies and tell their personal stories of farm life. Chapter 2 also lays the theoretical basis for the study. It discusses the role Uses and Gratifications research has played in studies on mass media and where the theory stands today in the expanded body of mass communications research. It focuses on the history of this theory, some of the criticisms of it, and how more studies are using it as it continues to develop and new social media tools are created.

Chapter 3 introduces the research questions and discusses the methodology used to interview 22 farmers about their use of Twitter. Chapter 4 looks at the four major

trends that show why farmers are using Twitter, and Chapter 5 discusses the researcher's conclusions by revisiting the research questions, looking at the limitations of the research, and discussing other areas that may need to be studied.

## **Chapter 2 – Background on Farmers’ Use of Twitter and Theoretical Discussion and Literature Review**

This chapter will give an overview of some of the ways farmers use the microblogging service, the campaigns they have launched on Twitter, partnerships they have been made with commodity brokers, and an explanation of the AgChat Foundation, which was started by farmers to support the use of social media among the agriculture community. This chapter also presents a review of the literature related to Uses and Gratifications Theory, which will be expanded upon during Chapter’s 4 discussion of my results.

Farmers, who make up about 1.5 percent of America’s population (Knutson 2011), started talking to media outlets about their use of Twitter in early 2010. A study released by the National Association of Farm Broadcasters (NAFB) in August of 2009, found about 2 percent of farmers used Twitter. That number has likely grown considerably over the past year and half, because awareness of Twitter among people in America has exploded in growth since 2009 (Webster 2011). Five percent of Americans 12 and older were aware of Twitter in 2008, but that number jumped to 87 percent by 2010 (Webster 2011).

While farmers aren’t usually known as technological enthusiasts (Barbassa 2010), a growing number are signing on to Twitter (Hest 2010). Karstans (2010) states, “Often out in the tractor working long days alone, farmers young and old are using newly affordable and accessible technology such as BlackBerrys and iPhones to tap into social

media applications. By participating, they are taking...farmers' ideas, concerns and ideals...around the world.”

The 2009 NAFB study noted that of producers who make \$100,000 in gross farm income, 55 percent have access to the Internet, with 38 percent of them using it every day. However, 45 percent of farmers have someone else access the Internet for them. The number goes up for farmers making \$250,000 in gross farm income with 64.5 percent accessing the Internet. These numbers are likely to have grown since the NAFB study as broadband connectivity has expanded broadly in 2009 (Radwanick 2010). Because of the large gap of farmers that don't access the Internet themselves, farm and grower associations have made it a goal to teach farmers how to use the Internet and other social media tools (Thorstensen 2010, Knutson 2011, Hest 2010, Monteith 2010).

It's important to note Twitter is not the only social media outlet farmers use. Many use blogs, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and other less well-known social media tools to reach people (Karstans 2010, Knutson 2011, Crumb 2011). This thesis focuses on Twitter because of its ability to deliver important messages in real time, its discussion and chat capabilities for a large group of people, and because it's very easy for people to connect and find each other through hashtags added to Tweets. A hashtag is a word with the # symbol in front of it, often used to define the topic of the Tweet and make the tweet easily searchable by other users.

While some farmers share recipes or Tweet about farm happenings, others join Twitter because it is a source of information on agriculture policy on the local, state, and national level or to share ideas with others in the community (Thorstensen 2010). However, some join because of a fear that other, opposing organizations such as PETA

and HSUS use social media tools like Twitter to get their anti-animal agriculture message out to consumers (Hest 2010, Barbassa 2010). By using tools like Twitter to tell their story and explain how they operate their farms, farmers are realizing they don't have to go through the filter of traditional or mainstream media (Monteith 2010). They can also converse with people outside of the industry on a one-on-one basis (Crumb 2011) instead of participating in a form of communication where the farmer or an organization tells people what they are doing without any questions asked by the consumer.

Some farmers learned about Twitter from organizations like the national Dairy Checkoff (Thorstensen 2010), state growers associations (Knutson 2011), or Farm Bureau meetings (Hest 2010, Monteith 2010). They are encouraged by these national organizations to tell their own stories because the organizations have realized the importance of making sure the public sees farmers' stories are authentic (Thorstensen 2010).

Using social media allows farmers to reach a broader audience they may not be able to reach via other outlets. While only 8 percent of online Americans are using Twitter (Smith & Rainie 2010), the most likely groups of people to use it are young adults, minorities, and urban residents (Knutson 2011, Smith & Rainie 2010), which are all groups that may be difficult for farmers to reach out to from their rural areas.

One example of a way farmers have used Twitter, as reported by news outlets, is to campaign against organizations like the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), because some farmers believe those organizations portray agriculture as animal abuse. One of the most notable campaigns farmers have run on Twitter is against the winemaker Yellow Tail because of

a \$100,000 donation the company made to HSUS (Monteith 2010). Fairchild (2010) states people on Twitter persuaded others to boycott the wine, and often tagged their tweets with the hashtag “#yellowfail.” The campaign also was accompanied by similar campaigns on Facebook, YouTube, and other social media sites. Farmers who campaigned against HSUS believe the organization claims to use the money to support local animal shelters when it actually uses its money to over-regulate or oppose animal agriculture (Monteith 2010). When farmers flooded Twitter and other sites with their comments and boycott threats, the parent company of Yellow Tail acknowledged that it had made a mistake with its contribution and promised to look at non-profit organizations in the future that didn’t have lobbying interests (Ohio Farm Bureau 2010).

Commodity brokers have also become interested in farmers’ Tweets and their posted pictures and videos, because they provide information about crops and market conditions (Lambert 2010, Berry & Rees 2009). Because of all of the farmers tweeting about the condition of their crops, animal herds, weather conditions, and other factors on the farm, brokers are finding out information more quickly than they would from a subscription news service or other forms of information (Lambert 2010, Berry & Rees 2009). Information on crop conditions – especially up-to-date information – can have an effect on whether farmers hold off from selling or if they try to quickly sell their product because of food prices (Lambert 2010).

Because of the growing number of farmers using Twitter and other social media sites, the Ag Chat Foundation was created (Monteith 2010, AgChat Foundation 2011). Since April of 2009, each Tuesday night a monitored discussion over various topics affecting the farming community takes place using the #agchat hashtag (AgChat

Foundation, 2011). People who participate are not necessarily all farmers, producers, or ranchers. Rather, participants can include anyone who is interested in agriculture or food in general. In an e-mail interview on Sept. 3, 2010, with Jeff Fowle, the president of the AgChat Foundation, he said there were more than 80 participants at a recent AgChat Foundation conference, an average of 200 people participate in each weekly AgChat, and over 1,800 unique participants have contributed to the discussion since it started. While #agchat takes place on Twitter, the Foundation promotes all forms of social media – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and blogs – to disseminate the agriculture message (AgChat Foundation 2011). In a play on words, the promoting of agriculture is known as “agvocacy” and the AgChat Foundation, like other national organizations, also trains people to use social media to promote their stories (AgChat Foundation 2011).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory is not new to mass media research. It has been used in studies of newspaper readership and TV viewership as well as more recent studies on MySpace and Facebook (Bonds & Raacke 2010, Park et al. 2009, Chen 2011). Park et al. (2009) states “one way to explore the needs individuals are meeting by using social networking sites is to apply Uses and Gratifications Theory.” It’s important to note the research on how Twitter is used is very limited (Chen 2011) because it is a relatively new tool that has quickly gained popularity. Only two studies have been completed by Chen (2011) and Johnson and Yang (2009) that are specifically based on Uses and Gratifications Theory and Twitter.

The first study completed by Chen (2011, pg. 755) looked at whether “active Twitter use gratifies a need to feel connected to other people.” To research this, respondents completed a 21-question survey that asked questions about how they used Twitter, their gratification of their need to connect with others, and some demographics (Chen 2011). It was found that “people who seek out Twitter most actively would gratify a need to connect with others on Twitter to a greater extent than other users” (Chen 2011, p. 759). Applying this finding to U&G Theory, Chen said gratifying the need for connection for Twitter comes from Abraham Maslow’s idea that people need to belong and Henry Murray’s idea that we need to affiliate (Chen 2011).

The second study completed by Johnson and Yang (2009) looked at the motives for Twitter use and the satisfaction of having used Twitter (Johnson & Yang 2009). The researchers also posted an online survey to Twitter and used a convenience sample of 242 people to get their results. The study found that people had both social motives – which included things like having fun, being entertained, and expressing yourself more easily - and information motives – which included giving or receiving advice or learning new things - for using the social media site (Johnson & Yang 2009).

In the recent past, U&G Theory has also been expanded on with a study on why people join Facebook groups and why people use social media sites. Park et al. (2009) researched the link between the use of Facebook groups and political and civic engagement. They used data from 1,715 participants from two Texas universities who were randomly invited to participate in an online survey. To look at the uses and gratifications behind using Facebook groups, Park et al. (2009, p. 730) said respondents were given a list of 16 statements regarding Facebook groups use. They asked the

students to “rate their level of agreement with specific reasons for using Facebook Groups...” On the other end, Park et al. (2009) also asked students to rate their involvement in civic and political groups, by asking them to rate their experiences in volunteering. Analysis of the results noted there were four needs people had when joining a group: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information. Park et al. (2009, p. 731) noted: “Individuals who participate in Facebook groups to satisfy socializing needs are generally interested in meeting and talking with others as well as getting peer support and a sense of community. Entertainment gratification refers to engagement in Facebook groups for leisure and amusement needs. As for information needs, Facebook groups users intend to learn about on-and-off campus events and details regarding specific products and services. Finally, survey respondents are likely to participate in Facebook groups for several reasons related to seeking and maintaining their personal status through online group participation.”

According to Ruggiero (2000, p. 3), the U&G approach was developed to “study the gratifications that attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs.” The key concept behind U&G is audience activity (Rubin 1994), or how people use the media (Chen 2011), instead of how the media affects people. It’s important to look at U&G Theory to study the use of Twitter, especially among a niche group of people, to understand why people are using the new medium and what gratifications they are receiving from it (Chen 2011). Knowing this information will be essential to meeting audiences’ needs in the future.

Katz et al. (1973) says media use is goal-directed and that McQuail, Blumler, and Brown in 1972 came up with the following categories for media use: that it is used as a

“diversion or for entertainment purposes, to build community and personal relationships, for personal identity, and surveillance” (Katz et al. 1973, p. 512-513). In his research, McQuail looked at different radio and television programs and he developed a number of media-person interactions that he said captured the most important media satisfactions (McQuail 2005). His groups consisted of those people who used media for personal relationships, for personal identity, and for surveillance or information seeking (McQuail 2005, Katz et al. 1973). These themes are much like those that Chen (2011) and Park et al. (2009) found in their studies on Facebook and Twitter as well.

McQuail (2005, p. 424) explained when people choose media and the content associated with it that it is “generally rational and directed toward certain specific goals and satisfactions.” Chen (2011) contends since many outlets compete for a user’s attention, people will intentionally choose which medium meets their needs when it comes to information, emotional connection and status. Chen (201, p. 756) argues “[U&G] follows that people who are most active on Twitter would do so because they get something out of that experience.”

However, U&G Theory has not been developed without its criticisms. Baran & Davis 2006, Ruggiero 2000, and Chen 2011 say it doesn’t address the effects of a medium (Baran & Davis 2006), the research is too tied to the individual, which makes it hard to generalize to the public, and U&G is too compartmentalized (Rubin 1994). However, with the resurgence of the Internet (Park et al. 2009), and especially new media, U&G has again been applied to mass communication research studies (Baran & Davis 2006, Ruggiero 2000) to study gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (Ruggiero 2000) by people who use media. Baran & Davis (2006) argue that U&G will

be important when it comes to studying why people may choose Internet-based communication methods over traditional methods like magazines, newspapers, and television.

### **Chapter 3 - Research Questions and Methodology**

The following three research questions were asked:

**Research Question 1:** What uses and gratifications are being sought by farmers who use Twitter?

**Research Question 2:** To what extent is Twitter meeting the needs of farmers who are using it?

**Research Question 3:** How does Twitter fit in with farmers' use of other media?

The following operational definitions were used:

**Farmer:** a resident of the United States who would say his or her primary occupation is a farmer, producer, or rancher.

**Uses and Gratifications:** Rubin (1994, p. 419) says this is a theory "to explain how people use media to gratify their needs, to understand motives for media behavior, and to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and behavior."

To answer the proposed research questions, a qualitative methodology was used to further explore Twitter use by farmers. A 41-question survey was developed with mostly open-ended questions that asked why farmers joined Twitter, how Twitter has affected their lifestyles and jobs as farmers, and who they follow on the social networking site. Their age, gender, location, type of farming, and highest education level were asked to establish demographics. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the middle of October 2010,

farmers were solicited via Twitter for interviews. It was determined that a non-probability sample would need to be used because there is no way of obtaining a random sample through a directory or list of Twitter users.

Therefore, the researcher requested to interview farmers via Twitter by creating a Twitter account, @RuralTweet. The requests were made every day over the time span of three and half months, from the middle of October 2010 to the end of January 2011. Because Twitter will not let you repeat a message and the number of characters is limited to 140, a series of three messages was sent every day that told people about the project and led them to a website to further explain the thesis subject. The three messages were sent at different times throughout the day, and many times the researcher used HootSuite to schedule a message very early in the morning when farmers would be awake and checking market reports on Twitter. Two messages were sent on Tuesday nights when the weekly #agchats were taking place. All of the tweets had a hashtag like #agchat and #farmers in it. Hashtags were used in tweets so people could easily locate a conversation by simply clicking on the word.

While the researcher also followed as many farmers, farm journalists and farm organizations that she could find, she received a lot of assistance from those who retweeted her posts about wanting to talk to farmers on Twitter. Retweets are a way of forwarding messages on Twitter to your followers with credit to the original poster. The researcher had her tweets retweeted by farm and grower's associations as well as individuals.

Twitter allows users to include a brief biography of themselves. In the @RuralTweet account, the researcher explained who she was and what her thesis was

about. The biography led people to the same website the Tweets did and gave people an email address to contact the researcher to participate.

The solicitation Tweets asked people to reply via direct message or email. Direct message responses on Twitter are restricted to followers, so if the researcher wasn't following a user, the user could not direct message her. An email address was posted on the website so people could reach the researcher directly more easily. In the end, she had people who chose to contact her via Twitter direct messages and people who chose to contact her via email.

After confirming the subject considered their primary occupation to be a farmer, rancher, or producer in the United States, the researcher arranged for interviews, which were recorded. A few people were turned away because they were not U.S. residents or they did not consider farming to be their primary occupation. The interviews varied from 12 minutes to 48 minutes, with most lasting around 25 to 30 minutes. Because farmers usually live in rural areas, cell phone coverage was sometimes spotty, resulting in some inaudible phrases or answers. Altogether, 22 people were interviewed, and those interviews were transcribed in order to ensure accuracy in the coding process.

A qualitative approach to this research was used so the interviewees could provide detailed descriptions about why and how they were using Twitter. The open-ended question format was designed to provide as much information as possible since this was one of the first studies on farmers' use of Twitter.

### **Data Analysis**

When starting to analyze the data, the researcher used the data analysis process laid out by Rabiee (2004, p. 657) who says it should include "familiarization, identifying

a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation.” The researcher first familiarized herself with the data by conducting all of the interviews, listening to the audio files, and reading the transcripts several times. After studying the transcripts thoroughly, several themes that identified purposes for using Twitter emerged as many people expressed similar sentiments.

The main uses and benefits that recurred include: Twitter was used by farmers to obtain new information immediately, to meet others and exchange information with like-minded people, to reach out to consumers and others who would help the farming business, and to be an opinion leader on how farmers should use social media to share their message. After these areas emerged, the researcher cut up the transcripts and considered each answer’s meaning, context, internal consistency, frequency and extensiveness, and specificity, as was recommended by Raibee (2004). Each answer to a question was categorized based on the theme it represented, with most of the responses falling into the themes mentioned above or could be classified as a demographic. As with any interview, some answers were so vague they didn’t have any meaning or context, and some answers had several inaudible parts so they could not be properly categorized. People were then grouped together based on the amount of times their quotes represented the major themes.

## **Chapter 4 – Findings from the Research**

Four major purposes for using Twitter recur in the analysis of 22 interviews with farmers. The farmers find uses and gratification from Twitter primarily as information-seekers, leadership seekers, community builders, or business builders. The first group, the information-seekers, primarily use the social media tool to gain information and to tell their story. The second group seeks a leadership role in agriculture through Twitter. They seek out people to teach or lead when it comes to social media and how to share farmers' stories. The third group's main purpose is to build community among farmers, ranchers, and producers to exchange information. Finally, the people in the fourth group use Twitter almost exclusively for business purposes to connect with consumers or advisors on how to improve their business.

While each group has its own distinctive characteristics, some of those characteristics do overlap among the groups. For example, while a respondent may use Twitter primarily for surveillance and information purposes, some also used it on a secondary basis to help out their business.

### **Information-Seekers**

The first group, which includes **Respondents 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 19, and 21**, is made of people who regularly talked about using Twitter to find and disseminate information. Three main characteristics behind this purpose are that this group often praised how quickly they received information via Twitter, they sought information by following

specific topics on Twitter, and they took part in disseminating information to others to get their stories out.

The demographics of this group are varied with three females and four males with two of them falling in the 46-64 age range and five falling in the under 45 range. Two people in this group have advanced degrees, four have bachelor degrees and one person has at least some college. They come mostly from the nation's midsection – Nebraska, Missouri, Texas, Iowa, Colorado, and Arkansas. The group raises a diverse amount of crops and animals with three of them farming soybeans, one of them raising sheep, three of them producing corn, and others producing a variety of food including pork, wheat, popcorn, and beef. A majority of this group found out about Twitter via training sponsored by a farmer's association, through the news, or a former place of employment. While they mostly focus on farming when they tweet, they also discuss other areas of their lives, politics, or their hobbies and interests. When comparing their Twitter use among their use of other media throughout the day, many said they spent quite a few hours on it or spent most of their time using Twitter to receive news and information than they did traditional outlets like radio, television, and newspapers. Only one person, **Respondent 9**, said he typically spent less time on Twitter than he did with other mediums. **Respondents 9, 11, and 13** tweet from a computer, **Respondent 5** tweets mainly from his smartphone, and the rest said they use both computers and smartphones.

First, most of the group members praised the quick information they glean from Twitter. **Respondent 2** said "I think it's truly the quickest access to the current information, because I carry a phone that I can look at Twitter and check what's going on and there is so much stuff in the news about different issues in agriculture that there is

something almost every day that catches my eye.” **Respondent 9** reiterated the feelings that Twitter allows for more real-time sharing of information, which is something you can’t really get anywhere else, and said “You can reach out and receive information from a wide variety of sources, especially if you go out and seek new people to follow.” **Respondent 19** also noted Twitter’s fast and real-time information, and said he is more likely to read an article if someone points it out on Twitter.

**Respondent 5** said: “It allows you to converse with people that maybe you don’t necessarily have the opportunity to converse with. Sometimes, it’s like a giant coffee shop. You get a whole range of ideas from other people on what’s going on. You get to hear a wider perspective, especially on agriculture. You kind of get a feeling of what’s going on nationwide – whether it’s planting or harvesting, or what crops look like. You kind of get [the information] on a daily basis, not just at meetings or you see somebody once a year, you kind of get that flavor every day.”

Second, this group seeks out that information by following specific topics on the social media site that will give them the information they are seeking. When describing what topics he started following on Twitter **Respondent 13** said: “I was trying to keep up with what was happening with the political fight that was affecting the agricultural community, which is always out there as a topic on Twitter. The second reason was to try and promote, in my ways, more sustainable agriculture that was responsible to the community. I’m extremely concerned about natural resources like water and how people take care of their animals.” **Respondents 2, 9, 11, and 19** also said they first started out following a lot of agriculture industry news as well as other topics of personal interest. **Respondent 2** said while she uses Twitter to communicate with others at times, she

mostly uses it to get information. “I call myself a voyeur. I’m out there watching and reading, but I’m not always commenting.”

In response to the same question about topics they followed on Twitter, **Respondent 5** said at the beginning he mostly followed agriculture topics and started following some environmental groups so he could see what everyone was talking about. “There was a group of farmers out there that were getting together and AgChat was just getting started at that point, so it was a lot of ag-based stuff, started following some of the anti-animal activist groups as well. I was seeing what was going on both sides of the issue.”

While **Respondent 5** said all of this information hasn’t changed how he does his job, it’s changed how he gets information and research on his farm practices: “It’s made me try and make sure I’m talking about what we’re doing or researching what other people are doing a lot quicker than say waiting for a farm magazine to come out. The story might be 6 or 7 months old by the time you get the farm magazine. There might still be some relevant information, but I might try something out on the farm because I saw it on Twitter yesterday....”

Third, this group also enjoys disseminating information to other people and getting their story out. **Respondent 2** said she follows moms, “and the reason I do that is because I would like to let more people know about dairy.” The Information Seekers follow and tweet about a variety of different topics. For example, **Respondents 2, 11, and 19** have blogs, and **Respondents 2 and 11** said they use Twitter to push out information they may cover on their blogs.

Most of the group said they tweet about topics that are personally important to them, but **Respondents 2, 5, and 19** said they also tweet about daily activities and what they are doing. They were also asked if they tweet about political views or views on the news. **Respondents 5, 11, and 19** sometimes tweet about political views or views on the news. **Respondent 19** said: “I try not to get into politics, but I do send out tweets about issues that could affect producers/farmers/ranchers that are political as far as just putting out facts so that people are aware that this could happen to producers if this goes through. I’m not trying to bash anything, but more just trying to show others the producer’s standpoint.”

While still being an information-seeker who enjoys telling people her story as well, **Respondent 21** is an outlier for this group. While she said she uses Twitter to seek out information and to correspond with others to share her viewpoints throughout her statements, she said she mostly followed politicians, government organizations, media outlets and journalists. While she did also communicate with those in the agricultural sector and reiterates the theme of information seeking throughout her interview, she seems much more focused on receiving news and sharing her story with journalists. She said she enjoys “the ability to connect with people directly on the news business. Like there were some people on the news who were talking...on Fox News one time, and I contacted directly the person that was saying the wrong things. So I ... said ‘hey, I farm, so I know about this,’ without being disrespectful, they just don’t know about it. Making those connections is also important – connecting with others who are telling people about farming.”

This well-educated and young group is focused on receiving and giving information to many other people – other farmers, foodies, and just regular consumers. While they do have similar characteristics with other groups, especially the Community Builders, they follow people with the intention of receiving vital information from them.

### **Leadership Seekers**

The second group is comprised of people who are looking to lead others in agriculture and social media and using Twitter as a tool to do so. It is comprised of three people - **Respondents 6, 14, and 17**. There are two very defining elements about this group's purpose. First, everyone in the group has a strategic way of tweeting and they have deliberate uses for the social media site. Second, this group has a vision for how they think farmers should be using Twitter now and how they want farmers to use it in the future. When it comes to their demographics, one unique trait about this group is they have established leadership positions in physical organizations, like Farm Bureau organizations or other grower's associations, or have somehow established themselves as digital leaders on Twitter. Coming from Illinois, Kentucky, and California, all three people in this group are male, with two people under 45 years old and one between 46-64 years old. Two of them have bachelor's degrees and one has his master's. They all tweet from both a computer and a phone, but one said he mostly tweets from a phone. Each member of this group has also built quite a network for himself on Twitter. However, they each have their own definitions for what a "network" is, whether it is the interactions with people or by the number or status of people who follow them. One of the

respondents is followed by thousands of others, another is followed by a few hundred, and the third is followed by over a thousand, which he says is “not that many.” Ironically, this group also doesn’t spend as much time on Twitter as others in this study to get news and information. Two people use Twitter to get news and information one to a few times a day, while the other one said he uses it about a third of the time compared to his use of other media outlets.

First, when it comes to their strategy for Twitter, each person had his own way of tweeting and had a deliberate reasoning for his method of use. **Respondent 17** said he tweets when he is motivated to, whether it’s every other day or every three to four days, but he is strategic about what he tweets to counter-act some of the beliefs held by followers. “I guess here’s my philosophy on tweeting: I don’t burn it up...I’m followed by a lot of Humane Society and PETA people...more so than anybody else. I can put something on there every day with the same tone and same thought process and basically make those people numb to it. Or I can take another route, and every so often, take what I consider a simple, mundane task. Let’s take for example, we were unrolling hay the other day, out in the middle of a snowstorm and the cows ate before we did...We take that kind of tone with it so they understand,” he said.

**Respondent 6** said he became involved on the site because he knows and understands the psychology behind Twitter and how he can ask others questions in order to receive a certain response from them. “I seek out certain individuals who have an influential following and who have the potential for a major reach for impressions. And if they are a certain individual who is of similar thinking to me, I will ask leading questions to further engage the rest of their audience to further engage on a specific topic.

Otherwise, if it's a certain individual who has an opinion which is opposition to agriculture, I will ask leading questions to show, demonstrate, or cast a light upon the error in their thought process and the fallibility in their logic," he said.

Although **Respondent 14** was not as blunt in saying he used Twitter to spread a specific message, he made it clear in his interview that he sees himself as a leader who can teach others to use it in a way that is advantageous to farming, and that there is a need to teach farmers the valuable uses of Twitter. He said he even plans to use Twitter more for networking when he gets his book published, starts to do more life coaching, and participates in more speaking engagements. He said: "I'm on the only one on [a major farm organization's board] that uses Twitter. ... A few of the young guys... are on Facebook, but maybe just three or four. So even the young guys are not using Twitter, at least in my part of the world yet. ... Even some of the businesses that I would like to follow, some of the businesses trying to use Twitter are doing a very poor job. I've actually taken the effort to make suggestions to increase their visibility, and they have ignored them... I think the farmers are going to have to see value. They think it's silly and it takes a lot of time and all that, so they go to the coffee shop and they watch TV. It's a matter of choices. I'm not sure what's going to drive the farmers to use Twitter, because a lot of the farmers that are using it are using it for a purpose. They are building a tremendous following with speaking engagements and stuff like that... There are very few farmers that are just on there just to be participating."

Second, this group also sees a vision for how farmers can use Twitter and other social media in order to get their story out and communicate with consumers.

**Respondent 6** said: "I think it will continue to grow and be recognized for the

importance and the opportunity it offers to reconnect with consumers. I think it's an invaluable tool. Maybe it's not exactly Twitter, who knows how long Twitter will last, I have a feeling it will be around for a while. But it's a tool – a connection, the opportunity to build bridges, grow communities is tremendous and I don't see it dissipating in the near future.” **Respondent 6** pays attention to what is going on at technology conferences and sees it as his mission to share the latest innovations with the agriculture community. He said: “I was actually probably a bit unique. I was probably one of the first...to get actively involved in Twitter, and I actually spend more time teaching others how to utilize [it] – how to connect to specific audiences and work with a number of [people] ... on how to reach a specific audience, how to gain interest, [and] how to participate in productive/professional dialogue.”

**Respondent 17** said he is focused on getting the younger generation on Twitter, but he is hesitant to say that Twitter will really be able to take off until the older generation of farmers either adopts it or retires and lets the younger generation take over. He said: “If we look at the older guys, which make up the vast majority of the [cattle] community, and take the average age of the producer, which is 62 or 63, or whatever it is these days, he's probably not going to adapt real well and change his business. Now if we come down to the minority, you know, guys my age, it probably will have an effect. We're not talking short term though, and the reason I say that is, we've got to wait our turn in the business... Those 65 year olds have got to retire and move on and give us the reigns a little bit. Then I think the social medias and stuff like that will play a much larger role, but until that change happens, I don't see it being very significant.”

People in this group have the idea they are either the opinion leaders or they are teachers of social media and have an interest in leading the farming community into the next state of technological innovation. While it's a small group, they are well educated and focused on how they can use technology strategically to help promote agriculture.

### **Community Builders**

The farmers that make up the Community Builders group use Twitter to meet and relate to new friends in the business and work to build relationships through the social tool. There are three main elements to this purpose behind using the social media site. First, most people in this group joined Twitter with the intention of reaching out to others. Second, Twitter has changed how people in this group communicate with other people on Twitter and people in the physical world to provide a greater consensus on what farming is all about. Finally, in a characteristic similar to but not the same as the Information-Seekers group, this group seeks people out to follow who have like-minded interests to follow and build relationships with.

Nine people – **Respondents 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 20, and 22** – are in this, the largest group. When it comes to their demographics, there are three females and six males, and four people between 46-64 years old, with five of the group members under 45. This group also grows a diverse amount of crops such as corn and soybeans, but they mostly raise cattle and other meat such as chicken, rabbits, sheep and hogs. They are from all over the nation – two from Alabama, and one from Iowa, New York, Kentucky, Maine, Kansas, Utah, and Nebraska. There is one person who has a junior college degree, five people who have bachelor's degrees, one person with a law degree, and two others

with a graduate education. Compared to their other news and information gathering habits, this group was across the board in whether they spent more, less, or about the same amount of time on Twitter compared to their other news and information gathering habits. Two people said they are on and off Twitter so much throughout the day that it would be hard to compare how much time they spend on the social media site compared to how much time they spend with other news outlets. Out of the nine community builders, only two – **Respondent 20 and Respondent 3** – limited themselves to Twitter. The other seven used other forms of social media as well to build relationships. Those that did use social media usually used quite a few of the social tools at their disposal including Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs and YouTube.

Most of the people in this group have met someone in person who they were first introduced to via Twitter. They like to share information with others, and they also think there are some business benefits to Twitter. However, they concentrate most on building community and making connections with people.

The first characteristic of this theme is that people joined Twitter with the intention of meeting others and building support for agriculture. **Respondent 12** commented on why she joined: “Well, because in middle of 2009 the dairy farmers were in a horrible financial mess – the price of milk had crashed dramatically, and so every dairy farm, including my own farm was losing money at about a rate of \$1,000 per year, per cow. So I thought it was such a financial disaster that I thought I could reach out and find other farmers that were in the same situation, so that was my primary goal to try and talk with other dairy farmers in the country.” **Respondent 8** said he joined when he

realized there was an active agricultural community on it, and **Respondent 15** said he was primarily interested in the new way of connecting with people.

Second, Twitter has changed how this group communicates both online and in the real world with other people. When asked if he believes Twitter has changed how he communicates, **Respondent 3** said: “Definitely... It’s allowed me to share what I’m doing on the farm with people around the world. It’s allowed me to communicate with other farmers to see how it used to be...I never did it, but you have to go to the coffee shop or the elevator office and you sit around and drink coffee and talk to your neighbors about how harvest or planting was going. Now, when I’m sitting in the tractor or the combine, you’ve got auto steer, I can find out how harvest is going in Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska or wherever, not just in my local area.”

**Respondent 12** reiterated the idea that it has “opened up a whole new world of people to communicate with.” When **Respondent 15** was asked if it has changed his method of communicating, he said: “Yes and no. The yes is that obviously when you communicate on Twitter, you have to do it in brief bursts. You better be pretty succinct so what you have to say comes across. No, because I find that if there is something that has to go further than 140 characters conversation back and forth, many of us tend to revert to either e-mail or telephone calls.”

However, **Respondent 4** said while he is very conscious of his activity on Twitter, he is working hard to make sure he is building relationships outside of social media and in the real world as well. He said: “It has kind of helped me when I encounter real life questions from people. I’ve got a lot of questions on Twitter before just on various aspects of a dairy farmer and agriculture in general. Being that’s over a computer,

that gives me time just to stop and make sure I'm sure of the answer I am going to give. Of course, you don't have that luxury when you are standing face-to-face with someone. Having already seen a lot of the questions that come over Twitter, that's kind of, in effect, been a good practice for me to be up on issues and be able discuss them face-to-face with people when I'm presented with that situation." He also acknowledges the potential downside of communicating by social media. "It's so easy to do and such easy communication and such a good way to get our story out there, we can run the risk that we get to the point that we spend too much time doing that and not carving out enough time in our lives to make personal contact with people. From my standpoint, I like talking about things on my farm and I like to promote agriculture in general, and casting a positive light. Part of that is that I engage in traditional media, engage with people I meet whenever I'm out somewhere. I still got to remember that I got to make time to engage people in all of the traditional ways about agriculture I need to make sure I don't put all of my eggs in the social media basket, so to speak."

Third, most of the people in this group said they actively seek people out who have like-minded interests to follow on Twitter and build a community with. Following someone on Twitter means you will receive their updates and whichever updates they choose to retweet. For example, when asked who they follow on Twitter and why, **Respondent 22** said: "People I follow now are off of retweets, you know, someone will retweet something that someone Tweeted about, so I'll look at their profile and their timeline and try to follow them if they are interesting. ...So ag and people who have common interests – like precision ag. I try and find as many of those people that I can

just because precision ag is a technology that's changing constantly, so it's good to keep up on that information.”

While many of the people in this group look for people in the agricultural community to follow, they each have their own ideas on who is “fit” to follow. Many say that each individual they follow is selected for a specific reason such as finding a person who meets a particular demographic. **Respondent 15** said he always checks people's profiles to see if they tweet too frequently or if they are providing valuable content.

**Respondent 3** was the only one out of the group who said he doesn't search for people to follow. He usually just waits for people to follow him, but will follow anyone that looks like a mom or is a part of the agricultural community.

In response to the same question, **Respondent 16** explained her strategy for following people and really connecting with others: “I have two different groups. ... I follow first of all other agriculture people who are tweeting good information, good links out there, good basic news. And then, the other group that I follow is consumers that are not at all involved in agriculture. I have really worked to find those other people that I could connect with, and those are mostly moms. I'm a mom and I can visit with them on that level as well.”

This group is focused on community and making connections with others in agriculture by being specific about who they choose to follow on Twitter, as most joined with specific intentions to meet and converse with others. While they seem pleased with Twitter, they are active users of other social media tools and they make sure that they are not putting all of their energy into Twitter or social media in general, as they like to connect with others face to face as well.

## **Business Builders**

The final group consists of three people – **Respondents 1, 10, and 18** - who are all concentrating on using Twitter to benefit their business and grow it through a niche market they seek out on Twitter. There are two main characteristics behind their purpose for using the site. First, this group is very strategic about whom they connect with on Twitter to improve their business. Second, these people are on Twitter and using it because they believe they get valuable resources from Twitter they can't get anywhere else. When it comes to their demographics, two males and one female make up this group. Two are organic farmers and one has a diverse amount of crops and cattle. Two are under 45 years of age and the other is between 46-64 years old. All three have their bachelor's degrees and they are from Wyoming, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

**Respondents 10 and 18** were the most unusual because they make it very clear they are only on Twitter to benefit business. **Respondent 10** only corresponds with commodity brokers and major companies through the social media site, and **Respondent 18** only corresponds with consumers. **Respondent 1** seeks out community, but in the end, overwhelmingly says throughout her statements that her primary use of Twitter is to promote the family business. This group is also across the board when it comes to how much time they spend on Twitter in comparison to other news outlets in order to find news and information as one doesn't really use Twitter to get information, one said she uses it more, and the other said it was about the same.

First, this group is very strategic about whom they connect with on Twitter. Respondent 18 said as an organic farmer, he is looking for a niche market, and he can

target those people on Twitter. He doesn't have time to talk to other farmers, so therefore, he only connects with consumers. **Respondent 10** for the most part only follows a niche group as well, but he is focused on following commodity marketers. He said that he also doesn't spend a lot of time focusing on communicating with other farmers. While it's clear **Respondent 1** uses Twitter for information and community building as well, she also uses it extensively to benefit her organic farm. In response to the question "Why did you join Twitter?" she said she and her husband were doing a lot of social media about their farm. They have a large direct-market business that sells beef, pork, and chicken, and they had already created a website, Facebook account, and a blog about their farm. "So the next step was Twitter - just to give short little updates on what was happening. On our blog, you can see our tweets from our farm, and it's kind of 'oh, what's going on.' If we have a calf picture or things like that. So really engage the consumers more than a long blog or a static website," she said.

This group is also very strategic in who they follow, and are focused on people who will help benefit their business. When asked whom **Respondent 1** decided to follow on Twitter she said she follows a lot of moms, because they make the grocery and food decisions. She also follows a lot of people who are also in the organic farm business, just as she is, so her and her husband can get a sense of what is going on in their market. **Respondent 18** also said he looks for those who are interested in organic food: "It's people that are foodies, people interested in connecting to where their food comes from. These are people that are interested in connecting to how it's done. They know organics, they understand what organics mean. They are looking for it and they can't find it in their supermarket...So I use Twitter to go out and find individual customers that I then bring

to my website for purchasing.” And **Respondent 10** looks for the most reliable source to get him the commodity information he needs: “I get a lot of the commodity brokers just because there are a lot of people down in the trading pit and they are talking to different traders, so they can give a better idea on how they expect the morning market to open. They will tweet about breaking news such as China buying a large portion of American soybeans or the Russian drought...I follow a lot of people in the ethanol industry, beef industry, a couple of other companies that are involved in agriculture like Monsanto and BASF, the major companies like that.”

Second, this group receives valuable business information on Twitter they don't think they would have really learned anywhere else. When **Respondent 10** was asked if he had any examples of something related to agriculture he learned on Twitter that he doesn't think he would have learned anywhere else, he talked about an example he learned from all of the commodity traders that he follows: “Last night, probably around 11, I found out that China bought another very large portion of American soybeans, and that affected overnight trading as well as today's trading. But I was aware of it last night, so I could prepare for it in my marketing strategy for today. I didn't have to wait until it was announced during the day.” **Respondent 10** said Twitter offers him live updates from a group of marketers that can be sent right to his phone, and he hasn't found another service that can offer that without having to sit by a computer all day. **Respondent 1** also gave an example of the information her and her husband have used to help their farm they don't think they would have found elsewhere. “We [were] going to be calving soon and he found one with a problem that we never heard about before or had seen in the operation. He quickly tweeted it and within seconds people responded with ideas and

suggestions from the other dairy farmers that we follow. That kind of information has been very valuable to us.” **Respondent 18** said Twitter offers something that Facebook can’t give him – connectivity for free.

This group was very distinctive because they put such an emphasis on making their business better throughout their statements, but they differ in who exactly it is they are reaching out to and who they think can help them improve their business. They all agree though that they have benefited from Twitter through either the knowledge they obtain from commodity brokers or making connections with consumers who are seeking organic products.

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion and Limitations of the Research**

When looking at the first research question, “What gratifications and uses are being sought by farmers who use Twitter?” the four different classifications the farmers were grouped in clearly answers this question because it defines their purpose.

Respondent 14 probably said it best when he said, “Everybody on there has a purpose. I don’t see farmers on there just to be on there.” The farmers are using Twitter to find and share information, lead others in using social media, build a community of farmers, and help their businesses. All of the groups are very different even though some of the groups and respondents have traits in common. When comparing and contrasting the four groups, certain things are clear. First, people in each group acknowledge that other people on Twitter have different purposes for using the social media site, but they don’t always understand how others are using it or how it might be effective in other ways.

Respondent 18, who was in the business builders group, said he didn’t really see the point in talking with other farmers, because, after all, what would a peach grower in Florida have in common with a grain producer in Kansas? Respondent 15, who was in the community builders group, said he finds one doesn’t get many customers directly from Twitter, but admits a link to a Twitter feed on other websites, might generate some interest in one’s product. Farming is a very diverse occupation and people have just as many diverse reasons for being on Twitter. But the agriculture community could be better served by Twitter if people had more of an understanding of what each person’s purpose was so they could help each other reach those results.

Second, there were no major trends regarding the demographics of the respondents in the study. For example, people under the age of 45 were not all

categorized in some group, and each group had diversity among the geographic areas people lived in and what each farmer produced. This is likely because a social media site like Twitter is such a personalized tool that each person can decide how they want to use it to benefit themselves. The only major trend that stood out was that everyone interviewed said they had at least a few years of college or an associate's degree, with multiple farmers having advanced degrees. Perhaps a later quantitative study could be done to delve deeper into how the demographics might relate to how one uses Twitter or what gratifications and uses people are seeking.

Third, those who use Twitter for business purposes appear to differ from media users studied in other Uses and Gratifications Theory research. It did not surprise the researcher that this group stood out because, after all, it was a certain occupation that was being studied instead of a group of people who are all the same age, the same gender, or were from the same region. Perhaps the same results would come about if someone else were to look at how doctors or some other diverse profession was using Twitter. Therefore, there are also further questions to be asked on whether farmers think they have benefited financially from Twitter, or any other social media tool, and whether it's made a major impact on their farming business or operations in general.

Fourth, the other three groups – the information-seekers, leadership seekers, and community builders – are all groups that have been identified by McQuail (2005), Park et al. (2009), and Chen (2011) when looking at how people use media. This research builds on all of their ideas that people seek out media for these reasons. It specifically expands on Chen's (2011) study on the use of Twitter and the Park et al. (2009) study on Facebook Groups. Chen noted that most people who use Twitter do so because they get

an experience out of it. The four groups clearly show that people are building their businesses, receiving information, and making new friends in the business. The Park study found that people join and participate in Facebook Groups because it is socializing, entertaining, supporting one's self-status, and informational. While their study was of a different social network, the fact that similar themes were found may be able to contribute to future research that looks at similarities and differences between the two social networks.

Fifth, when looking at the second research question - To what extent is Twitter meeting the needs of farmers who are using the medium? – it's important to highlight that even though they were using the social media tool, some farmers did have some reservations about it. Some of those complaints include spending too much time on Twitter and forgetting that farmers need to use traditional media as well, that the conversation on Twitter is turning to how cool it is that farmers are using it instead of focusing on quality agriculture discussion, and that it's harder to convince older farmers to use the social media site. On the flip side though, most comments were overwhelmingly positive on how many of the farmers believed they were a part of a new movement and community by making new friends, and that they gained valuable information on animal care, business marketing, and agricultural policy.

Sixth, when looking at the third research question, "How does Twitter fit in with farmer's use of other media?" there were two distinct groups that stood out. First, all but one of the Information-Seekers said they used Twitter more than other news outlets to receive news and information, and the Leadership group actually used it less. The other two groups were across the board when it came to how much they used Twitter for news

and information gathering. While more research in this area needs to be done in order to quantify just how much time farmers are spending on Twitter to get their information, this information should give agriculture organizations a good idea of what farmers think about using social media and how they can use it in the future.

Because there wasn't any previous research on farmers' use of Twitter, this exploratory research project as a whole has limitations in areas that should be expanded. First, this research just focused on farmers that resided in the United States, but use of Twitter among farmers is growing internationally. A few people from outside the United States contacted the researcher wishing to participate in the study, but because they were not working in the United States, they were not allowed to take part. Second, for economic reasons, many farmers are working other jobs as their primary form of income, so people who volunteered or worked part-time on a farm, or had a farm but it wasn't their primary source of income, were not interviewed. There is also a large contingent of agriculture public relations and communications people using Twitter and participating in the weekly #agchats. They are asking farmers questions, promoting products, and encouraging discussion or agriculture policy. All of these groups are likely to affect the agricultural discussion on Twitter, so perhaps a further study could include them.

Research about farmers' use of Twitter could also benefit by being looked at in different ways. For example, an updated quantitative study on just how many farmers are tweeting and how many impressions they are generating would be beneficial in understanding their full impact in making people understand how food is produced. Another form of research that would be helpful would be a content analysis about what

those tweets are discussing and who is clicking on links to find out what kind of information people are really learning from these farmers.

Regardless of the reasons that farmers use Twitter or the strategies they employ in using it, it's clear that they each have a purpose for using it, whether it be reaching out to each other to exchange ideas and information, show leadership within a group of people by training others, build a community, or try to improve their businesses and their profession. By tweeting individually as farmers instead of letting their organizations, such as the Farm Bureau or a popular grower's association, tweet for them, they are able to obtain and provide a wide variety of information and connect with different kinds of people.

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## Appendix 1

The following graphs provide demographics for each of the groups mentioned in the preceding research.

### Information Seekers

No.	Age	Gender	Type of farming	Location	Education
2	46-64	Female	Dairy/beef	Arkansas	bachelors
5	Under 45	Male	Corn/soybeans/popcorn	Nebraska	bachelors
9	Under 45	Male	Crops/hogs	Iowa	bachelors
11	Under 45	Female	Pork/corn/soybeans/wheat	Missouri	2 yrs of college
13	46-64	Male	Cattle	Texas	Advanced degree
19	Under 45	Male	Sheep	Colorado	Bachelors
21	Under 45	Female	Soybeans/corn/alfalfa	Nebraska	Master's

### Leadership Seekers

No.	Age	Gender	Type of farming	Location	Education
6	Under 45	Male	Hay/horses/cattle	California	bachelors
14	46-64	Male	Corn/beans/cows	Illinois	bachelors
17	Under 45	Male	Cattle	Kentucky	bachelors

### Community Builders

No.	Age	Gender	Type of farming	Location	Education
3	Under 45	Male	Hogs/corn/soybeans	Iowa	bachelors
4	Under 45	Male	Dairy	Alabama	bachelors
7	46-64	Female	Chickens/rabbits/ducks/veggies	Alabama	Junior college
8	46-64	Male	Sheep/equines/donkey	Kentucky	some master's
12	46-64	Female	Dairy	New York	JD
15	46-64	Male	Meat/produce	Maine	Bachelors
16	Under 45	Female	Cattle	Kansas	Bachelors
20	Under 45	Male	Dairy	Utah	Bachelors
22	Under 45	Male	Corn/soybeans	Nebraska	Masters

### Business Builders

No.	Age	Gender	Type of farming	Location	Education
1	Under 45	female	Organic dairy	Minnesota	bachelors
10	Under 45	male	Wheat, sunflowers, corn, cattle	North Dakota	bachelors
18	46-64	male	Organic meats	Wyoming	bachelors

## Appendix 2

Hello.

This is Sarah Van Dalsem, a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. I talked with you a few days ago and you agreed to talk with me about how and why you are using Twitter. Are you still willing to talk to me at this time?

I have just a few reminders before we get started.

First, this conversation will be recorded to ensure accuracy; however your real name and Twitter name will not be used and will remain anonymous throughout the course of the study.

Second, you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Third, if you have any concerns about this project, you can contact my committee chair, Sue Burzynski Bullard, at 402-472-7110 or the UNL Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965.

If you'd like to receive a copy of the final results of this study, I'd be happy to take down your contact information at the end of this conversation and send you an electronic copy.

If it's OK with you, can we get started?

## **Interview Questions**

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?

Where did you first hear about Twitter?

When did you join Twitter?

Why did you join Twitter?

What topics or issues did you first follow?

Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?

Are there any changes in Twitter you like to see?

Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?

If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?

If you don't use a mobile device, why not?

Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?

How about during the day?

How about in the evening?

How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?

Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?

Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?

### **Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?

In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?

If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?

Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?

What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?

In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

Who do you follow on Twitter and why?

How many people follow you?

How many people do you follow?

How often do you Tweet?

How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?

Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?

What do you Tweet about?

- Daily activities/what you are doing?
- Political views or views on the news?
- Links to resources/articles?
- Do you answer people's questions?
- Do you ask questions and seek advice?
  - o If so, do people respond to you?
- Any other topic I've left out?

Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you.**

Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?

Gender:

City, State:

Type of farming you do:

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Thanks again for taking time out of your day to talk to me. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to give me a call back at (785) 221-1472 or you can call the Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-3123.

## Appendix 3

### Respondent 1

#### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

##### **About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?**

Well I don't know when I started hearing about it awhile back. But we started using it for our farm operation in August 2009. That's when I set up a farm account and then a personal one as well.

##### **Why did you join Twitter?**

We were doing a lot more social media with our farm – getting our story out. Also, we have a large direct market business. We sell beef, pork and chicken directly from our farm, so we had been updating our website, working on our blog, establishing a Facebook account for our farm. So the next step was Twitter just to give short little updates on what was happening. On our blog, you can see our tweets from our farm, and it's kind of "oh, what's going on." If we have a calf picture or things like that. So really engage the consumers more than a long blog or a static website.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** To reach out to consumers, we are trying to get a lot of [REDACTED] people, moms especially, so people in our area of course. We do a lot of work with natural grocery stores in our area, so we follow a lot of them as well, and just in general the agricultural community and just connecting with other folks that are doing the same thing we are doing.

##### **Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?**

Well, we know the news immediately. My husband I joke that we don't need to watch the news anymore because it's all on Twitter. It's totally true. We do follow all of the major news networks on our Twitter account so everything pops up automatically, but we kind of get a sense of what's happening culturally in our region or in the subgroup or in agriculture – the major things that people are talking about. Maybe it's the Farm Bureau, or energy use, or water and that's streaming, so it's interesting to see how the topic develops on certain subtopics that we follow.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** Oh, I don't know. We utilize lists a lot, so getting those to be a little more user friendly, updating the applications. You know, we use our smartphones quite a bit, so using the lists, if the lists were a little more friendly on the applications, but otherwise yeah, I don't know any changes.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both. My husband, he's been taking over the farm account, and he does most of his tweets from his phone, and I do mine from both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems at all?** No, he uses the Blackberry application from his blackberry, and he's never said he has any issues. I also use the

Blackberry, but I use the UberTweet application, and I've never had any issues with that as well. And actually, it's quite easy. I think it's easier to tweet from my phone because I can quickly take a picture automatically ask me if I want to UberTweet it. You can do that right on my Twitter, and you don't have to log into anything. It's a lot quicker than having to plug my camera into my laptop or do any of that.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I only use Ubertweet, on my laptop I use Tweetdeck.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?**

Well, I don't leave the house. My first wave of information is I'll turn on the computer in the morning. [REDACTED] Public Radio is my homepage, so that's my first bout of information in the morning. After that I try to stay away from social media until mid-afternoon when my kids are asleep, or are napping because I don't want it to interfere with my interactions with them. But then it's following twitter, logging on to Facebook and finding out what's going in the world that way as well.

**OK, so you don't do anything until nap time, what about in the evening?**

Evening, I rarely watch TV news, so that's just not a main source of information. Just because we're dairy farmers and we are usually in the barn when that happens. So for me, it's NPR on the radio, I'll listen to that while I'm doing my chores. Or looking at my phone, Twitter I guess.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?**

Oh, probably more.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones? I know you mentioned Facebook already, but any other ones?**

LinkedIn, I don't use that too often. Google, you know, Google Wave those type of things.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how? Definitely, more fast-paced getting information quicker. Finding things that I might not necessarily seek out on my own, because you can see what your friends are talking about, so it's information that I might not have sought out by myself. So it exposes me to different ideas and thoughts as well.**

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your farming lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how If not, why not?**

A little. It's the connection with our customers and our peers as well. I think we actually with the farm account, we actually use it with our peers more than anything else. You know, asking

questions about animal health and nutrition and automatic receiving responses from around the United States and the world. One time, my husband he was out checking dry cows and checking milk that we are going to be calving soon and he found one with a problem that we never heard about before or had seen in the operation. He quickly tweeted it and within seconds responded with ideas and suggestions – from the other dairy farmers that we follow. That kind of information has been very valuable to us.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?**

We saw them at the conferences, major magazines and commodity groups and through newspapers and stuff, but we didn't really have the day to day interaction with fellow farmers.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?**

Much larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?**

I would say that we are more informed in the way that we can see other ideas as opposed to (inaudible)...we can see other ideas and what people are talking about across the nation.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?**

Oh gosh. No. There is a lot that happens. Not that I wouldn't learn anywhere else. I am not sure. I really don't know.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?**

I think a lot more people who are agriculture producers are going to be able to communicate with other agriculture producers, but also to get our story out, so talking with consumers, especially the mom groups, talking about what we do, why we do it, and why it's important

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** We follow a lot of moms, because they are the number 1 decision makers for grocery and food decisions. So we follow a lot of moms, we follow a lot of people in our area as well, agriculture folks from around the world in a variety commodities. We follow a lot of the major news networks...let's see...what else. Oh. We are an organic farm, so we follow a lot of people who consider themselves green or organic so that we can kind of get a sense of what is going on that niche market as well.

**How many people follow you?** Both are about equal

**How many people do you follow?** The farm has I think 1500 and I have around 800

**How often do you Tweet?** 3-4 times a day

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Probably 3-4 times a day as well.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yes.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yes, a lot of what we are doing, pictures of the farms. Since I follow the mom aspect, I tweet a lot about things that are happening with my kids and that sort of thing and connecting with moms that way. We do a lot of recipes and upload to the blog as well. Agriculture fun facts and fun things that we are doing on the farm.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Oh, sometimes, especially my husband.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes, we've found that it's more valuable when you can provide links or picture. It provides a more valuable experience so that it isn't just a tweet to that 140 character statement.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yes, all the time.
- **You said before that you ask questions and seek advice and you used the example before that your husband used the example of you had a sick animal, so people respond to you?** Yes.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** Um...not really, I guess.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Oh, I think it's fine. The whole point of Twitter is to be short and precise, you know, microblogging, so if you start changing that you really lose what Twitter was meant to be.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into:** under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus? I'm 28, so I'm under 45

**Gender:** Female

**City, State:** [REDACTED], Minnesota

**Type of farming you do:** We're an organic dairy farm, 4<sup>th</sup> generation

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Both my husband and I have bachelor's degrees.

## Respondent 2

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Ok. Probably it was the very end of October last year, I went to a training for dairy farmer moms in Kansas City that was done by Midwest Dairy Association, and they introduced us to Twitter, and Facebook and blogging and asked us to...if there were any of those platforms that was that we would like to become involved with and would we become involved with and then they shared information about each one.

**When did you join Twitter?** Well actually, before we had the meeting, they required us to get online and get a Twitter account and a Facebook account and the blogging was really left up to the individual, and I didn't do anything on that. So when I went to the meeting, I had already set up an account for both of those;

**So is that why you joined Twitter - because of this meeting?** Yes, because I like to promote dairy and agriculture and it's a way to reach more people about what we do on the farm, so I was open to that.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Well, at first I didn't quite understand all of it. I don't know. I probably...the first things I followed were pertaining to agriculture comments and remarks and then it was later that I kind of started looking at other people's Twitters that connected with a blog.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** I think it's truly the quickest access to the current information, because I carry a phone that I can look at Twitter and check what's going on and there is so much stuff in the news about different issues in agriculture that there is something almost every day that catches my eye.

**Are there any changes in Twitter you would you like to see?** I don't really know, because I still don't feel very versed in using it to its fullest, so I really feel like I'm still a learner

**Do you tweet from a mobile device?** Computer? Or Both? Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** No, it's worked really well. There has been a few times when the system was down, but they always have the little picture that comes up, you know and says it's out of order, but it's always come back on pretty quickly.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use Tweetdeck.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Ok, I usually we are watching the local TV news channel that carries the news for our area. And I don't usually, that's really the main thing, I don't usually get online, just through the TV.

**How about during the day?** Oh, I would say I check my phone, I check Twitter, sometimes if there is something going on in the United States news, I may get on my phone and check to see if there is any news out there online. But usually it's just on TV.

**How about in the evening?** Kind of the same. I use my evening time, that's when I'm really looking at Facebook and if I haven't looked at Twitter during the day, I look at it then. I don't look at Twitter just every day, some days I just have too much going on.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** I imagine just thinking about the time I watch TV and the time that I Twitter, probably half

**Do you use other social media sites, I know you mentioned Facebook and if so, which ones?** I do have Facebook, and I really use Facebook and Twitter probably more to let people know when I put a blog entry on. And I do communicate some with it, but I don't do a lot of it. I'm kind of...I call myself a voyeur. I'm out there watching and reading, but I'm not always commenting.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Well, it's added another dimension; it hasn't changed how I may verbally communicate with other organizations and things I'm doing because I don't use it as much as other people do.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** The tasks that I do here at home, it hasn't really changed what we do, but it has probably given us greater access to current information like markets.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Probably for dairy, through our dairy co-op, and I received some online things from dairy groups like dairy management and dairy herd management, and articles, and things that come on (inaudible).

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I would say it's larger because I think if I had a question or issue about something, I would probably have more contacts. I would probably have more people I could call on.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I would say I'm more informed.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Probably about other commodity groups and things that are going on in their particular industry. We're so different and all the different things that we are doing. I think it's a great way to connect.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it will continue to grow and I think as more people become aware of how they can use it. I probably

think a lot of people use it in different ways, and if not Twitter, it will be something that comes out of Twitter.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** The people that I choose to follow are usually connected to agriculture, I have connected to some groups like moms, and the reason I do that is that I would like to let people know more about dairy, so I find that's the way we can connect with them.

**How many people follow you?** I think it's 200 and something. I don't look at it at all. I'm followed as by almost as many people as I follow, so right around over 200, I think. It might be more, I don't know.

**How often do you Tweet. I know you said before you kind of just like to look at things...?** I'm pretty sporadic. In a week's time, I probably don't tweet 3-5 times. I really have to feel strongly about something before I'll tweet, or if I have something, like I said, if I write a news blog or post, I like to put that out, so once a week for that and the other times might be 2-5.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Oh, it varies from day to day. I'd say on an average day, if I'm here at the house doing a variety of things, I'll probably look 3 times a day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yes, I've met, I just attended a blogging conference this past week and there was a lady there that I had not met and we had connected on Twitter, and so then there were people at another conference, I had followed them and then I met them at the conference.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yeah, probably, something connected to what I was doing, or a condition on the farm or something that has occurred.
- **Political views or views on the news?** I try..if I have, I try not to be confrontational, because I don't want that to become what people think of my Twitter. I don't want to get into that position.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes, and I probably tweet that way more than anything else.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** If I get question, I try to, and sometimes I haven't because I didn't check my phone and hours have passed since anybody had said anything and that's probably not very nice. Sometimes that so long ago, they don't even care what I think.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** I think I have just a few times, but not very often. I guess I'm a little intimidated by it all and not feeling as secure about it or good with it. I don't want people saying "oh, that stupid woman."
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yeah. I haven't asked a lot of questions though.

- **Any other topic I've left out?** No, I don't really think so. You asked me about the political thing. I think I have just retweeted some things more than I did anything and I really try to steer away from that because a lot of different views...our acquaintances have different views than we do.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I like the brevity because it's quick to read and you pretty much get the gist and there is information you can click on it and the bit link gives you the website and its easy to get to...That's why I prefer it over Facebook. I don't have to spend as much time reading it or doing anything.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into:** under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus? I'm in the 46 to 64.

**Gender:** Female

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Arkansas

**Type of farming you do, I know you mentioned dairy:** dairy and beef

What is the highest level of education you have completed? I have a bachelor's degree in nursing

### Respondent 3

#### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Oh, I suppose it's been about 2 years ago now, I was coming home from a... [REDACTED] and I don't remember how I heard about it, but we heard something on our committee about getting the message out and finding ways to tell others what we are doing in agriculture, so I logged onto Twitter and decided to check that out and decided it was something I thought I'd like to keep doing.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Oh, when I was looking to get followers, I was looking for anyone involved in agriculture and Farm Bureau people, um topics was agriculture and politics.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** I guess it offers me a way to share what I'm doing on the farm with other...who knows how many people. And sometimes I'll just go on there to find some news, because I think I can find news on there a lot quicker on there than other places.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** I guess I haven't really thought about that. I like it short, you know there is people who do Facebook and blog and stuff, I don't do any of that.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** At first it was from a laptop, but now it's strictly from a mobile device.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** Oh, not typically. The only thing is that when I first go on, I use (Spesmic?), and when I first go on to look at my @ replies, they will come on for a second and then they'll be gone. So I have to go back to the timeline and go back to the replies and refresh it and then they will come up again.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use -- Spesmic

#### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Any news and information or what?

**Yes, any news and information, just overall, on a typical day.**

I usually don't, I get up leave the house right away. I've got the radio on in my pickup and I go out and do some chores, then I come back home and see my kids before they go to school, and then sometimes I'll quick check my e-mail and my Twitter account on my mobile device.

**How about during the day?** Radio and e-mail and my Twitter account.

**How about in the evening?** Then it's probably Fox News and if I'm sitting there watching the news, I'll probably be looking on my e-mail and my Twitter account as well.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Like a percentage or what?

**Yeah.**

That's a good question. I wouldn't know what to tell you I guess.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** No, I don't.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Definitely, yeah. It's allowed me to share what I'm doing on the farm with people around the world. It's allowed me to communicate with other farmers to see how it use to be...and I never did it, but you have to go to the coffee shop or the elevator office and you sit around and drink coffee and talk to your neighbors about how harvest or planting was going. Now, when I'm sitting in the tractor or the combine, you've got auto steer, I can find out how harvest is going in Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska or wherever, not just in my local area.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** I don't think it's changed how I do my job, it's changed how I can show others what I'm doing.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter? I know you mentioned coffee shops before, but said you didn't participate in that.** Farm Bureau meetings, just any other meetings that you get to talk to other farmers and that's the opportunity to see how their doing things and what you could do different – trade shows, is mainly where you find that stuff like that out. Now if you happen to follow somebody on Twitter that's doing something new and you can see it right away before you go to a show or a Farm Bureau meeting.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Oh, I'd say it's larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'd say maybe a little more informed.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Yeah, I guess it's made me more aware of how many like animal rights or environmental type people were actually out there. I knew there was a lot, but it opened my eyes to that a little more.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I guess it could see chemical companies doing more advising with their products on it, maybe product promotion,

or like maybe Twitter users get a certain deal on something, or I would think that oh, university extension could do more advising on something like that.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I usually and don't just sit around look for people to follow. Somebody that follows me, I look at their profile before I decide to follow them back, and I kind of look at how many followers and people that their following, I look at that ratio. If they are following a whole bunch and not many people follow them back, there probably not giving a whole lot of useful information. Anyone that looks like a mother, or someone like that that I can influence where their food comes from – I'll follow them in a heartbeat. Anyone else in agriculture, it doesn't matter, I'll follow them.

**How many people do you follow?** I think I'm around the 2600 – 2700 range, and I think a couple hundred less follow me.

**How often do you Tweet? Like in a day? The number of Tweets?** I suppose 5-10 a day, I suppose.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Maybe 15-20.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** I have. Oh, because it was at a Farm Trade show or something like that, just cause, I don't know you start talking to them on Twitter, kind of get to know them, but it would be nice to meet them too.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Sometimes, yeah, especially during spring and fall when we are busy and doing lots of things.
- **Political views or views on the news?** I'll do some of that too, yep.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Sometimes.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** I'll always answer questions, yes.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** I have done that, yes.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** They have.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** I've Twittered something about my kids and my family too, because that's important to me.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I like Twitter because it's short, so if they lengthen it, I don't know that I'd have that much time to...I like to be able to click down to people I'm following or do a search that I do and something strikes me, and they have a link to it that interests, I'll go read it. Otherwise, I just want to go on and get through as many as I can, so I wouldn't want them to lengthen it.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into:** under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus? Under 45

**Gender:** Male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Iowa

**Type of farming you do:** our main part of our farm is hogs, I got a (inaudible) operation, and then I give it to my dad and he finishes it out, and then we also raise corn and soybeans. Well the hog operation, is a, I own sows, it's a sow operation.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** I have a bachelor of science degree.

## Respondent 4

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I probably started hearing about it the very first part of last year, about well, I probably heard about it a little before it before then – just hearing about it, not really understanding what it was. It was first part of 2009 that I really sat down and took a look at it was and had somebody explain it – it was over a webinar that was put on through the Dairy Checkoff. They had a social media webinar that they covered a lot of different platforms – blogging, Facebook, Twitter was one of them. And at that time, that was February of 09, somewhere in that neighborhood. I hadn't signed up for Twitter at that point. Shortly thereafter, I did and that's kind of where my starting point on it was.

**When did you join Twitter?** Signing up in the first place was more or less of a trial run thing. I just had started on Facebook about a month previously, and I could see the potential it had for kind of sharing some agricultural stories, talking about things that I do. So I thought I'd try Twitter out, see how it went and I wasn't real, at first, I wasn't sure if it would take. I didn't have a smartphone at that time, and I could do a lot at it from my desktop when I was at home. Keeping up during the day though wasn't practical without an internet-cable phone. So I wasn't really sure about it, but overtime I saw that even with limited use, it can be effective at connecting with people.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Mostly had to do with dairy, course we were in the midst of a pretty bad crop situation, so I was always looking at the news as it related to the dairy industry, that's what I was paying attention to, and then of course, non-ag related sports. That's my big distraction – used to keep my sanity. That's what I was trying to keep up with – dairy farming in particular, agriculture in general as well, and most of what I was using it for, from my end, was letting people know what was happening on my farm, day in and day out, just the whole philosophy that this is a tool that will connect you with people that you will probably never come in contact with otherwise and people who may not ever come across any other farmer in their lives. Just kind of letting them know what was happening on my farm, just gives the connection that lets them know where their food is coming from and opens up a dialogue if they have any questions about some of the things that we're doing, it's a good avenue for them to ask and for me to answer.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** You mean through like other social media platforms? It offers quicker interaction time between myself and other people than anything else. I can do just because I can. Throughout the day, I can pull out my phone and check it and if anyone is asking me questions or if there is anything I need to respond to, I can do that. A lot of times that will start a dialogue immediately, so there is a lot of back and forth on it. I haven't found anything else that will let me have that instantaneous connection pretty much throughout the day that Twitter offers.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** Nothing that I can think of. I don't get real hung up on the framework of it, I'm just pretty much ok whatever it is, whatever structure, I'll just try to make my experience the best I can. There is nothing I can think of that I really want

to do with it that I've not been able to do. As far as any other kind of logistical stuff, I'm pretty adaptable, so there isn't anything that I would change, one way or another.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both, now. I've got a desktop and smartphone.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** On rare occasion, I will try to send something, try to Tweet something that doesn't go through. I don't think that's necessarily the fault of the Twitter system, I think that's more with the program on my phone and maybe a cell connection, but really that's the only downside or the only problem I've had tweeting through my phone.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** Yeah, I use Tweetdeck on my computer at home, on my laptop, and my phone, I use a program called Gravity.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** I usually, in the morning, will watch some of the local television in our milk barn as we're finishing up, get a good dose of weather and that's usually the only news that I care about in the morning. Then, when I am home for breakfast, I'll usually look at headlines that pop up on my Yahoo homepage, and I'll get most of my national news and state news off online sources. Same deal at lunch, and then in the evenings, I'll watch local news again and occasionally I'll watch national news on television. Most of the television news I watch though is all local, and most everything else comes from the Internet.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** In comparison, probably a fair amount of time. A lot the news stories that I do read, I first see coming across on Twitter, and now that's not to stay I'll sit here and stare at my screen with Twitter is open. I'll leave it up and periodically flip back to it and stand over it real quick. But that's probably, twitter drives me to a lot of the stories I read.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I got a personal Facebook account and one established for my farm, I got a blog that I do for my farm, and I've got a YouTube channel that we do for farm videos. And, those are where I spend, as far as my social media sites, that's where I spend 95% of my time probably.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** It has in a couple of different ways. In one way, it has kind of helped me when I encounter real life questions from people. I've got a lot of questions on Twitter before just on various aspects of dairy farmer and agriculture in general. Being that it's over a computer, that gives me time just to stop and make sure I'm sure of the answer I am going to give. Of course, you don't have that luxury when you are standing face-to-face with someone. Having already seen a lot of the questions that come over Twitter, that's kind of in effect been a good practice for me to be up on issues and be able discuss them face-to-face with people when I'm presented with that situation. Now, kind of on the down side, and then is something that I really have to...I haven't fallen into this, I guess because I'm

conscious of it and I need to make sure I keep this in view, is that using Twitter and even Facebook or something else is that it's so easy to do and such easy communication and such a good way to get our story out there, we can run the risk that we get to the point that we spend too much time doing that and not carving out enough time in our lives to make personal contact with people. From my standpoint, I like talking about things on my farm and I like to promote agriculture in general, and casting a positive light. Part of that is that I engage in traditional media, engage with people I meet whenever I'm out somewhere. I need to make sure I don't put all of my eggs in the social media basket, so to speak. I still got remember that I got to make time to engage people in all of the traditional ways about agriculture.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Not really. I've never had any information come across Twitter that has made me stop and think "hey, I need to be doing something different." Probably the only thing that it reminds me of, and this hasn't changed anything we do, but it reminds you how fast information can be spread and whether it's true or not. So it's just kind of a reminder – always do things above board back home on the farm because if you do try to cut a corner and anyone finds out about it, it will spread like wildfire. Like I said though, that hasn't changed anything, but that's always something we try to do here anyway. It's just kind of reminder, that says "hey, if you're going to be open and talking about the things that you're doing, you got to make sure you're honest about it and that your actions match up with what it is you're telling people you're doing.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Really, other than the...I didn't know anyone personally that was using it prior to the dairy webinar that I participated in, and I learned the logistics of how to sign up during that webinar that was put on through the Dairy Checkoff, and then from there I connected with some other farmers that were using it, mainly by searching for key words like agriculture, farming, and in the process of during that came across other people who were making a living doing agriculture or being advocates or ag education, and once I found a few people and paid attention as to who they were interacting with that led to more people involved in agriculture that I became connected with, and it kind of grew like that.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Oh, I would say by having twitter, I have access to more people that I could ask a question to.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I would say on breaking news, I would probably be a little more, I would probably find out things more quickly. I tell you though, those that farm for a living get so many magazines in the mailbox every week, that it doesn't take long to get caught up on information even if you're not online. So yeah, I might learn things a little more quickly, but after something has been out there for a week or two, I don't suspect it's made a whole lot of difference.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Nothing specific comes to mind. I'm sure I've learned about some other sectors of agriculture just by being in connection over twitter with other farmers that grow something different. I can't think of any specific examples, but I'm sure I've learned about other parts of agriculture by seeing other people tweet about, that I otherwise I might not picked up on had I not been involved in Twitter.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it will continue to grow, I think more farmers will continue to do it and talk about things on their farm. The things I'm scared of, that I've kind of been saying, it's almost, it seems for a lot of people, that for a lot of farmers, it seems, once they've been on Twitter for awhile it's more about, they are more interested in talking about how cool it is that farmers are using Twitter than actually using it to share information and let the public know what's happening on their own operations. You know, every day I'm seeing more people that are connected to agriculture and more people actually on a farm signing up, and putting information out there, I expect that will continue.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I do follow several farmers, I try to follow people that – one big group that I follow are ag journalists and people who are connected to extension, because that's one way I can learn about what's happening in agriculture right now and those extension people I can pick up stories that might help me on my farming operation as they are putting out information and research. Other than that, there isn't any certain group that I go out and target and say "hey, I want to follow that fit into this category." Probably most of the people I follow are the result of them first following me, and I'll get that notification and I'll look at their profile, say "hey, they look like they may be pretty interesting" and I'll follow them in that regards.

**How many people follow you?** Right now, it looks like I've got 1,780 followers, and I am following 899.

**How often do you Tweet?** A lot of that depends on what I'm doing on the farm. On a typical day, I think the average number of total tweets I send a day is between 10-12. I think the number of times I actually pull out my phone and engage on it, I'll do that basically, a little during breakfast, a little during lunch, and a couple of times in the evening, and then during the day on my phone, 1-3 times in the morning, and 2-3 times in the afternoon. It kind of spreads out.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yeah, I have met several people through several different people in agriculture. I can't think of anyone outside of agriculture that I met on Twitter first, but through farm bureau meetings and a couple of other things, I have had the opportunity to meet people that I first heard of on Twitter.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yeah, that's probably is what I try to do it about. Like for instance, just today, I've been spreading some dairy slurry on fields for fertilizer. I have actually been doing it the past couple of days. So the ways I have been using Twitter is talking about that and actually uploaded a few pictures to Twitter of me in action.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Very, very rarely about politics. If I do tweet about politics, it's just usually relaying something and not taking a political position, I will tweet on certain policies that are relevant to agriculture, and politics sometimes plays into that. As far as news, I'll make a comment or tweet something that's in the news. The bulk of what I do is sharing my life and what's on the farm with the public. There are few other things that get in there, but that's kind of the meat and potatoes of what I try to do.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yeah, I'll do that. If I come across something that I think is interesting, I'll share it, and then a lot of times and see what others have shared and I'll retweet that.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yeah, I try to answer all the questions that come my way. I may not be able to do it right that moment, but I'll usually try to do it as quickly as possible. If I don't know an answer, I'll refer them to someone else.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice yourself?** Not too often. If there is something specific I need to know, I'll do that, but usually if there is something I will try to figure out, usually I'll do a little research on my own and dig that up.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I think it's probably a good idea. Just because the way it's set up to be short bursts of information. I'm afraid if you start extending it out, it would be like you are trying to read a novel through the Twitter stream. There are many times I wish I had more characters for the information I wanted to put out, but all in all, I say it's a pretty good thing that it's limited like it is.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into:** under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus? Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** ██████████ Alabama

**Type of farming you do:** dairy, we grow forages on our farm for our cows, but dairy is what we do.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Bachelor of science degree

## Respondent 5

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** A couple of years ago now. I think I originally signed up for it. About 2 years ago – about 2008. I signed up actually something else – whatever I named I used, but didn't get involved with it for probably about 6 months after that.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I'm trying to think – it would have probably been just being on the Internet, and just reading stuff about it. I never really had anyone I knew just using it.

**Why did you join Twitter?** Where I really got involved with it – The first time I joined I just thought 'oh, this is something interesting' - but didn't really take off with it. When I really got involved with it on [REDACTED] there was a gal from the north part of the state that was talking to me that was saying ' hey, we really need to get online as farmers and help protect the animal industry, because there are some voices out there that are using social media to really go after the animal industry out there – not just in [REDACTED], but nationwide. So that's how the whole original getting highly involved with it got started.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** I think at the very beginning it was mainly ag related. There was a group of farmers out there that were getting together and AgChat was just getting started at that point, so it was a lot of ag-based stuff, started following some of the anti-animal activist groups as well. I was seeing what was going on both sides of the issue. Right away started to follow some environmental groups as well that just saw something interesting they put out, or more as a concern to see what they were saying as well.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** A couple of things – mainly instantaneous information. I mean, you can find out fairly quickly on what is going on – anywhere. So whether it's hearing the stories of (inaudible) down in the river – the first reporting on all that was on Twitter. So it's instantaneous information. Also, it allows you to converse with people that maybe you don't necessarily have the opportunity to converse with. Sometimes, it's like a giant coffeeshop. You get a whole range of ideas from other people on what's going on. You get to hear a wider perspectives, especially on agriculture. You kind of get a feeling of what's going on nationwide – whether it's planting or harvesting, or what crops look like. You kind of get on a daily basis, not just at meetings or you see somebody once a year, you kind of get that flavor every day.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** Boy, that's a good question. So far, any changes that would be nice to see, usually someone has already thought of them. I can't think of anything right now – I mean, you have the ability to chat with multiple people, you have the ability to hold thoughts out there more or less...post pictures, post video. There is really nothing – with Twitter, I don't really have the privacy concerns that have come up with, say, Facebook over the past number of months. So far, you don't have that issue.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Mainly, from a smartphone.

If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems? No, you know, it's become a lot better. When I first started doing it, I did it from a Blackberry, and then we switched to a Droid. As the smartphone has taken over more and more, the platforms to use Twitter from have adapted and become a whole lot better to use it. Most everything I can do on the computer with Twitter, I can do from my smartphone – with the Droid. There is still some obvious limitations, but most of the time it's from the silly little phone I carry around.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** Yeah, on the phone, mainly use Tweetdeck, also use Sismic. Kind of go back and forth, they both – there are some things that one offers and the other doesn't. If I remember right, if I can't think of someone's name, you know I kind of have an idea or I can't think of what their full name is, I can start typing it in, and it knows who I am following, so it can give me some recommendations. It will be like 'are you looking for this person,' yes, I want to. On the computer, if I'm using it, it's Tweetdeck, usually.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** My smartphone. I began to realize that I don't use my computer much anymore. The Droid is basically my computer. In the morning, I got the handful of sites bookmarked on my browser on my Droid, or I've got some apps on there that I use whether it's the Drudge Report app or the New York Times, whoever the app might be where I can go and look up stories, plus whatever information I'm getting pushed to me by e-mail. And then, in reality, I'll start thumbing through Twitter cause, especially in agriculture, I'm looking for some market information – why did the overnights do what they did? I can actually find information quicker from a couple of guys that I follow on Twitter than I can from even the e-mails that I receive. The e-mails won't come in till about 6:30 and the some of those guys have been tweeting for about an hour or hour and a half prior to that.

**How about during the day?** When I work at home, either via the Droid, via Twitter – looking at e-mail, websites, same thing. Especially when I'm in the tractor or out doing something, a lot of it still via radio. It could be both local radio, tractor radio – [REDACTED], or it depends on what I'm listening to – XM radio, get the national news via XM.

**How about in the evening?** Depending on the time of year, still a lot of it is Droid based because we're in the combine, tractor. Depends if I'm watching TV, I might pull up the computer to see what's going on but it seems like more and more everything revolves around the computer or smartphone and getting information that way.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Oh gosh. I would say anymore it is..if I spend 15 minutes on any website or app, I probably spend 45 minutes on Twitter. Probably a 3 to 1 ratio, because I can scroll real fast and see if anything interests me and I don't have to spend a lot of time on looking website to website.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I do use Facebook, just not that much. I'm more of a Twitter person. Apparently there is becoming that distinction out there between Twitter and Facebook. I do use LinkedIn – maybe not to its fullest potential, I do make some contacts though. I have signed up for other ones, but those would be the big three that I would use.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yeah, I think it has. For starters, it's made some contacts with people that I would never make contact otherwise. Either I knew who they were or I knew where they lived, what area of the state or whatever, but I would have never had a reason to talk to them. If they sent something out on Twitter, or they responded to something I sent out, it's allowed for communication to happen that way. I would think that would be the main one.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** I don't know if it's really changed how I do my job, but from the job standpoint, it's made me try and make sure I'm talking about what we're doing or researching what other people are doing a lot quicker than say waiting for a farm magazine to come out. The story might be 6 or 7 months old by the time you get the farm magazine. There might still be some relevant information, but I might try something out on the farm because I saw it on Twitter yesterday, and maybe something we talked about today on the farm to see if we can utilize it somehow – so I guess that it would change it a little bit - maybe utilizing those decisions quicker.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** A lot of it would be either through farm magazines, through different meetings or conferences we go to. A lot of those may not take place – [REDACTED] or something in the winter, but those are only once a year. Maybe something once in awhile on the Internet, but it's kind of hard to search. Sometimes you're searching out for something and you don't know what you are looking for, whereas on Twitter, someone may put something out, and you see it it's right there so you go and research something. Whereas before, you kind of had to know what you're looking for to go find it. I guess in a way, Twitter is kind of like a giant farm show. Because there is things out there that people tweet about and you're like "oh, I didn't think of it that way." It's like walking down a farm show and you say "oh, I have seen that piece of implement before, what's that?" It's kind of that saying, "You didn't know you were looking for it until you saw it."

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I would it's larger, maybe not sheer numbers because I may not be going into the local coffee shops that have 30 some guys in there at any one time, and you don't always have that on Twitter. But the network is bigger because I can reach a lot wider geographic area.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** Probably in agriculture, probably a lot more informed.

And to clarify, there may be something going on in agriculture that the guys who are listening to [REDACTED] or something may come up with, however, I think on the broader scope of the things that effect agriculture, I think getting things via Twitter is the better avenue.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** You know, there has been some of the stuff on the HSUS – the Humane Society of the United States. And this would spill over into Facebook a little bit, because there are some of the groups that are using them both together, but we learned about on there, and things to keep an eye out on things that wouldn't necessarily shown up in your farm magazine, it wouldn't show up in your newspaper, wouldn't show up necessarily on the news either.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it's gonna be a be a big game changer in agriculture if you're group - crop consultants or extension educators - will take the time to utilize it because you can information out so quickly, so if something is happening with a crop disease or you are seeing something out there good or bad you can get it out quickly, and maybe farmers will be on the look out for it so you can – say sudden death syndrome in soybeans, you can get it out to other farmers so they can check their crops and look to see if they have it going on too. Before, you know, you might have to wait for the local paper to come out with the local extension educator's column in it, or you might have to wait for an e-mail. Well, that e-mail might show up and maybe you didn't read it until 9 o'clock at night. With Twitter, you have it with you and you might be looking at it at noon.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I would say a wide array from everyone I disagree with politically, to guys I agree with on farming issues. Some of it is because I just want to see the different information that's out there and I want to see what guys are doing. And some of it is (inaudible) enemy.

**How many people follow you?** I think there is about 1200. Part of that is because I haven't gone back through to see who is following me and who I can follow back.

**How many people do you follow?** I think it's right around 1100.

**How often do you Tweet?** Probably on average 4-5 times a day, depending on what's going on. It gets really skewed. When I'm in the combine, I won't take the time to put things on Twitter, because I'm trying to watch the combine. But if I'm sitting in a meeting or doing something else, I might be more active.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yeah, well we did it at [REDACTED] last year. We did it because I knew of some people that were going to be there and wanted to meet face to face. That one was in [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] has the largest contingency of people there.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Sometimes about the daily activities and what's going on. Sometimes about the important things, like [REDACTED] football. Kind of everything in between – it maybe something as simple as something one of the kids said or what our crops are doing during harvest. It's pretty much all over the board.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Some. Sometimes I do depending on what's going on. Actually, the healthcare debate, and I put something out there that happened to be something [REDACTED] had said and someone responded to me, and disagreed with me – we've actually struck up a pretty decent friendship, and it was all because of that Tweet, strangely enough.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yeah, if I find something of interest, yes, I will provide something there.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yeah, if it's something that's relevant or something that I can help out on.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Probably not so much as other people, but you know if there is something out there. Maybe not so much in the form of a question – put a statement out there that will get some feedback.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I think the amount of characters is fine. I think it's a challenge. If you get use to writing an e-mail or something. What I've noticed is the people who had problems with it at first, as I've watch them develop they really figure out how to shorten some of that stuff up.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into:** under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus? Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Nebraska

**Type of farming you do:** row crop, corn, soybeans and popcorn

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** undergraduate



**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use Tweetdeck, Sismic, Twitter for Android, Cotweet, I think those are the 4 primaries I use.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Listen to Fox News on satellite.

**How about during the day?** Listen to Fox News on satellite.

**How about in the evening?** Ditto.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** I tend to a quick overview on twitter for about 15 minutes every morning and I'll spend 15 to 20 minutes at night, and through the day, depending on if I get an alert, I may take a look once or twice during the day at one or more of the lists that I've compiled.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I use Twitter predominately, I also have a blog, and I also have a YouTube set up. I also use Facebook, utilize LinkedIn. So LinkedIn probably the least, I share more information that I do dissertations on my blog, links that I feel are important for my friends on Facebook, but like I said, Twitter is my dominate means of communicating to my followers.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yes. Twitter is actually been a real positive tool. Due to limitations of having to communicate in 140 characters has changed the manner in which my brain thinks about what it is I'm going to say, and 99% of the time now, my tweets are sound bites. They are short, succinct, and precise. And it something when individuals are utilizing Twitter they need to keep in mind to be sure they can put their full thought into one tweet because if you rely on two tweets or more to get your idea across, anyone of those tweets will not necessarily show up and be supported by the previous or a post. I think it has modified the way in which people think about how they share information. Thinking before speaking is just as important as thinking before tweeting.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** I would say at the beginning it was taking time out my day – I was dedicating time in each day to be engaged pre-smartphone. Once I got my smartphone, I am still dedicating time to social media, but the time that I am putting social media is done in down time, or when I'm moving from one field to the next, I'm able to multi-task, so I'm actually spending less time when I'm in the house on the laptop checking Tweets, Facebook, e-mails, etc. The smartphone has actually allowed me to be engaged on regular schedule but is not costing me time, so to speak.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** I was actually probably a bit unique. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I actually spend more time

teaching others how to utilize – how to connect to specific audiences and work with a number of the other co-founders of the foundation on how to reach specific audience, how to gain interest, how to participate in productive/professional dialogue, so I really haven't...I end up finding myself teaching and sharing more than on what I'm gathering. Information that I'm gathering on the uses of Twitter, I have found a number of innovation summits and technology conferences that have not included ag people, so that's where I garner my information and turn around share that with the ag community.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** In my case, I would say it's larger than anyone who doesn't or does use Twitter. I guess between Twitter and Facebook, I'm fairly confident in saying that I have more contacts than most anyone else would even think of on or off of the social media channel.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** More.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Maybe I should paraphrase this or put an asterisk on it: Through Twitter, I learn of other ag-related issues, typically anywhere from 6, 12, to 24 hours ahead of anyone else because it's in real time. There are some organizations that will electronically post events, but if it doesn't happen within a certain cycle, it's 6-12 hours before it gets posted. With other organizations relying on print media, I could know it a month to a week, or several days ahead of anyone that doesn't utilize social media. I think that's a real value for an ag person.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it will continue to grow and be recognized the importance and the opportunity it offers to reconnect with consumers. I think it's an invaluable tool. Maybe it's not exactly Twitter, who knows how long Twitter will last, I have a feeling it will be around for awhile. But it's a tool – a connection, the opportunity to build bridges, grow communities is tremendous and I don't see it dissipating in the near future.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I follow specifically 8 different demographics currently. I have a hunting and fishing group, mommy bloggers, daddy bloggers, media personalities, politicians, sports broken down into Nascar, basketball, and football; foodies, chefs, and oh wow, I guess I'm up to 11 now. Oh, and environmental individuals. Over the last year and half, I have targeted specific individuals and demographics to follow and engage in. Those are each for a slightly different purpose. Mommy and daddy bloggers are a demographic that I have built a positive relationship with, they are very popular in the social media networks for social media information. Any of those individuals are already trusted and have a mature audience that already trust them. And so I have garnered a positive information with them to get accurate

information out on issues that may hit the limelight in mainstream media, and then the political individuals, engage with them to actively dialogue on legislative issues that may be on a state or national level. Then the remaining lists is a dialogue. If you think of the model in marketing being an oval, those other groups tend to be in the center which can be moved to support agriculture, are influential and can be influenced, so that's why I've targeted those main demographics

**How many people follow you?** Just over 25,000

**How many people do you follow?** Between 20-22,000

**How often do you Tweet?** Oh, depends on the day. I average 8-9 tweets a day, except on Tuesdays which my average usually bumps up to 20-25.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** I do regularly in the morning, lunch and evening. Then during the day if I get an alert on specific search that I have set up, I might be check when the alert comes throughout, so I might be checking between 5-8 times during the day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Oh yeah, with my 25,000 followers, I have probably met close to 800 of them in person. Or I've met someone in person, we became friends, and then followers.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Partially my activities as it relates to production of food, fiber and fuel. I look for teachable moments that I might be able to capture a short video or a picture that I might be able to tweet out for consumers. I also give particular activity, event, or article of interest comes up, I'll shoot out the link. I try to do real experience for me that I think might be misunderstood by the general public and try to provide insight to that event or activity in order to better inform the consumer.
- **Political views or views on the news?** I tweet about political as it impacts agriculture. Most of my political tweets will often be related to environmental regulation, environmental agencies that are overseeing regulations, and assembly/senate, or assembly bills state/federal level that will have an impact one way or the other either here in [REDACTED] or on agriculture to the nation at large.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Always.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** I ask questions strategically for a desired outcome. That's part of the psychology of Twitter, and why I became involved. I seek out certain individuals who have an influential following and who have the potential for a major reach for impressions. And if they are a certain individual who is of similar thinking to me, I will ask leading questions to further engage the rest of their audience to further engage on a specific topic. Otherwise, if it's a certain individual who has an opinion which is opposition to agriculture, I will ask leading questions to show, demonstrate, or cast a light upon the error in their thought process and the fallibility in their logic.

- **If so, do people respond to you?** Often times, yes. There have been a few...specifically some hire ups in the HSUS who won't respond to me because I've burned them a few times, and they won't engage me anymore. So I create alternative accounts with other names and use those other accounts to do the same thing. So often times, if it's just someone from the public who heard something or read something that was anti-ag, I can engage them in discussion and come to a positive outcome without any type of ill will. Often times they are very grateful for sharing in the dialogue with them and pointing out inaccuracies in whatever they read or heard.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** It needs to remain brief. If you can't say in 140 characters what you're thinking, don't say it. People need to learn to be precise and accurate. If you want to have a longer discussion then go to Tweetlonger, utilize Facebook, start blogging, go to YouTube. Twitter specifically is a micro-blog. Micro is small. Keep it short and simple.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Still under 45.

**Gender:** Male.

**City, State:** [REDACTED] California

**Type of farming you do:** hay, horses, and cattle

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Bachelors of science.

## Respondent 7

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I started hearing about it probably 3 or 4 years ago. And initially had signed up and didn't really do much with it for probably 6 or 7 months – it just kind of sat there. I'd post every once in awhile but it just kind of seemed pointless. Cause in a lot of ways it seemed like I was talking to myself.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I don't remember actually. Probably in passing in a small business type thing probably, because I know there was a lot of discussion even 2 or 3 years ago for small businesses and building businesses with Twitter and farming is no different.

**Why did you join Twitter?** I joined it actually, initially to promote my writing. Like I said, I do a lot of freelance writing, a lot of it is about farm-related topics. And to get the word out there about projects I was working on, then it took a turn – I don't want to say to be more play – but less trying to market myself and more try to help others with it. Whether it be posting links or conversation, ag chat, various things is not strictly a promotional type deal anymore.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** AgChat has always been, from the first time I heard about it, has been a big one. I followed foodchat, I actually created a hashtag after the conference this year, that was one of my little projects. I followed others from time to time, but it hasn't but I don't persist with those, I guess.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Quick contacts. Particularly, using the hashtags, because if I put it to food, if I post something with “food” or the “meat” hashtag, it goes to we don't even know how many people probably that I wouldn't normally run across by going to everyone who follows that hashtag. Even though it's kind of quick contacts and stuff, if you get enough quick contacts, it kind of starts to stick in people's mind.

**Are there any changes in Twitter you would like to see?** I'd say more personable, but I don't really know how to do that without...because it is such a vast network. I don't think really, I kind of have fits with it on a sem-regular basis, but that's not Twitter itself, that's the program. Accessing it. I think the only other possibility, and this is with the applications, but handling a larger size group for discussions, like AgChat. I know sometimes when it gets busy enough, it tends to boggle a little bit.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Primarily computer or laptop. I'm probably one of the last people alive who doesn't have a cell phone – I haven't gotten into that yet. My brother he is the family geek and he's got the Droid and everything else. I just haven't quite justified in my mind the cost of it, and being as how we are real focused on cash rather than credit, that's kind of a big thing. I think eventually I'll take that step to do more mobile stuff. I see cases where it could be a really god thing, the financial part is just real hard to get around.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use Tweetdeck, I tried using Hoot Suite and I kind of got lost on it. I've used Tweet(inaudible) and I've used Twubs, I

guess those are the biggies. I use Tweetdeck is normally the one I log into with. It's easier to keep multiple streams of stuff happening and it's easier to, the biggest reason I started using it, is because it's easier to see when someone is talking to me and addressing me, because on the regular Twitter page, I will miss that. I didn't want to get into a situation where someone did have a question and did want to ask me something and I'd miss it because I wasn't at the time they asked. Whereas when I pull up Tweetdeck, it tells me everything that has happened.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house? I**

usually check several times a day – the news online and usually that's integrated with other things. I'll get up, I'll check Facebook, go to check e-mail and kind of in between you see the highlights. If I see something that sparks my interest, I'll check on that. And with Facebook and Twitter both, I've got breaking news stuff that will come through if it's something that's a major thing. Of course, what the news media thinks is major and what I think is major...Tiger Woods getting out of rehab, I don't think is major. I think we pay far too much attention to people...not there is anything wrong with Tiger Woods. We all put our pants on the same way.

**How about during the day?** Most of the time during the day, unless I happen to be going to switch e-mails and see it is primarily just happen to see breaking news. If I see it come up on Twitter or see it come up on Facebook. I actually check Facebook once an hour – I'm actually on it even more than I'm on Twitter. The biggest reason for that is because I'm having problems with Tweetdeck – it locks up and it just becomes such a hassle that I don't have it on as much as I use to. Trying to iron out the problems with it. Those are two of the big things. Probably 3 or 4 times a week, do a news search or several agriculture related stuff – rabbit meat, kind of things that apply to what we're doing here. That way, I can get fairly fresh news topics to pass on to people and generate ideas for blog posts and just also to kind of stay on top of what is happening out there.

**How about in the evening?** Pretty much the same. I will usually check once or twice in the evening on Yahoo or once in awhile CNN there is something on. Usually in the evenings, I try to take a break from it. We don't have TV here at all, so everything we get is online. We watch TV so to speak online, and all of our news and everything else we get online.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Twitter probably I usually start out in the morning and if it doesn't lock up, it's on all day long. I usually have several screens up and will peak at it every 45 minutes to an hour to see if anybody has addressed anything or posted to me or anything like that. It's kind of on and off all day long.

**I know you said earlier that you have a Facebook page - Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I have a MySpace, I have a blog site, and I have YouTube. And I do another one, again going to the ag chat conference, those were kind of the 4 biggies. I started LinkedIn after that conference, but I haven't done a whole lot with it yet, and I started article marketing. At this point, with me doing a lot of freelance stuff as I've been doing, I'm looking at

doing more advertorials as I call them. It looks like an article, but it's a real subtle sell, whether it's to (inaudible).

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yeah, definitely. I think in a 140 characters. That was kind of the big joke, because I do tend to be naturally pretty wordy, so it's definitely tightened up on how I think and how I phrase things to make a point in that amount of time, in that amount of space that's allowed on Twitter. So that's probably the biggest way it's changed things, and it's a constant learning process to effectively get the point across without embellishing and leaving a bunch of things in there that don't really need to be.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Yeah. We tend to be very private. We don't have a whole lot of people back where the animals are. Part of that is security, part of that is biosecurity. Part of it is just the risk from animal rights and other things – people just aren't what they seem to be. The rabbit world seems to see a lot of that. People that don't think you should breed, they don't think you should eat a rabbit, just a lot of extreme type of agendas. So the idea of posting pictures of our babies, and posting pictures of day to day stuff here took a lot of re-evaluating I guess, that would be a good word for it. It's not something, I would use the occasional picture in an article or something like that, but not the extent that I have done on Twitter or Facebook lately. To kind of get out there, and it's allowed, and I don't want to say random, but it is kind of random because you don't know who is going to read it – education about what we do. Because a lot of people, they know about dog shows, they know about horse shows, but they have no idea rabbit shows exist. So it's been a chance to educate not only the general public but people in agriculture because they are not familiar with the rabbit world. They know the chickens, rabbits not so much.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Actually, primarily, it was in passing at farm shows, fairs, things like that was the primary interaction with the farming set. I'm in the alumni club at the college I went to, and once a year they have a get together, and it's kind of from all walks of agriculture in that aspect, but it wasn't nearly as extensive as being on Twitter.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I think it's much larger, much larger. I've got and this also from a writing standpoint, I've made no bones about it – I know nothing about cotton, but I've made a friend on Twitter and Facebook and that's her specialty. I've been able to talk to, you can go on almost anytime and post “does someone know somebody for whatever” and usually within an hour somebody is coming back with an idea. A lot of times too, because again the rabbit and the small type situation, it takes a lot of adapting and a lot of the things may think are common place, for example, hog-wiring tanks, people in this area have no idea what I'm talking about. So it's kind of nice to talk to people in other parts of the country who are like “oh yeah, I know what you're talking about.” It's like a sanity check. Because they have no idea what I'm talking about when I say a hog tank down here, they have no idea. I've gone into 2 or 3 farm stores here looking for a tank with an insert so that I can put something over the top and that way I can water the chickens and I know they've got 250 or however many gallons

of water and I know they aren't going to run out. With a hog insert, they can't get into it, they can't drown in it. Nobody knows what I'm talking about when I talk about a hog insert. Down here, when they water pigs, they just water them the same way.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I think things spread much quicker on Twitter. At the end of August, even at the conference, the news about the veal come across even before it happened, so things like that we are aware of much quicker and it allows for a much quicker response. If used the right way, it allows for the education the fostering is what's effective for those with their own agenda. The media isn't paying as much attention to the HSUS as they have in the past, and I think a lot of that is seeing that we are not all a bunch of dumb farmers out here. We do use technology, and a lot of farmers are technology savvy. We use far more technology than the people in town. I think a lot of times that gets overlooked, the idea that anyone can run a tractor, well with some of these newer tractors, you really have to know what you're doing to start the thing! So I think that as far as technology there is a lot of things that are changing all the time that make a big difference.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** There has been a few of them, but I'm trying to remember what they were. It is such a common thing anymore that if I've got a question about something, I'll go and post it there, and within an hour or so there is somebody coming back with it. But I'm trying to remember the last thing that I posted as a question. I know I put together a little grassroots fundraising [REDACTED], that was kind of some say an innovative use of it that was a little bit different.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I'm hearing a lot of people that say the markets are responding and paying attention to Twitter much more than they use to. The communication from consumer to farmer is happening a lot more. There is still, we are kind of working out the kinks of miscommunication and perceptions, but I think as it increases and we kind of bridge that we are all on the same page and we all eat the same food, I think it will make a big difference in the information that the consumer has and the understanding that the farmers have of what the consumers want.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Big ones: [REDACTED] because I think he's a really cool guy and he's also very up to speed on things like water rights and stuff like that those of us back east kind of take for granted. That kind of, again, different perspective. Actually, most of the AgChat Foundation I've been following and have been since before it was the AgChat Foundation. I also follow several country entertainers. Friends, family, several organization that have Twitter accounts, so just quite a variety of people actually that is a mix there. Most of it for my [REDACTED] farm – one for my writing and the other for my farm, the later kind of blends in while I'm posting articles, recipes for ag products. Kind of get people thinking – I post blog

inserts, mostly my own but sometimes others too. Just a lot of different information, a lot of times I'll find something that others might find relevant and will post something like that.

### **How many people follow you? 631**

**How many people do you follow?** I haven't even looked in awhile to find out. It's several hundred. 563 – I usually go through once a week or so and those that have followed me, if it looks related or interesting, I will go ahead and follow back. If it looks like a spammer, I just don't do that.

**How often do you Tweet?** When it's not locked up and I'm not having problems with it, I seem to kind of hit - I'll do several times an hour and then I'll go and do something else for awhile. I try not to do an overload. I've worked on coming back every 2 or 3 hours and making 2 or 3 posts. Trying to spread it throughout the day instead of all at once, because people get on it several times during the day, and I don't want to make it seem like I'm always there, but I don't want to be that far away either.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Usually I look at what others have said before I post anything, just to kind of see if there is something to retweet. If there is a link or breaking news to pass along, and some of the things anymore -- when Michael Jackson was being rushed to the hospital, I kind of made the joke "it sounds like they are tweeting from the ambulance – because it was minute by minute stuff. I saw something just the other day about a philosopher giving a speech or something and he collapsed on stage, and instead of going to help him they started tweeting about it. Turns out he got up and he's OK and no harm no foul – but what if it wasn't"? The idea that we'll tweet it before we call 911 or see if he's OK, seems kind of extreme.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yes, [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. Several other people that I've met on Twitter or that I knew before and we followed each other on Twitter as well. So far, I've not had any bad experiences, but you know you always hear the horror stories on everything else. People are pretty much what they appear to be. The down side to it is that you can't tell the tone. There are some people that come across very serious, but that doesn't always come across in a black and white sentence. But I've found that if people are being honest, they are pretty much the same.

### **What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Pretty much, probably, it varies so much, and it's not every time I go feed that kind of thing, but putting nest boxes in for the day because it opens the door to when the babies are due and raising bunnies. It provides an opening, if someone were to ask to teach them about the rabbits and about birthing and management, little things like that. I might do, like when we get a batch of chicks, I might post 2 or 3 times a week, some little thing about how they are getting bigger, something like that. If someone is following with the idea – because we do



meet people in passing, you make comments in passing. You can go to Facebook to converse a little more in depth. If that goes OK, you can go to your blog and share a little bit more. Not necessarily the progression, but the comparison there I think help put a lot of things into perspective as to what I can with each one so that it's separate, but it's connected.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Late 40s.

**Gender:** Female

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Alabama

**Type of farming you do. I know you said it's a slow money farm – can you explain that a little?:** We're very small, we are on a large city lot. It's an in-town situation. We've got chickens, we've got rabbits, we've got ducks, we've got herbs and vegetables out front. I've got (rosa bushes?) started to where we are harvesting the rose hips off of them. But we are looking at a 7-acre lot that's about 3 miles outside of town to be able to do more. So it's very small, primarily heritage and heirloom type things building towards expanding.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Junior college.

## Respondent 8

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Well a little over a year ago, I stumbled on to Twitter didn't think very much about it – I just thought it was another fad like so many people do. I started investigating it a bit and found out that there was a very active agricultural community, so I've become involved with it and became engaged with it at that point. So it's been a little over a year, not quite a year and a half.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I really don't remember. I'm sure it was through mainstream media somehow, whether it was through a newspaper article or a magazine or something along those lines, and just the name kind of caught my attention. Unfortunately, like a lot of people, the name kind of trivialized it to me because it seems kind of, the term Twitter, the name Twitter, seems kind of fluffy and so I kind of discounted it until I got into it and learned more about it. But I don't really remember where the seed was planted.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** I am involved in animal agriculture, and that is principally the area I am interested in, so I watched for...and I don't really follow hashtags so much. I use Tweetdeck and I kind of scan the tweets that come in. I am more interested in animal agriculture, animal welfare, animal rights issues, and I am kind of an advocate along those lines. After become involved in it though, I've become involved in the Tuesday night AgChat groups, and I've branched out a little more. I am interested in other agriculture issues as well, my principle interest though is animal ag.

**Does Twitter offer you anything you can't get anywhere else?** No, it really doesn't. In some ways, I probably use Facebook a little more than Twitter. There may be some folks out there that I'm reaching or that are reaching me through Twitter that I might not be able to establish any other way. I see it as a positive, and I maintain the account from that standpoint, but I'm not real aggressive as some people are in collecting numbers.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** I don't know that there are. It's really user friendly and I really intrigued by the concept because I'm a communicator anyway. For the last 40 years I've been involved in broadcast and print media, and electronic media of course and so I'm very intrigued by being able to put as much as a message as I can into 140 characters. So, is there anything that I would change, probably not. I think the platform is kind of neat. It does a lack a little bit of stability, but I think that's kind of inherent. And not being as tech savvy a lot of people are, I don't really know how to address that. I would just like to see it a little more stable.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** Occasionally, I don't do it that often, so it doesn't give me a great deal of problems.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use Tweetdeck on the mobile as well, and I use TwitDroid, because I am using a Droid operating system. I have

experimented with some of the other applications like HootSuite, and a few of those things, and I keep coming back to Tweetdeck, because it suites my interests a little bit better. For the Tuesday night chat, I will use an application like Tweetchat or Twubs or an aggregator to screen everything else out.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Well usually start pretty early around here like they do on most farms. The first thing I will do will check the overnight with a news aggregator, I use Google. I'll look, scan headlines from that. I'll use – there is a serve that you can set up key words and Google will aggregate news and send you lists of news stories, and I have several of those set up that I use. Of course, just watching both Twitter and Facebook, I pick up a lot of what everyone else is talking about too. I see a lot of the links there that I might miss somewhere else.

**How about during the day?** Well, it depends on actually here at the farm or I'm on the road. I do use the mobile applications when I'm out for meetings and such things like that. Here on the farm, it depends on the weather whether I'm outside or not. If I'm outside, I don't use the mobile that much on the farm because it's very difficult to get service out here. I had a little episode back in the summer where I lost an iPhone in the hayfield, and that kind of actually changed my mind about tweeting from a site. There are a little bit too many risks involved with that. Whenever I'm in the house, we use satellite here, so whenever the satellite is cooperating, I'll check the desktop or the laptop.

**How about in the evening?** Pretty much the same way. We don't – we have used satellite television, and my wife absolutely abhors television, especially with the direction that things are going so we've had satellite turned off – we don't do TV anymore so most of what I get is from the aggregators and picking up headline and going out and looking at them. But sometimes I will go out online and actually read the Wall Street Journal or the New York Times or the Washington Post.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Not very much, really. I'd say 15 to 20 minutes a day would be pushing it.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Besides Facebook? LinkedIn, and I've used FourSquare, but I'm not – I struggle a little bit with the real utility with something like that. I am not sure I want everyone to know where I am and what I'm doing.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** I think it has to a degree, being a journalist and being a writer, which was essentially my profession for most of my life, Twitter has made me think in more immediate terms as far as my communications, probably distilling the message down to where it fits in those 140 characters. And that kind of transfers over into other things. I don't know if it makes you that much more efficient of a communicator, it makes you quicker. I think that it's a double edge sword just like e-mail because you lost the ability to truly communicate interpersonally. Everything becomes (inaudible) or a line or 2 on

Facebook or something like that. I think that's unfortunate, but there is an element of the efficiency in Twitter that I like.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No, not really. It's broadens my ability to connect with other people doing something similar to what I'm doing, but it really doesn't have much to do with my day to day workings. I'm not in the position that a lot of farmers are in where they are following the commodity trade, that sort of thing that really find that information valuable about when markets are peaking and stuff like that. What we do, we're in a small business, primarily sheep and our markets are a little more stable – not as fluid as other markets, so I don't really find making marketing decisions or any other decisions that we have to make on a day to day business. It doesn't change the way I do things. From the standpoint of being aware of situations, such as animal rights and animal welfare, it doesn't change what I'm doing, but it certainly peaks my awareness.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Primarily extension.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I think it's larger. Sometimes I'm concerned about the quality of information that may be there, but definitely there is more people to reach out and touch.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'm far more informed. I'm a lot more tuned in than most of the people are because they tend to take perhaps a more parochial view than I do. They are more concerned with what's going on in their immediate farm or their immediate community, whereas I look at things on a more wider scope than they are. I am looking at things more nationally or even internationally that could end up impacting me, and I like to see those things coming.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** No, not really. I have to say, I use Twitter to keep up with issues more than anything else and I don't really see it as an educational tool.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think there is a capabilities and possibilities are infinite. It depends how well the technology is embraced. I think some farmers are a little bit quicker to embrace technology than others are. I think there is a tremendous potential for communication and primarily communication, not so much education. But being able to share viewpoints, news stories, that sort of thing with people all around the world.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Well most people that I follow are other ag related folks that I have selectively chosen because of their level of activity and because they do address issues that I'm more interested in. Specifically do you want to know some of the people I follow? Of course, I would like to be able to communicate with sheep and goat people, small farm people. Not as many of those people are embracing the technology, so I end up with cattle people and grains, which is not a bad thing because it's livestock and we need to know what's going in those markets.

**How many people follow you?** Just shy of 300 right now.

**How many people do you follow?** Only about 80 people.

**How often do you Tweet?** On any given day, probably no more than 2 or 3 times. I try to share information if I think that someone might be interested in it. Sometimes I share things that I have no idea whether someone would be interested in it and they end up getting the most retweets. So it's hard to say, but most days I don't tweet more than 2 or 3 times.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Again, it depends on workload. Twitter is a little bit of a diversion for me, a bit of entertainment. I don't know, a half a dozen times a day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Oh yeah [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It's not just the electronic media, there are honest to goodness breathing people that you like to get together with when you find out they share views and interests.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** I do. As I say, that sometimes seems to be the non-agriculture people embrace the most, because there is a vicariousness that they seem to want to grab onto. It's that connection to the farm that they have never really had, so sometimes they follow farmers and are intrigued by different things like landing, when we are (landing?) in the spring, when we are in the barn, I'll occasionally tweet and post pictures, and there has been some interest in that. And that's an opportunity to show some folks probably something they have never seen before.

- **Political views or views on the news?** I do, but there primarily agriculture or environmental in nature. I have some pretty strong environmental views as well, and we get a bad rap as farmers that we don't care about the environment. I am constantly reminding people that we are the original environmentalists, and if we don't take care of the environment, we don't have a place to work. I am very in tuned to that and vocal sometimes with people who don't really understand.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Absolutely, yes. As a matter of fact, most of my tweets are a link to an article or as you say a resource that I've located that somebody might find useful.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** I do. Not very often, I don't get that many questions. When they are questions, I am happy to answer them with the caveat that it is my opinions and my way of doing things that is not necessarily the right way, but it's the right way.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Occasionally. Asking questions more than seeking advice. Lots of times I will do a little fact finding to do a little probing when someone says something to find out a little bit more about where they are in their views. I don't put a lot of stock in...I've seen a lot of people burned in online situations where they take someone's advice on specifically a medical issue for livestock, and it's not good advice, so I try not to give any and I try not to accept very much. I advise people anytime they want information like that, they need to go through a veterinarian.
  - o If so, do people respond to you? Yes.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Yeah, as I indicated earlier, I like the brevity. It makes you work a little harder to get your point across in a limited amount of characters.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** 46 to 64

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** ██████████ Kentucky

**Type of farming you do:** primarily concentrate on sheep, even though we do have equines, and donkeys. We primarily use the donkeys as livestock guardian animals – we use dogs as livestock guardian animals as well. We have beef cattle and we raise a little bit of poultry. It's a diversified operation.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** About a year and a half of grad school. I have a BS, and I was working on my master's when reality struck and I had to go and get a real job.

## Respondent 9

### First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I probably started hearing about it maybe a year ago or so, and went online and looked at it, signed up for an account, but never really did anything until maybe 4 or 5 months ago.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** Probably in the news or something like that.

**Why did you join Twitter?** I don't know, I just thought I'd see what the buzz was about, I guess.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Ag related topics, sports, some down-syndrome topics

**Does Twitter offer you that you can't get anywhere else?** I think there is a lot more real-time sharing of information, and that's kind of why I like it.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** I guess not anything that comes to mind right off hand. Maybe a little easier searching, I guess.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Computer

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I primarily use Tweetdeck.

### Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Typically maybe go online before turning the TV news on, turn on the news shortly after that usually.

**How about during the day?** Either online or on the radio

**How about in the evening?** I guess it would be mostly online, a little TV news.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Typically a little less.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Yes, Facebook, primarily Facebook.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yeah, I think so. I think you can reach out and receive information from a wide variety of sources, especially if you go out and seek new people to follow.

### Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Probably not. I guess at some point I'd like to have a smartphone or a mobile device that I could access it from, but I don't at this time.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Primarily through farm organizations locally or the state level and through e-mail.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I'd say larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'd say maybe a little more informed.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** I guess maybe specific access to particular podcasts that I may not have known about before, but someone linked to on Twitter and I checked it out and became a follower of that too. It provides a different avenue of information from what I was getting previously.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think there will be maybe a little faster access regarding maybe events that happen within agriculture, maybe a market report day, where you can get updated pretty quickly and kind of get what the feeling is in real-time rather than waiting for the next half hour when the news is coming on the radio.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I guess I decide to follow people that post maybe a particularly interesting link, or a different angle on a subject that maybe I haven't heard before. I'll follow them to see what they have to say overtime. I like to follow people that maybe tweet at a particular time of day about a subject that I'm interested in and do that fairly regularly. I guess those would be the big two.

**How many people follow you?** Oh, maybe couple hundred is all – 150 or 200.

**How many people do you follow?** Between 200 or 250.

**How often do you Tweet?** Depends on the day. Some days I'd do 5 to 10, may go a couple of days without doing any.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Probably multiple times a day. 2-3 times a day, or say have the Tweetdeck open and it refreshes itself, so I can follow a number of subjects at one time.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** No. I think so, I would maybe go to a education session or something. I'd be more apt to do that if I followed them on Twitter previously.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Not so much. I guess if I had it with me in mobile I might do that more. I guess I probably tweet more, or retweet a link that I think is good, or something that has happened outside of what I'm doing.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Once in awhile, but not too often.
- **Links to resources/articles?** I try to, I think those are the most valuable ones to tweet. If you want your tweet to be heard by more people, it's got to have some kind of link to it, I think. If it's meaningful.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Sure.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Oh yeah, I guess I have.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yeah.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I think I like the brevity. It makes you be more concise, I can see some people getting on there and rambling on and on.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** Male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Iowa

**Type of farming you do:** crops and livestock hogs

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Completed a BS.

## Respondent 10

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Probably I knew about it for a couple of years, but I started getting involved with it a year ago. A grain marketer that I follow, I knew he did regular updates on Twitter, and that is why I started.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** Oh boy, I have no idea, probably at school or something.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Commodity marketing, that's pretty much the only thing I still follow closely is the grain markets and different grain marketers that have different accounts.

**Does Twitter offer you that you can't get anywhere else?** Yeah, live updates from a various group of grain marketers and the ability to have their tweets sent directly to your phone. So you know about it without having to be right next to your computer.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** I think being able to search for people could be easier. If you don't know what their Twitter name is, and a lot of people don't put their full name on it, it's hard to find certain people.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** Nope, nothing that I have ever been irritated with.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** No, I don't use any of those.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** I follow a lot of news organization and major commodity marketing on Twitter. So I get up and I check my phone to find out what happened during the night that I didn't wake up to, and then I'll start going through my e-mails, because I'll get several different broker companies that will send out a newsletter about what happened and what they are expecting to happen during the day. So I just go through those and pretty much e-mails and Twitter.

**How about during the day?** During the day I still use Twitter and e-mail a lot, but I'll also go to various websites to see what they are posting.

**How about in the evening?** In the evening, same thing during the day. Various websites, Twitter, and e-mail.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** I'd be about the same as all the others.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Like Facebook? Yeah. I use Facebook, but it doesn't have the variety of contacts that Twitter does.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate?** If so, how? Yes. Absolutely. You have more up to date information, so when you give your grain broker a call, you know what's going on, you don't have to waste a bunch of time having him fill you in and then make a decision. You're already aware of what happened.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Probably on my phone a lot more, now. Agriculture has turned into such an information world that you have to know what's going on. 10 years ago an hour in the commodity market was a long time, now 5 minutes is a long time in the market. Twitter is the ability to keep more up to date so you can operate on the marketing side of your farm and manage it a lot better by being able to stay informed with everything.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Before, with farmers you didn't really didn't get into contact with anybody that you didn't know for awhile, but for a lot of commodity marketers, you would just check their websites or you would read an article in a magazine, the various different magazines that come out every now and then.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Much larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** More informed.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Last night, probably around 11, I found out that China bought another very large portion on American soybeans, and that affected overnight trading as well as today's trading. But I was aware of it last night, so I could prepare for it in my marketing strategy for today. I didn't have to wait until it was announced during the day.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it's going to become more common for people to use it. It's another tool for people can use and it's a great resource to get up to date information.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I get a lot of the commodity brokers just because there are a lot of people down in the trading pit and they are talking to different traders, so they can

give a better idea on how they expect the morning market to open. They will tweet about breaking news such as China buying a large portion of American soybeans or the Russian drought. Those are all major topics that we found out about right away because the people that are in the middle of trading are right there and they tweet about it. I have [REDACTED] there is a commodity group called Grain Guru, I follow him. I probably have 150 different grain marketers that I follow. I follow a lot of people in the ethanol industry, beef industry, a couple of other companies that are involved in agriculture like Monsanto and BASF, the major companies like that.

**How many people follow you?** 70, maybe, somewhere in that range.

**How many people do you follow?** I think I'm at 250.

**How often do you Tweet?** Less than 1 per day, I use it more so for gathering information. If I do tweet something it's because it was a hot topic and I'll just re-send it. It's easy for me to go back at night and look at what I retweeted and find that article that I wanted to read earlier.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** 4 or 5 times a day, but for the major people that I follow, I get their tweets sent to my phone.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** No. yeah, I suppose there would be a few people I would consider meeting.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** No.
- **Political views or views on the news?** No. I guess I don't send out many tweets, if anything I'll retweet.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yeah, if I found something interesting on my own, I would tweet that on my own. So it would be informational.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Very rarely. Maybe once or twice.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** I have not yet, but I've considered it.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I guess 150 really isn't a lot, but it's enough to convey a message and post an article. So if you are really that interested in it, go ahead and follow the link. If you made where you can put more characters in it, you are going to have people out there writing a book, so it's easier to just get a quick message and a link to an article.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] North Dakota

**Type of farming you do:** we have spring wheat, winter wheat, sunflowers, corn and cedar cattle

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Will graduate in December with a bachelor's degree.

## Respondent 11

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I've known about Twitter for awhile. I didn't actually sign up for it until about June of this year. My husband and I participated in a training session that the National Pork Board put on in Des Moines. The whole sessions was about educating farmers about the importance of utilizing social networking to tell our story and to educate the public, and so through that training session they had Twitter accounts, Facebook accounts, of course I already had one of those, and LinkedIn account. They just had us go through the different steps of the different ways you can go out there and tell your story. So that's where I first started using Twitter.

**Why did you join Twitter?** Well I've been writing a blog this year, back in April I believe. It was just something – I'm a writer and it was just something that I wanted to somehow tell our story, and I wasn't really sure how to go about doing that. I had read some other farm blogs and so I started doing that, but then I didn't know how to get people to actually read your blog. So by going to that training session they talked about how you can pull traffic over by using social networks like Twitter. So that's why I kind of started using it, because it's been a way to not only share my blog with other people and other blogs that I might come across or other articles. But it's been a way that I've been introduced to a lot of other people and things.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Basically we are pork producers, so anything that involves the pork industry or the consignment (inaudible) things like that. I'm always interested in learning about anything like that. Also the nutritional values of pork. I like to know that stuff because I like to share it with other people.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** I think the biggest thing that recall I prefer about Twitter is the community – you have so many other farmers there. You know, you have AgChat, other different little AgChats that just involve farmers. I really like that community setting where it just feels like I'm converging with adults that are wanting to do the same thing and accomplish the same goals as me.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** Yeah, they need to...the whale. The infamous whale. I guess that has to do with their servers, but they need to make room for the bigger capacity. There is a lot more people on it now.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** I tweet on just my computer.

**If you don't use a mobile device, why not?** Because I don't have one. My cell phone does have Internet access if I choose to use it, but it costs extra. I'm already in a contract, so when my other contract is up I fully intend on getting something like an iPhone or Blackberry or whatever, but that's not up yet.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I have the Tweetmeme on my blog, and I use that to. If I put a new blog entry up and I'm in hurry, I'll just click that real quick but I have also used Twubs for AgChat, but those are the only ones I've used so far.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Well, basically I just hunker down. I check Twitter, what other people are saying, what's going on. I have that Google Reader so I try to keep tabs on different articles and subjects through that. Basically, I just start clicking buttons, Googling, and Tweeting to try and find out what's going on.

**How about during the day?** Pretty much – I rely a lot on my Google Reader. I have a lot of my keywords in there and I get a lot from that. Other than that, I watch the news every morning.

**How about in the evening?** I try to set that stuff aside in the evening. I am pretty much on the computer all day. In the evening times, it's like you know, just give the brain a break for awhile.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Twitter, oh probably say, spend an hour a day at least on it. Tuesday nights is AgChat, so I probably spend a couple of hours on it then, but I'd probably say you know, in a week I probably spend 7 or 8 hours on it.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I use Facebook. I also am on LinkedIn. Of course, the Blogger. LinkedIn, I'm not so much. I'm on it, but I don't really use it. Facebook and Twitter are the main social networks that I use to communicate with people.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yeah. I'm actually – I wouldn't consider myself a social person at all. I don't do well with face-to-face, but with Twitter, oh yeah. I've communicated with more people on Twitter than I think I have in a lifetime.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Yeah. I think it has really, because it's our whole family that farms. When I first presented the idea of sharing what we do on the Internet for everyone, they were kind of concerned at first because there has been a lot of farm bashing, and you know, sharing anything on the Internet is a double-edged sword – you got to be careful. I think it's made them more conscious to make sure they don't cut corners, make sure they don't take that shortcut just because they are in a hurry or they got a lot to do today. I think it's made everyone here more conscious of what they do, because we do..it is being put out there.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Really, it was really limited to my family and our few friends, neighbors here. I didn't really get connected with really informed as much as I am now until after I got on and started communicating with Twitter, talking with other people, and researching what other people are doing too. I just knew what was happening in front of us. I didn't get to reach out like I can now.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Oh, I use Twitter more than anything, especially when it comes to farming. Facebook is more my friends...my longtime friends. Twitter is more business. So, larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** Well, that kind of depends completely on the other farmer. I'd say...I don't know. If I look at what I say my father in law knows about what's going on in the farming community, I'd say we are about the same. He has his way of keeping up with things, and I have mine. Then again, there are some other people I'd say I'm more informed because they don't get out there and communicate. So I guess it all depends on how much you communicate and how you get your information.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Oh yeah, I mentioned AgChat before, I've learned a lot through that, and the other articles that people have shared on there. Oh, there is a wealth of information I would have never had access to.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I am hoping more people get on there and just try to share what they know. I've had both positive and negative responses through Twitter. People that don't believe in what we do, and people that do believe in what we do and cheer us on. I'm hoping in the future I can see a lot more farmers being involved in and I hope they do.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I follow a lot of mainly all agriculture people, companies, and I basically want to follow people who are in the same boat as me. They're other agriculturalists who are just trying to put a positive light on what other people have been trying to bash all these years..activists and what not. So I basically just follow farmers.

**How many people follow you?** 70 something

**How many people do you follow?** I don't know, maybe about 150.

**How often do you Tweet?** A few times a week. I try to tweet every week, at least 2-3 times a week. I could have 3-4 tweets in one day, or I could have 3-4 tweets in one week. It all depends. I'm not like a heavy, heavy tweeter, but I think that's because I don't have access to my mobile device yet. I just have access to a computer.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Every day. I check Twitter every day, to see who's on, what's being said. Even if it's for a couple of minutes, I'll check it every day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** I've met someone in person and then followed them on Twitter. I don't think I've met anyone that I've followed just yet – I'm hoping to change that, but not yet.

### **What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Oh no. I tweet about anytime I write a new article, I'll tweet about that and share it. Or anytime I put a new video up on YouTube, or if I put a new blog up. It's basically to pull traffic over to what we're doing here, or if I come across someone else's article or pertinent information, I'll tweet about that too.
- **Political views or views on the news?** I have yeah, I did a whole no Prop B campaign and used Twitter a lot for that.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Sometimes, yes, if I think I have a good answer.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Sometimes, not as often as I should probably.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yes, they have.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** No, not really.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I think yeah, it is kind of interesting sometimes only have what...150 characters that Twitter has? I think for what Twitter is, the shorter is good. For the simple fact that if you have a site, you can use like bit.ly to shorten it down, so that helps you. Twitter is more fast paced. You don't have time read a whole paragraph or blog. That's what blogs are for. I think the smaller usage of characters is also kind of a challenge, it's creates its kind of own little language. It's kind of annoying, but I think it's necessary.

### **Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** female

**City, State:** ████████ Missouri

**Type of farming you do:** pork, we grow corn, soybeans, and occasionally wheat as well.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** I am currently a college student – I've got two years so far.

## Respondent 12

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** During – around July of 2009.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I think just happened to see something on the Internet about what Twitter was, so I was curious, so I entered www.twitter.com, just to find out what it was.

**When did you join Twitter?** Well, once I found out what it was, I immediately decided to join it.

**Why did you join Twitter?** Well, because in middle of 2009 the dairy farmers were in a horrible horrible financial mess – the price of milk had crashed dramatically, and so every dairy farm, including my own farm was losing money at about a rate of \$1,000 per...well it ended up being \$1,000 per year, per cow. So I thought it was such a financial disaster that I thought I could reach out and find other farmers that were in the same situation, so that was my primary goal to try and talk with other dairy farmers in the country.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Well I tried to initially, I searched dairy, and when I entered a search for dairy, other farmers came up – you know, if I just entered the hashtag dairy. So I found a few dairy farmers right off the bat. I immediately started talking with them to see if they had the same situation. One lady in particular - [REDACTED] – I immediately started talking with her. Then, I found that many of the dairy farmers who were on the Internet, quite a few of them were either in leadership positions with the co-ops or the companies or dairy promotion efforts, so we started to dialogue.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Oh yeah, definitely. The real-time conversation, and also the search feature so that you find people on whatever topic you are interested in. So now I've branched out into other topics like food, state policy, ag policy, agriculture, environmental, stuff like that. You know, I could e-mail people, but I wouldn't know how to get their e-mail addresses, and that's really slow. Then there are chat rooms, but it's hard to search. In fact, I did Yahoo chat for awhile, but I didn't really find anybody who were farmers. So this one offers you nationwide access to people.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** No, I haven't really conceptualized anything. Maybe to have 140 characters, to be able to expand it a little bit.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** Yes, sometimes my tweets, I'll send a tweet and it doesn't show up. I don't know why. I never have that problem from a computer, but I do my blackberry. It's also sometimes – I have trouble shrinking links to articles that I want to share with someone to a website, so I have to do that a little bit better.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** No, just Twitpics. I send a lot of pictures, I post a lot of pictures of just day-to-day activities on the farm, so I have 2,500 followers right now.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** The second I wake up, literally, seconds later, I grab my cell phone and I get my New York Times morning alert. Then I get alerts from a couple of European newspapers that I get. Then I also check Twitter and see if any messages have been sent to me, maybe because people will share a couple of things that they picked up in the morning.

**How about during the day?** Probably the same way – I got to Fox News or CNN, or if I'm on the computer I'll pick up news there. I don't really even watch TV anymore.

**How about in the evening?** Usually on my cell phone, same thing. I'll just search Fox News or CNN or Twitter. If I'm interested in something, you know people always share articles on Twitter, so if you enter a topic, like if I enter "dairy" on Twitter, chances are someone that is involved in the industry will have posted information that has occurred immediately.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Probably more time on Twitter, because I find Twitter to be more current. I follow about 2,000 people, and many of them are related to dairy and food, so if the National Milk Producers Federation posted something, then if I search dairy it will show up on there and a variety of publications.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** No, I don't really think so – what else would there be? I've seen other ones, like chats, but I don't use those. Oh, Facebook. I do occasionally use sometimes. Where if I see an article that is of interest to me, I post it on Facebook.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Oh, definitely. It opened a whole world to me to be able to communicate with how authors in food and agriculture. Also, on behalf of farmers in my state, to make money contacts with food people [REDACTED]. State level – I can also ask questions directly from the major co-ops like the National Milk Producers Federation, is an organization of all the major dairy co-ops in the United States. I can send a tweet to their top policy people. Or the Dairy Farmers of America, the largest dairy co-op in the United States, their communications person is online, so I can send her a tweet instantly asking her a question. Especially authors to whose literature shapes food policy in the United States, specifically [REDACTED] has actually responded to me and sent me e-mails asking for questions on the dairy industry, [REDACTED] – she tweets me and asks me questions on the dairy industry all the time. She's sent me a couple of her books to review. So, you know, I've had some really interesting conversations with young people in [REDACTED] who are interested in food. For example, I get all these followers in the city who have never been to a farm but they see all my pictures every day and they are very interested



level, they would know more. I would say my connections to [REDACTED] people are among the best connections in the state now because of Twitter. Because I actually find myself telling the leadership of Farm Bureau, “hey, there was a meeting in [REDACTED] that affects people” or I contacted [REDACTED] about meetings that they didn’t know about that were actually important.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don’t think you would have learned elsewhere?** For example, this past summer I had lots of little calves born and I really, my sister is a veterinarian, so I searched for a lot of supplements that my calves got and [REDACTED]. When I researched them I found that they were actually a lot better than what the farmers here [REDACTED] were using, so immediately started using those products. You know, my sister analyzed them and found that they had the colostrums that you give to little calves when they are born. That’s a very specific example of something that I’ve learned. So you know, just sharing information about products is a nice thing.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** Well, I would hope that more farmers would do it. A lot of dairy farmers here [REDACTED] don’t use their cell phones as much as I do, maybe they don’t have Internet service on their cell phones. I have told several farmers about it though, and there are several young women farmers that are very technologically advanced and they are considering getting Twitter on their phones to use like I do.

**Now, I’d like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Well I usually search a couple of areas. I search dairy, I also search environment and agriculture, I also search global warming and agriculture. I have some specific interests there. I try to follow leaders of urban food movements, because I find a lot of these people have theories, but they’ve actually never been on farms. So I search out urban food chat thinkers. That part has had quite a bit of success in talking to people. Now some of them, I kind of feel they won’t tweet back to me if I’m a farmer. There are a couple of prominent people that have never tweeted back to me, but some surprising people have, like this [REDACTED] had a conversation with me on Twitter one night about dairy. So that’s what I try to search out, I try to use that as an opportunity to find the urban food thinkers.

**How many people follow you?** Currently, I think about 2,350, somewhere around there.

**How many people do you follow?** I follow about 2,000 myself. If someone follows me, I immediately follow them back.

**How often do you Tweet?** I could probably tell you exactly since last year, I’ve tweeted many times. I’ll go to my [REDACTED] here... This is an interesting study. I carry my cell phone in the barn, everywhere with me. My Blackberry is always in my left hand. Then I take pictures

while I'm farming and I post pictures so usually about 40 -150 people look at the pictures I post. So it gets to the point where my family is like "will you quit posting pictures already!" I get a lot of interesting commentary. An interesting thing – a calf was being born so I was tweeting a calf birth, and that was...that whole sequence was posted on an online newspaper [REDACTED]. Ok, I would say I tweet scores of times each day.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Probably about 10 times a day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter?** If so, why? If no, would you consider it? Yeah, we have – we call it a Tweetup. So when we went to the [REDACTED], I had several legislators from around [REDACTED] state that I was tweeting with, so we all met at the conference room in [REDACTED]. And then [REDACTED] technical people met us, so yes, I had one Tweetup where I met everybody. I've talked to several people on the telephone too, where we will tweet for awhile and then be like "hey, let's talk on the phone!" It's easier to just get on the phone and talk – you know, people will send a direct message. So like [REDACTED] was interested in talking, so she sent me her phone number and I called her and I just wanted to find out her background and what she's into. And then I e-mail different people in the industry like if I see, oh, sometimes, these groups that go around and liberate animals and stuff. They put like threats and stuff like that, I direct e-mail it to different people so that they know what's going on.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yeah, I do that. Like last night, I went out to help a neighbor deliver a calf. So I put on there [REDACTED] [REDACTED] You know, "milking cows," "feeding (inaudible),"
- **Political views or views on the news?** Oh yeah, all the time. Some people don't, but I do. I'll put on [REDACTED] That's how I picked up a lot of followers. Yeah, I have 2,359 followers at the moment.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes, if I see an article that I think is a good quality, I'll put a link to it. I don't like to tweet articles that I think are crappy. I try to screen them for quality.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** All the time. I've had scores of urban people ask me questions about what I'm doing or why I'm doing it. You know "why do you take away the calf from the mother cows, isn't that terrible?" and I explain the whole situation or "why are you giving that cow antibiotics, what is that all about? Why aren't you organic?" Then, I'll explain what the particular antibiotic is for or whatever.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Oh yes, like I had questions on (carboncy frustration?) so I follow different people who are scientists in that area. Or if I wanted to specifics on different things like DMOs, the scientists are right online and you can ask.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** I would say for the most part. Only a few people don't respond to me. I don't know if they just don't talk to farmers.

Some of these people have said “don’t worry about it, these people never respond anyway. They just use it for broadcast purposes.”

■ **Any other topic I’ve left out?** No, that’s pretty much it. Food, environment, agriculture. Occasionally I’ll tweet about things going on in Europe. I like France, so I’ll tweet about France. There are some interesting things that I started doing, you know the people with their online radio shows, like their blogs or podcasts, call me ■  
 ■  
 ■. I’m going to be on her radio show on Friday. There is another one ■  
 ■ that is fairly big and they asked me if I would be on their show  
 sometime ■  
 ■  
 ■

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I wish it could just be a little bit longer – maybe 200 or something like that.

**Finally, I’d like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** 46 to 64

**Gender:** Female

**City, State:** ■ New York

**Type of farming you do:** dairy. We are branching out into actual cheese making. We have a cheese factor, a cheese plant.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Juris doctorate, I have a law degree.

## Respondent 13

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I don't know probably 2 or 3 years ago when it first started.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I actually I also have a [REDACTED]. I work for a large [REDACTED], so it's part of their thing too.

**When did you join Twitter?** From a [REDACTED] standpoint, I joined it probably 2 years ago. From a rancher's standpoint, I did this version [REDACTED] in August of this past year.

**Why did you join Twitter?** Well, basically just to connect with other people in agriculture. Where I live there is not necessarily a lot of technology in the agriculture world and there is a rather limited availability of information outside the local area, albeit there is the county extension services which are a part of the [REDACTED]. Just to learn more, more than anything else, because the practices here are not the practices in other places of the country.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Well two things really. I was trying to keep up with what was happening with the political fight that was affecting the agricultural community, which is always out there as a topic on Twitter. The second reason was to try and promote, in my ways, more sustainable agriculture that was responsible to the community. I'm extremely concerned about natural resources like water and how people take care of their animals..(inaudible). So I hope that answers the question – 1 is political, and two, is being in touch with what is going on other places in regards to the farming/ranching.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Yeah although the quality has gone down in my opinion. At first, the Tweets seemed to be more like the original intent of Twitter, which was just kind of a brief exchange of what's going on and what's new – that sort of thing. As it's progressed, it's become more, in my opinion, just stuff coming across the line. Now, how it's helped me, is where I'm at, I do not have wireline type DSL or cable connection, I have to have satellite. So with that there is some latency in all this stuff, and I do have 3 systems that I work on all the time – three computer systems. What I do leave up is the feeds, the commodity markets, and I do leave Twitter up to see if during the day if something relevant, that I have interest in I'll check it out. Now a big thing across the feeds the past couple of days has been the PAX (sp?) discussion and the agriculture community and some of things happening in the USDA, the various states, the Department of Agriculture, those things are helpful to me. Then I don't have to go out and find it myself. Somebody is sitting around to be honest with you with nothing important to do, and they are actually being my filter. So you could say they are the information filter.

**Are there any changes in Twitter you would like to see?** Oh yeah. And maybe it's because I haven't explored it that much, but I would like to see tagging. For instance, let's say between me and you if I always wanted to know that you had a tweet, without me having to click on you, I'd like to have a note that says OK, you've done a tweet and I can look up your name and see what it

is. Because when you follow 20-50 people, it's pretty easy to deal with it. What I've found that is that when the number breaks above 100, it's pretty hard to do the filtering visually. IT would be a lot better if there was some way to capture those people who are actually providing valuable content. I mean, you see what comes on, there is a lot of "thanks" that comes on and all that stuff and that's good that they acknowledge people. On the other hand, there has to be something of value, otherwise the bandwidth and the computer power being used is actually being wasted, in my opinion.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** I only use the computer. I don't use the mobile device.

**If you don't use a mobile device, why not?** Because the only time I'd use a mobile device would be when I would be in the field. When I'm out on my ranch, I don't need that distraction. Distractions in the field can cost you your life, I'll put it that way.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** No.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Well, in the first place, I don't leave the house. Although I do do some work for a technical company, my workplace is here at the ranch. So, how do I get newsfeeds? I collect the local news. Local meaning [REDACTED] news, the first thing in the morning – I have it on. I watch it about 6-6:30 every night. During the course of the day, I always have the commodity market feeds up, and things like MSN up. I do see the news, albeit, those actually don't refresh as much as others. The other way through a few news outlets that I follow on Twitter, so I do watch that activity too. In some cases it's pretty local, in some cases, it's national. I use the things that make sense to my needs here. The other thing with all that, it all has to be triangulated to where I live, meaning the weather that I get isn't 100 miles away from me, or further. The news I get for the most part is the same type of content, and the national news has turned to be more of sensationalism, so unless there is something that is relevant on the national news. I'll watch ABC news or something like that, as I have done at times. It's really not that important to me.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Well, when you say "on Twitter" ..the TV type of news stuff, I spend probably during the course of the day 20-30 minutes, because I get the top of the news and I definitely have to watch the weather. In the case of the other channels like MSN or the others, it's kind of a miss. Like I said, I keep those feeds on all day long. So, how much time I devote to it, in the course of a day, I might spend 20-40 minutes off and on those other channels.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** No, I do not...if you are referring to like Facebook or MySpace. Other blogs are sometimes classified as social media, I don't spend anytime on there. I think other people, from a personal standpoint, I think there is too much information on individuals out there in the states.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate?** If so, how? No. My main communication channel is either e-mail or the phone. So if it's through my corporate job or my ranching operations it's done in one of those two channels. Occasionally, it's done in regular mail, but that's very occasional.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No. The value of the content amongst the people I'm following has declined. The one I've found most useful, and for some reason was guy at the University of Indiana – Purdue. The ag group did a really good job filtering through all of the information over the course of the day and actually pushing it out about 5 a.m. that seemed to be the best. And I found there content the most useful.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** That's an interesting question. Probably three different ways – just based on my own experience and my family's experience. We've been in the farming and ranching business for 160 years. We've had ranches and farms from Virginia, Tennessee, Texas, California, Nevada, so it's just basically being there, doing that and learning over time from the family operation. The other way was my own self education on various sites on the Internet, and basic books. Probably the third way, especially from a local perspective is making sure that I understand why the older ranchers and farmers in my area do what they do, when they do it and why they do it. So if you want to say that all in one sentence is just experience, self-education, and observation.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Interesting. I would think that – let me answer two ways. It has to do with, specifically with what I have to deal with in my operations, Twitter is irrelevant. It has to do with new products, new techniques, just a general way of getting a question answered, it's OK. I actually find search engines like Google and MSN and some others to be very valuable in being able to filter and get to the topic pretty quickly. So does Twitter give me more resources? Yes, but I would have to say that there is not enough people actually in farming and ranching on Twitter. To be blunt about it. What it seems to be, as I observe it overtime, is commercial operations. People trying to sell something. Which is OK. If the incentives are right, it makes perfect sense, I don't have a problem with it. There are certain businesses where the product might be something I'm looking for anyway. The other thing that I observed is with, I can only think of probably a dozen exceptions. There are not people like myself that are actually out there in the field, tweeting. It tends to be the wife or the wannabe that's out there tweeting. So, there are probably I'd say a dozen women/wives/ranchers/farmers where I find their content informative, and of value for one reason or another. The rest of it, I don't really see much use in it. It's the truth. If you would do a filter on how many people are tagged with some sort of agriculture thing, you'll find that the person doing the tweeting is usually female 99% of the time. No offense.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I think I'm more informed. I know I'm more informed.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Well yeah, there is one example. There was a public hearing on, I forget which bill it was the DOJ and the Dept. of Agriculture held an open meeting in Denver, I think that was in September. For the most part, unless you were in that area, you did not know that was being held. You didn't know what the topics were, you just didn't know what was happening. But because of Twitter, it was a pretty lively subject on that day or two. There was a video feed on someone's website of that meeting, which I found that to be of a lot of value. I mean, it goes back to the things, what do I think is – it goes back to the content and why I was using it. It gave me the information that was something that was occurring that would affect me, but I had no idea it was going on because it wasn't publicly announced where I'm at. In fact, as far as I know, there was no one from my general area. I'll just use Texas as an example. If you look at [REDACTED], it's a 3.5 or 4 hour drive. I doubt there is anyone from [REDACTED], which is heavily into the cattle industry attending that particular meeting. But the subject of that meeting has an effect on them. So basically, we didn't know. Now, I belong to the [REDACTED] Ranchers Associations and it covers [REDACTED]. They didn't even have any information on it. I was the one that got them to go onto Twitter, but they still don't know how to use it. You know, it's just crazy. It's such a simple tool. It doesn't really take a lot of effort in my opinion. I think it really serves a good public service, personally.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I can't answer that question. Really I can say that I don't. And the reason I say that I don't know is "how do I use it?" and that's to find products out there I can use and to be aware of what's occurring in the political or the regulations. For the most part, most operations that I'm around, and personally I've had operations in Texas in New Mexico, having online access is almost impossible. On my [REDACTED] ranch, I couldn't even have cell service there. There was 1 wireline that went across my hay pastures, but I couldn't even tap into that, because it went to some house that was 5 miles north of me. It's just one of those things – technology has not reached the agricultural community to the point where it can really be of value for the price you have to pay for it. For instance, my Internet connection costs me almost \$100 a month, and that's just the Internet connection. If you just translate that into production, that means over the course of a year, I have to sell 2 calves to have that access. If I own on top of that a mobile device, you're talking about another 1,200 bucks a year. So that's another 2 calves. That's gross on calves, that's not net. In some cases you might not make any money off of that calve or that ag unit ever. Just because of the conditions that occur within that cow and her offspring. I mean that cow cost you between \$500 and \$800 bucks, and then you have all the vaccinations and health stuff you have to do for them. Then you've got to get them to raise the calf and you've got to do the same thing for the calf to be responsible. I think right now, if I say, the value of the product that I'm producing exceeds the value of the money I'm getting to produce it. So the economics are all upside down. That's why the (inaudible) are decreasing. I'm sorry, now I'm getting off on a tangent. The tangent of sustainable operations that is allowing it to survive is going away. In my area, which the county I

live in, has a very high cattle population. I know 20 operators that have gotten out of the business since the first of the year, and basically had herds from 450-1,000 head. The money is just not there, and the regulations are getting worse. Then, when you have the natural mortality rates, it's just almost impossible. Then I guess the last thing that I'd say on that is that you can't find reliable help. It doesn't make any difference whether you pay them \$8 or \$25 an hour, they don't show up to work. My stuff is put together so that I can do it myself. It's come to that, I've had to put it together like that. Anyway, sorry for the editorial.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I'll follow anybody that has an ag profile. I mean not only the profile in the profile, but when you look at their tweets, are they tweeting about anything relevant? So that's how I make the decision. Now, what do I tweet about? I haven't been actively tweeting lately. What I have done in the past and what I'll start doing again is tweeting about things that are relevant to where I am at and what I'm doing, and that's about it. If you were to look back on mine, they usually start the day because I always check the temperature and precipitation and what has to be done for the day. You know, I might start it out with it's 70 degrees, no rain, light south wind. I've got to set hay today or something like that. Something that kind of lays out what the day is about. Not necessarily asking a question, because the reason I don't ask questions online or on Twitter is because I'm not sure I can get a reasonable response. So usually when I want to know something, I want to know it in the next few minutes or the next 12 hours. I assume hear in about 20 minutes, I'm going out to feed the cattle. I might walk out there and see that I've got a cow down. So that changes what's going to be done for the day. And it works like that every day. What you intend to do is not what you end up.

**How many people follow you?** 300

**How many people do you follow?** Right at about 650

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Political views or views on the news?** No, because I don't think it does any good.
- **Links to resources/articles?** I have done that a couple of times. Now, in my ██████████ world, yes I do. Would I do it in the future? I plan on doing it if the content is something that makes sense. Are you familiar with the Nobel Foundation? The Universities have good information ...but because my location in comparison to the people that follow me, I'm not sure how relevant it would be to them.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Oh yeah. If it's something that I can see no one has responded to and I know the answer, I'll get the answer.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I think that the brevity is OK. For the most part, it's almost like a conversation, it's a back and forth thing. We're talking longer because you're asking questions. But if we were just to sit down and have a small talk conversation, it wouldn't be much more than 140 characters. Especially with the way people have learned, let's say, to work around the words.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** 46-64

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** I don't live in a town. I live in [REDACTED], Texas. Which, if you were to look at the map, and look where [REDACTED] is, where the state line of Oklahoma and Arkansas come together, it's just southwest of there.

**Type of farming you do:** cattle

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Advanced degree

## Respondent 14

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Gosh, probably almost 3..it's been a couple of years. I can't remember when I first got on. I really heard about it early in '09 I believe.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** Yeah, I was taking on a class on social media. It was a webinar, and it was guys teaching it from [REDACTED] and it was about social media and Internet marketing and those kind of things. That was one of our assignments, to get on Twitter.

**Why did you join Twitter?** They said it was something that was up and coming.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** He suggested some people to follow, some people he knew wouldn't mind having us follow them. So I just started following those people and then I kind of went from there. There were people on Facebook that were on Twitter, and then sometimes I go through their followers and then find the ones that were tweeting the topics I was interested in. So I just started from scratch and I built up a few hundred very quickly.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** It might, and I'm not using it for anything specific right now. I think if you post something that gets retweeted periodically that it gives the person more exposure like Facebook. It looks like to me that once you put something on Facebook, it runs through and goes off the page fairly quickly at least for the people who have a lot of friends. And Twitter, it looks to me like stuff can get scattered. You put it out there one time and it may last you for 2-3 days.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** I haven't..I use Tweetdeck most of the time on the laptop and PC, and UberTwitter on the phone. UberTwitter just upgraded, and of course they have the new Twitter now, and I have not fully explored what new Twitter has to offer. I'm not even sure I've tried it. I think that's what keeps popping up. I know some people who are more involved are exploring what's involved with it, I have not taken the time to do that. I don't know what changes have been implemented, so I don't know what I would have them do.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** No, every once in awhile it doesn't go, but that happens with everything it seems like. No, I haven't had any real problems. When it does hang up, I don't what's doing that but it always seems to be a short-lived issue.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I use Twubs for primarily when I do the AgChat on Tuesday nights. Twubs actually seems to be the best and I have not tried the new Tweetdeck, you know, I haven't tried the new Tweedeck on Tuesday night to see how it would do. I've never tried on Twitter, because the searches didn't last long (inaudible). But Tweetdeck, I haven't fully explored it. I haven't explored too much on what Tweetdeck does, other than using the search columns.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** First thing in the morning, my market news comes through from the consultants I use – on the PC in the morning. Then of course various e-mails throughout the day. I probably get 120 e-mails, minimum, not including the ones that get spammed out every day. And they come in to my PC and my laptop and I have to clear them off both, so I don't have them come into my mobile device at this point, because I don't want to have to clean them off three. I didn't think that's the way it's going to be when I started this. But I can see down the road something where I would need to go to a server here so I don't have to. I had (inaudible). Once you delete them they are gone...gone off the server depends from a (inaudible). So I could update that way, but it's going to take some money and time.

So throughout the day, I get periodic market updates on my mobile device, which includes any marketing advice that might be triggered throughout the day. It might be advice to sell corn or beans in my case or to do a market strategy like a (inaudible). So that way when I'm in the field, all that stuff can happen. That comes in as a text message, because I don't have e-mail on my phone. Beyond that, the tweets, I try to get on Tweetdeck and there are some people that I support by making sure to retweet what they put up there. I have a couple who haven't gotten the hang of hashtags yet, either that or it's automatic from their blog posts, so I try to follow those and get a hashtag on it when I retweet it. Give them the market exposure they should be wanting or needing to be effective. So I just do that off and on throughout the day. I do use my mobile device to check Facebook and check Twitter from now and then. I do some posting of pictures on Facebook and Twitter. Actually, that's about the only way I post pictures anymore is from the phone and so some text messages, not a lot outgoing. Not everyone in my phone does text messages, so that's not always the best way to go.

**How about in the evening?** Really don't. I try to watch the local weather and other than that...yeah know, I listen to Christian radio and at the top of the hour, you get 5 minutes of news, so I do get it through the radio during the day, and at night, I probably don't. I don't check Twitter, especially in the house, I don't check it a lot, so Facebook and Twitter, if it pops up and I'm checking it then that's the way it's going to come. But I just don't do a lot of evenings. Monday evenings I've got three scheduled phone calls every week. Tuesday evenings is AgChat and one Tuesday a month I've got a webinar. My evenings get filled up webinars and other things. So if it happens at night, I may not know about it until the 10 o'clock news or the next day.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** That sure depends on the day and what I'm doing out in the field. You know everything is by phone and that changes my habit. I suppose Twitter is probably a 1/3 of the time. That's a rough estimate; I've never kept track. But you know, my wife will tell you it's too much, but anyway.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Facebook, LinkedIn, but I don't use it a lot because I haven't taken the time to learn to use it. I guess I don't get a lot of messages

from LinkedIn. I'm a few groups that I get and those actually come in through e-mail. I don't use LinkedIn much, it's primarily Facebook.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Probably not. Except for the people through the advocacy group and the AgChat meeting, there very few people in my local area that do social media, I mean for business or anything. I mean, there are a few moms and dads on Facebook, but very few just of anybody using Facebook in my area for business. There is one guy in my area using Twitter, and he just started here in the last month. So as far as communication, it's not with people I'm going to see on a regular basis. Some of them are not from around here, and I don't know when I'll see them again. Maybe a Tweetup someplace.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No. The only thing it has changed is I pay a little more attention to what I am doing, and if it's something that interesting and could be educational, I'll snap a picture and upload it. As far as just tweeting what I do, I guess I haven't built a base like some of the people have. Some people, no matter what they put up on there gets retweeted several times, and I haven't tweeted enough. But I have a big following, if they are good pictures – sunrises and sunsets, something, it will get retweeted a few times and looked at. I do pay attention to what I do and how I do it even if there is no one around, which is kind of weird. Just to increase my awareness of what I do and how I do it. There are people out there who are interested, and that could be pro or con.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** I was on Twitter, and I hadn't been on very long. I think I was on the very first, or one of the very first AgChats on Tuesday night. So I did connect with a few farmers on Twitter because of that and followed them to Facebook. Because up until that, I had not gotten the farmer or the ag realm on Facebook. Actually, I didn't use Twitter except for Tuesday nights at all until [REDACTED], but that's when I got UberTwitter on my phone. I came home on Tuesday nights, and I used the search. I kind of struggled through it that night, and I've been using it ever since. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], now I am a lot more interested because I know those people and they know me. So now when they put something out, I may retweet it and never even go look at the blog or the link because I know those people. I know they have integrity, so I just do it. Because they know me, I'm sure that's why some of my stuff just gets retweeting. Because I am kind of one of the group now, and that's made a big difference for me, because I was never able to make a tweetup that [REDACTED] put in place (inaudible) until August. I didn't understand it, it wasn't on my phone. Twitter was just – I just hardly didn't do anything with it until August.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I would say mine is larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'd say definitely, definitely more. I get a lot of the ag news, the breaking stuff on Twitter and some on Facebook. Of course, I do get some e-mails from the Farm Bureau, pork producers, and stuff like that, but I guess most of the stuff if it's legislative or last night I learned about a new type of crop insurance from Twitter. I missed AgChat, because I had a webinar and I got in the house late, and I worked out. So I found out a new product that could be very beneficial to my operation because the last few years it's been available, I haven't made a lot of money with it. I wouldn't have lost as much revenue because it would have made up the difference. So something like that – just find out things could make the difference in the bottom line. As far as other news, some of the technology, like the new Twitter, and I got a link because I'm going to do some social media training over the winter. There is a way to set my Blackberry to my laptop to the projector so that I can actually project the screen if I want to show people how I use the phone for social media training. I saw that on Twitter, and I haven't seen that anywhere else. I know I can go ask. I've learned to either go to a direct message or just put it out there, and I know somebody will get back to me with an answer.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** That's a good question, because there are still a lot of people that think I am crazy. [REDACTED]. There is a few of the young guys – on 30s or 20s that are on Facebook. But maybe just three or four. So even the young guys are not using Twitter, at least in my part of the world yet. So it's just going to depend – even some of the businesses that I would like to follow, some of the businesses trying to use Twitter – are doing a very poor job. I've actually taken the effort to make suggestions to increase their visibility, and they have ignored them. So I don't know if it's just going to take awhile for those. Because I think the farmers are going to have to see value. They think it's silly and it takes a lot of time and all that, so they go to the coffee shop and they watch TV. It's a matter of choices. I'm not sure what's going to drive the farmers to use Twitter, because a lot of the farmers that are using it are using it for a purpose. They are building a tremendous following with speaking engagements and stuff like that, breakfasts, they are selling agriculture related products, (inaudible) farms, they could be doing dairy tours. What I see is the general, there is very few farmers that are just on there just to be participating. I would put myself in that category right now, but that will change as I get my book published and I step into some life coaching and speaking type things then I will use it more when those things come around. I do network marketing, but I don't even do that on Twitter now, because I haven't figured out exactly how I would like to do that. I'm not using it that way right now. Everybody on there has a purpose. I don't see farmers on there just to be on there.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I follow all the people involved in the AgChat Foundation, which is about 75 or 80 people. I just follow people who are tweeting their blogs. Right now I am doing just a lot of following so that I can help people and retweet their blog posts and people that are interesting. I follow a lot of farmers, a lot of people in the Christian Circle network, of course that's not exclusive, there are people who do more tweeting of Bible verses

and that than others. I also follow Readership Trainers like [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Right now I'm trying to help [REDACTED] build his Twitter following. I also follow a lot of people in the health and wellness business because I've been in that circle for awhile. So once I get in these circles, and I actually start some of them on Facebook kind of one at a time. Then I went to Twitter, and now it's kind of give and take. But those are the main circles I follow and have made an effort to get involved in because that's my interest and I as I go forward that's the people I want to have following me to grow my business, my network, my connections, however you want to put it.

**How many people follow you?** It's not that many, I think there is only 1,300. I don't know if that's a lot or not. It's fallen back some because I don't always re-follow everybody. There are some people who I don't really want to see their stuff. So I've had a few if I don't follow them then they end of dropping me. But some of them have dropped me, I think that's normal, because I think some of it is automated. If they follow you, and you don't follow them, then they drop you. Or if they follow you and you don't tweet anything then they drop you. I do everything manually. I follow everybody manually – I check out their bio or whatever is posted and if they don't have anything, I may not follow them back. I guess I like to see who I am following. So do I check that, and once in a while I'll just click on them and go back and refresh my memory as far as who they are and why I'm following them. That's something maybe this winter I will get a chance to do – Exact followers 1,462.

**How many people do you follow?** 1,893. Getting bigger every day. I haven't built that number because I'm not doing it automatic. The people who are suggesting I do that, I just haven't take the time to do that.

**How often do you Tweet?** I'll go some days and not tweet very much. Because I've only done 980 tweets, that's not very many tweets. I do a lot of retweeting as much as anything at this point. But I do tweet some, mostly pictures. I haven't done a lot of tweeting of my thoughts and stuff like that. A couple of days would include retweets. It's real sporadic. I get in, I got a few minutes, I pop it up, I may do something on it. It's just depends.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Actually I think I check it more than Facebook. On a typical day, I'll check it maybe a half dozen times. I don't go back – I'll go to the bottom of the column and that's it. Of course, with everyone I'm following, they come through so fast, you never get to the bottom of the column. I can't seem them all anyway, I'm not that fast. Fairly regularly.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Mostly.
- **Political views or views on the news?** No, I retweet some of that, but I haven't done a lot of that and I really don't know what's holding me back, but I haven't taken the time to organize my thoughts and put them out there. I mean anyone who goes to my profile can figure out what I think. You know, because I who I follow and the tweets and retweets I have out there.

- Links to resources/articles? I do sometimes. If I find something particularly interesting to me that I haven't seen anyone else do, then I'll do that. Last week, our local representative in the House passed away and I picked it up off the newspaper and I put it on Facebook and Twitter. That was a link to the news story. But if I see something or somebody, then I'll make an effort to put a link out there for them or to them however you want to look at it.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** I will if I know the answer. I kind of support people in anyway I can if I can be of assistance. Sometimes it's just to let them know who to talk to whether it's Twitter or Facebook. I may just give them a DM or something and say hey "someone I know knows the answer." You know, if I can take a minute and support somebody, I'll do it.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yes, sometimes. Sometimes I wonder why I haven't done it more than I did. I got hung up on something – I forgot what it was well why didn't I just put it out there on Twitter and Facebook – it was like what was I thinking? So I'll be doing that more often as we go down the road.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yeah. Sometimes it's not a lot of responses. A lot of times it's just 1 or 2. I think that's because things get moved down into the feed so fast that people don't see it. If it doesn't answered, I'll retweet it. I like to use hashtags, at least the hashtags I know that will get followed, which are mostly ag ones. I try to put a hashtag on it and I think it makes it more like to get answered. If it's a computer technology issue, than I'll tag it with #tech, but #ag seems to be real effective.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** Not that I can remember. I'm just trying to think about what I do talk about it. I think it's mostly...one reason I retweet a lot is because I know the ag information I put out there is being seen by a circle. I know everybody's circle is unique, but I think mine is really unique because it goes into the health and wellness industry, and into the leadership training industry. I know what topic the health and wellness industry gets hung up and they bash agriculture a lot of time in order to get people to buy supplements, which is really annoying to me. So I try and put the facts out there. Of course, I can't make them look at them or make them use them. So I try to put the facts out there in my unique circle and hope that they get picked up so maybe we can change some people's minds. If they are open at all they can come see what it actually is, not what it's reported to be.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Limited number of characters get to be an aggravation when I am trying to retweet someone's tweet and they've used them all. They haven't take the time to make it easy to retweet for them. At times it would be longer. I don't have my blog up and going yet, so that limits it. I would just say that's personal preference though. It's just suppose to be short and sweet, that's the way it is. I think it started out at 140 characters because that's how many characters a typical smartphone or cell phone would support if I'm not mistaken. I do see there are ways to make them longer, but I haven't explored that to see what it's about. I don't know if I'll get around that to that, or hopefully when they have the

next Ag Chat Foundation meeting, which will be probably 3.0, I'll go and expand my horizons some more.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** 46 to 64

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Illinois

**Type of farming you do:** corn and beans, and we've got a few cows out here in the pasture.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Bachelors

## Respondent 15

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Probably in late 2007.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I have no idea.

**When did you join Twitter?** In 2008, early 2008.

**Why did you join Twitter?** I thought that it might be an interesting way to connect with people who were sharing information, and I also thought that it might have some business use.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Probably my I first looked for people in state and people who might have agriculture interests, people who might have or organizations who might have interesting news feeds, blog connections, with regards to poultry and farming and food. Some people just because they were funky, and funky is always good.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Probably a brief quick means of expression that reaches a different crowd of people who have some similar interests.

**Are there any changes in Twitter you would like to see?** It's hard to say. I use a Twitter client, you know an app. I'm happy with the app I use. It's – some of the changes that happen with Twitter aren't always the best.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Computer

**If you don't use a mobile device, why not?** I don't own one. Don't even want to own one. I may get stuck owning one, but I don't want it.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** Accessible Twitter.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Start the morning by making a pot of coffee, then go and look at the main daily newspapers – I actually look at Twitter. Then I look at the main daily newspapers and look through my e-mails. Look at probably the NYT, most days, and you know checking in and out with Twitter as I go along, I'd call that maybe a 3-hour period, because I wake up early. At the same time, if there is a lot of farm business to do, I'm mixing that along with reading the news and such. If I'm here, checking in with Twitter throughout the day and watching a couple of afternoon news resources that I use – they are local news resources. Really in terms of news, there are some farming publications that I get read and meat industry publications that I get and read, and restaurant publications that I get and read. We're in the midst of preparing a fairly extensive business plan here, so there is some things I'm watching for in those news feeds to use in the body of the business plan for evidence of necessity.

**How about in the evening?** I don't usually bother. I have a couple of news alerts that pop up if something outrageous is going on. About the last thing I do in terms of news, except for the occasional local weekly paper, is about 4:30 in the afternoon, I take a quick look at where the stock market closed and what the oil prices did.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** It's really hard to tell because it's in and out.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I have an account on Facebook, but I don't use it much. I have a couple of different things that I participate in. Mostly pretty locally based stuff – in the state of [REDACTED].

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yes and no. The yes is that obviously when you communicate on Twitter, you have to do it in brief bursts. You better be pretty succinct so what you have to say comes across. No, because I find that if there is something that has to go further than 140 characters conversation back and forth, many of us tend to revert to either e-mail or telephone calls.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** It has given me access to different publications that I wasn't aware of, so there is a real education component of it. It's also given me direct access to some people who are in the same industry. I don't mean just general farming – we do meat. There is a pretty specific meat component on Twitter. Everybody from scientist at the [REDACTED], to various meat processors and other raisers. There is a component of people there that I can learn from and share information with. As far as business goes, the benefit of Twitter is really interesting, I find that you probably don't get very many customers from Twitter, however, the Twitter feed itself linked to other websites generates some interest. When people can read 10 or 12 or 15 of your Tweets – I do some pretty random stuff, not just tweet farm stuff. I made a vow when I started on Twitter to be careful not to swear on it, [REDACTED]. Every now in then, those vows...you get carried away. I made a smart allec remark the other day, which included some swear words. [REDACTED] But as far as changing the way I communicate, no. More no than yes, I guess. It's that 140 character thing is really the only barrier.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Through conferences and through some local connections that we have – things that we still do. Through some different e-mail lists, and we still us those as well.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** It's probably smaller than those who don't use Twitter.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'm probably more informed because I'm a news junkie, I mean, it's not funny. It's like an addiction.

**Is there something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** I guess some of becomes obvious after you follow people for awhile is product information and ways of understanding the way they might do things. There is a lot of people tweet about their daily chores and daily issues. It's one particular example that I can give you that's been real relevant to us is there is a farmer in [REDACTED] that I follow who's using dogs with poultry. It's been interesting to read and I actually want to make a telephone follow-up call – I direct messaged them and got their phone number. About how the dogs and poultry interact, and I have some questions that really go further than what can be fleshed out in Twitter. They use their dogs for wildlife protection, to keep wildlife at bay, and that is something that is a concern for us here as well. We have a guardian donkey, and have been able to share some information with others about guardian donkeys. So the information kind of goes back and forth. Those are just a couple of examples.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** Depends on whether or not there is a future, I guess. Things change so fast that Twitter might be dead in a year or two. I really can't perceive any trends that would be much different than what's happening now. Right now there are a couple of groups that operate on Twitter. There is an AgChat that operates on Tuesday nights, and I'm kind of always pretty wasted by the time that comes around, but I do look at some of the tweets that go along with it vicariously through some of the people that I follow. Then there is also meat camp, which use to happen on Thursday nights and I think it will probably be revitalized. I think those are a couple of things where – it's like just in time tweeting – it's like a 2 hour period where you discuss 6 or 7 questions. It's a combination of social and business.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I always look at peoples profiles before I follow them. I look at their profiles and how much they are tweeting and whether it's more than I want to bear. I mean if I somebody that has 35,300 tweets in the space of a year and half, maybe that's not somebody that you have time to follow. Or if you see somebody that tweets something like "yeah" in reply to people, then those are the people I want to follow. I look for information resources. I look for farmers and they don't have to be like-minded farmers, but farmers that are really talking about the things that they do. Obviously I look for people that have an inclination to discuss food – good food. I look for some of the farming news outlets and some of the blogs that are there. I also follow some different magazines that – I read before Twitter ever existed, so it's just a way to be updated about what those folks are thinking and what's going on in their heads. So I have a few local press people that I follow, and I have a lot of general public, some of those people are just for fun. That's about my mode of operation.

**How many people follow you?** I think it's probably 350, something like that. It's hard to tell whether or not they are real people. For awhile, I would go through and clean out some of the stuff I didn't want in my followers and after awhile, I started to realize that I wasn't going to get spam back from these people so I didn't have to spend time doing that.

**How many people do you follow?** I follow I think probably 250 people or organizations or whatever.

**How often do you Tweet?** Some of it is seasonal, it depends on what there is to talk about. Some of it is like wintertime, you absolutely have a little bit more time to mess around. And some of the tweeting I do is literally messing around. Like I tweeted a Christmas song this morning before I left for a meeting. So I guess probably 5-10 times a day, I really don't know.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Depends on the day. I only checked into Twitter to tweet today after 8 this morning, and I tweeted 1 tweet just to indicate that I was here at about 4 o'clock and I haven't looked at what anyone was saying all day long. Other days, it's probably 4-5 times a day. Here again, it just depends on what's going on. Sometimes there are things that you are actually looking for when you know information will be around. I can give you a perfect example of that. When the cost of ag hearings were happening. I checked into Twitter very regularly, like once every 15 minutes or so while I listened to the hearings to see what the comments were. It's something I was real interested in because [REDACTED] before he had them anywhere else. We knew what his record was, and we knew who he was. So I was real interested to see if the rest of the country was catching on to the fact that this guy was wicked.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yep. It was by accident. In another case, it was a customer that I generated, because I do tweet sales information. Things that we have for sale and things that we're up to. To a greater or lesser degree, I think it's useful doing that, I think what it does it gives some more breadth to the farm name so the local people and regional people who are following me or might happen to see something that I've tweeted get a good indication that there is some breadth and depth to what we do here. We don't just raise chickens there is more than that. Other people that I've met interestingly enough I've met one person probably  $\frac{3}{4}$  an hour to hour after I put them in my list as a follower. I had no idea I was going to meet them, I just happened to be somewhere where they were. They had also seen something on Twitter that I saw, and we both showed up to the same event, so that was a little different. But like I said, I've met a few customers that found us through Twitter.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** That, plus sometimes tweet about different news items. I'll tweet some random opinion.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Political views I try to really keep to a minimum as much as I can. Views on the news, well I would be more inclined to tweet a story out and say this is there if you are interested in reading it. Sometimes I'll discuss views on things. I sent messages last night for example to a television

station, which of course end up in your tweets, because I was really discouraged that they were promoting a charity doing some work gathering items for kids and the only thing that they showed was Walmart and the Walmart giving tree that was in the charity, and the only audio in it was that people could pick their tag off the tree and pick it up right there at Walmart. I just thought that was not a good use of press time, it was like a commercial. So I tweeted my objection to that – twice.

- **Links to resources/articles?** Yep.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** If I can, yep.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** I do.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Sometimes.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** There is random stuff, just random stuff. I mean, like I said, I probably tweet as many, if not more songs than a lot of people do, like links to songs because it's fun, and you really have to lift yourself up sometimes when all you get for tweets is bullshit.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Whatever. It is what it is. If you can't work with it, don't use it.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** I'm like 90...no I'm not. I'm 60.

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** It's just a little town. [REDACTED] Maine.

**Type of farming you do:** we raise a lot of meat, and then diversify, because we do produce as well.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** I have a bachelors.

## Respondent 16

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I probably started hearing about it – I would say about a year ago probably. I actually signed up with it earlier than that, but didn't start using it until about a year ago.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** Online, I'm sure.

**Why did you join Twitter?** I wanted to promote my blog.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** The first hashtag I started following was #agchat and trying to connect with other producers, but now I concentrate a lot more on following moms and beef consumers.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Yeah, I think so. I think it gives me a chance to connect with people who buy beef. On Facebook you can only connect to people who you have approved to be your friend. On texting, you've got to have that persons number to connect with them. Twitter gives me the opportunity to connect with people I don't know, that I've never met, but they are out there buying my product.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** Not really.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** No, it's not as easy. I don't know if it's necessary problems.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I have. I use Tweetdeck on my computer, desktop. I use UberTwitter on my Blackberry.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** I watch a little bit of news in the morning, and that's just about it, besides radio. Other than that, the only other thing I get is online. That's kind of throughout the day when I have time. I guess I do get e-mails, ag newsletters and stuff like that, so I guess that is an important way that I get news.

**How about in the evening?** Not usually anything in the evening. Usually outside working all day, and I'm not up to evening news.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Probably spend about a total of an hour a day on Twitter. I probably spend 2 hours on everything else.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Yes – Facebook. I also have a blog. I guess I also have YouTube, so the big 4 anyway.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** No, I don't think it's really changed it. I feel that Twitter is a headline that needs to link or lead you to the full story. I use it as a chance to get a little information out there about my blog and lead people to that. But before you even do that, in order to make the original connection, you need to get to know that person through Twitter. That is why I participate in some of those chats. I don't think it's really changed things, for me anyway.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** I have a phone with me at all times. If something unique happens, and I've got a moment or two, I just tweet it.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** The only other person, there was only one person that I knew was on Twitter and she kind of talked to me about how to do it and what it all was and gave me a little confidence about it. Then it just took diving in.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** Probably more informed.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Well, I think one of the biggest examples is a pretty successful Twitter campaign that happened as I was really getting involved in Twitter, was the Yellow Tail wine incident. I know that also hit Facebook and some of the information on there, but I think it was really Twitter driven.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** Well I hope that people will use it just to let people know what we are doing out here on the farm and the ranch. Try to make a little more transparent that link from the plate back to the pasture.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I have two different groups, and I need to organize them into lists, and I really have not done that very well. I follow first of all other agriculture people who are tweeting good information, good links out there, good basic news. And then, the other group that I follow is consumers that are not at all involved in agriculture. I have really worked to find those other people that I could connect with, and those are mostly moms. I'm a mom and I can visit with them on that level as well.

**How many people follow you?** I haven't even really looked at that recently. I guess I can give you an idea. I think that's kind of a goofy measurement, but it's really all we have at this stage.

There are I'm guessing about 1500 people that follow me. To me, followers are less important, I guess that's why I don't pay attention to my numbers as close. They are less important than the connections I make. So if I have things that are retweeted, things that are commented on, the number of responses I get to various tweets, that's how I measure my success.

**How many people do you follow?** About the same, about 1,500, which I really need to take that down.

**How often do you Tweet?** How often, it's just kind of throughout the day. I don't know. I think if you break it down to a tweet every so often, it might just be about every ½ hour throughout the day. Like, I'm having coffee now, it might warm up and sit down at the desktop for 15 and 20 minutes, connecting with people. Then throughout the day, it's just kind of when something interesting happens and what's going on throughout the day.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** About the same. Usually if I check into Twitter and do a search for what's going on, I'm also going to be tweeting something.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Yes. I felt like it was a safe situation, because I knew who they were on Twitter because I followed him for a long time. I knew he specifically, well I guess it happened multiple times, that these people are advocates and I'm comfortable in that advocate group. But it was at an organized Tweetup, so I guess that was pretty comfortable.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yes.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Some.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes, almost always.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yes.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yes.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yes.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** No.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Oh, it is a little bit of a limiting factor. It is a little frustrating sometime, but it's OK. I don't know whether I like it or dislike it, but once you've kind of got in the swing of it, it's pretty easy.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** female

**City, State:** ██████████ Kansas

**Type of farming you do:** cattle ranch

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Bachelors degree, interestingly enough in journalism. So I like Twitter, I've been writing headlines, so the headline works pretty easily for me.

## Respondent 17

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I've heard about it for quite awhile. Actually, I haven't been using it for very long, and to be perfectly honest, the number one reason that I am on it now, [REDACTED], and so from an advocacy type position, it's something that we're trying to do as a committee to kind of further our cause. Make ourselves more available to the public – non-ag affiliated people and animal science affiliated people. But I've heard about it since it first come out, it's just not one of those things stereotypically I go out of my way to do, but it's one of those things that has to be done. There you go.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I don't know. Wish I could tell ya.

**When did you join Twitter?** Oh, I've been active about a month and half, two months something like that. I've actually had an account for probably 3, 4 or 5, something like that.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Right now? I follow speedway and roping pretty close. Then some cow/horse trailers. My profession, [REDACTED], so like cattle work and those type of programs where we get insight into the market that I typically follow. Trying to think of what else. I do a lot of individual producers on there. I don't think you'd necessarily call that a topic per se, but I would rather listen or read what those individuals out in production ag has to say versus what somebody on wall street has to.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** I think probably what we just said. I think that's the case – me being able, in real-time, to have an update with somebody in the same business I am, 10, 11 or 20 states across the country. That part of it is pretty cool to me. We can see some diversity in the industry that way. We can learn a lot about what's going on in the marketplace on a local level, and that's pretty hard to come by, you know. Unless you got a lot of friends in the world.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** I'm not what you would call a techno-savvy person to be perfectly honest with you. So I don't really know how you could make it better or make it worse. It's pretty, for someone that really has no clue about the vast inner workings of social media, it's still fairly easy to use and easy to follow. Off the top of my head I couldn't pinpoint one specific thing.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Actually, I think most of it is from my phone.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** I don't know how familiar you are with [REDACTED], but Internet service is sparse at best. We've upgraded to these iPhones, and we can grab 3G every now and again, so that helps a little bit. Our local cell phone carriers around here are actually family owned and operated type companies, outside of AT&T and those. We do have a connection problem, but that's not specific to Twitter, that's a pretty general rule for everything.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I have got it on my phone, but sometimes it seems to work, sometimes it doesn't. Most of the time, if I've got to get on Twitter, I just jump straight on Twitter anymore.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?**

Usually, it's strictly phone conversations. With our jobs, staying in touch with actually people in your neck of the woods, my relationships through feed yards, those type of things. We got a lot of info and feedback from those. We'll do, catch the morning news on the TV, something like that before we get out of the house but typically it's word of mouth via phone. I don't make a specific habit to sit down at my computer and search for the headlines. Typically, you'll hear about it during the day. There is no point to wasting anymore daylight than you have to.

**How about during the day?** You know through some of those applications on the phone, we'll catch some of it. The rest of it, like I said, you develop a lot of friends in this world. On a normal day, I usually field between 100 and 125 phone calls, so you know, word travels pretty fast.

**How about in the evening?** No, fairly the same. I will check like a Facebook account typically every evening after we get done. Like tonight after tonight when we get done checking on these cows, we'll be done for the night and I'll check it then. Typically the same, my phone doesn't quite ringing after hours.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Probably the least, to be perfectly honest, just because it doesn't require a lot of time. I can scroll down through the entire tweets of the day in less than a couple of minutes and grab what I want out of there and keep on trucking. Usually when I'm scrolling through there, there is a lot of advertisement and junk on there, and usually seems like a lot of those that I subscribed to earlier were pretty pointless. You kind of get numb to those guys, and you typically look for someone that puts something worthwhile on there worth my time.

**You mentioned Facebook earlier, besides that and Twitter, do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** Beyond those two, I didn't know there were anymore. Does that tell you anything about me?

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** No, honestly I don't. If it has, I can't see it. I guess it's changed my outlook on some things. I use to not put a lot of relevancy into this type of stuff, but through my involvement with [REDACTED], I understand now. I don't want to call it a necessary evil, but it really is.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No. My day to day hasn't changed outside of the interruptions of phone calls and alerts and stuff. The only thing it has allowed me to do is be a better advocate for ag and tell the story a little bit better. Outside of that, I would have to say no.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Ugh, the Dairy Queen every morning. I mean, I come from a very small, population wise, county that is extremely, extremely ag, and extremely ag oriented. We either see each other at breakfast or at the feed store.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Well, I guess I'm going to throw some gray area at you. Obviously there are some people out there that I could pose that question to, but the number of individuals that are actually qualified to answer that, I don't know. That's the underlying question for me. I can pitch that question to a thousand people, but at the same time, I don't know if that's going to help me get my question answered.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I guess if you'd ask me that question a little while ago, I would have told you that I was about the same, but it seems now that a lot of the phone calls throughout the day are people seeking information, and I guess they are looking at me as a source now, so my opinion has probably changed on that. I guess that I would be more informed. Now is it solely due to Twitter, uh, that's a tough one. But it sure has played a role in it, whether it be big or small.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Nothing comes to mind straight off. I say that, there are some individuals out there that do a really good job of posting news events and stuff that are more localized, not necessarily on a national scale. And to provide you with a cut and dry answer on that, I still couldn't do that, but that's the first thing that comes to mind, is that you get some insight on a localized manner instead of a national scale. When you get blurbs from Cattle Facts, Cattle Network, Grovers, those type organizations, you know kind of got to step back and say "probably not."

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** That to me, there is probably one factor that will hold me back from saying that it will be using quite extensively. That would be the stereotypical personality of a producer, for example. And this is what I do every day. When I'm not working for myself or for my father, I'm [REDACTED]. Most of those guys have trouble adapting to the technology for one, so let's try and take two roads with this. If we look at the older guys, which make up the vast majority of the community, and take the average age of the producer, which is 62 or 63, or whatever it is these days, he's probably not going to adapt real well and change his business. Now if we come down to the minority, you know, guys my age, it probably will have an effect. We're not talking short term though, and the reason I say that is, we've got to wait our turn in the business. I'm specifically talking about the cattle business, because that's what I'm most involved in. We've kind of got to sit back and wait our turn. Those 65 year olds have got to retire and move us and give us the reigns a little bit. Then I think the social medias and stuff like that will play a much larger role, but until that change happens, I don't see it being very significant. I don't know how in 140 characters or whatever it is you can put on a tweet, how

it would change our mode of marketing or our typical day-to-day business. The only thing it will do, like I said, is allow that story to be told. I guess I keep coming back to that, but it's a great way for us to be an advocate. And that to me is the main reason or main effect that we'll see in our industry from the Tweet, per se. I don't know if that's worth a whole lot.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Outside of a good cattle guy, I'm going to follow a cow producer, 9 times out of 10. Maybe an organization such as the Cattle Network. Actually, I haven't followed Grovers yet, but I think they got one now. Organizations such like that. I like the dynamic of being able to factual type source of information such as the Grovers or the Cattle Network and at the same time see that individual personality of a producer all on one screen. That to me, that interaction is pretty cool.

**How many people follow you?** I was up to a couple hundred I think. It beeps in like every 30 to 40 minutes, somebody wanting to follow you. I don't keep track.

**How many people do you follow?** I'm probably only 50 or 60 maybe, something like that. That's the good, bad and ugly. Matter of fact, I follow PETA and the Humane Society quite closely. That will be those type organizations, as well as the cattle organizations and individual producers.

**How often do you Tweet?** Oh, it's usually, I guess here's my philosophy on tweeting: I don't burn it up. I don't want those people such as, a let me back up here and make this clearer for you. I'm followed by a lot of Humane Society and PETA people, ok? More so than anybody else. I can put something on there every day with the same tone and same thought process and basically make those people numb to it. Or I can take another route and every so often, take what I consider a simple, mundane task, let's take for example, we were unrolling hay the other day, out in the middle of a snowstorm and the cows out before we did. So you know, we take that kind of tone with it so they understand. All of my tweets, which are few in number and have been geared toward that type of instance. But the frequency, I don't want to say every other day, I want to say every 3 to 4 days. It's whatever I feel motivated about doing.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Oh, I've kind of gotten in the habit of doing it every day. I would say at most, twice a day. When things are pretty slow and we're on the road – with these stupid phones these days you can do about anything. But we'll check my Facebook or Twitter or whatever if I'm bored and there is nothing else on the radio.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** No, not as of yet. I've done some of that through Facebook, but not actually on twitter. And most of that is because still haven't been on it very long for one. For two, I'm not following that many people, and three, I probably won't meet them until the NCBA convention.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yeah, the mundane tasks that we overlook every day. But I want people to understand the value of those simple, mundane tasks. We..I keep saying we, it's I, I gear them typically like that. I've got to admit I've been known to throw in a few low blows against PETA and HSUS along the way. But that's nothing more than an attention getter, whether it be appropriate or not, that's tough to tell, but it sure makes me feel better.
- **Political views or views on the news?** No, not so much. I guess all that stuff is important and relevant, it's all in my mind become quite homogenized. If I can seem myself doing that in the future, it's going to be something is extremely relevant to my life and the industry. Outside of what Congressman voted for what, it's not going to shake me too bad. The outcome of that means a lot more to me.
- **Links to resources/articles?** I haven't as of yet. It's something that I've look at, but to be perfectly honest with you, it's not something I'm sure how to do just yet.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** As far as publicly, no, I haven't. I have had a few questions directly asked to me, via message or whatever you want to call that. But publicly I have not that I can recall.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** No, I don't think I have.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** Well, I love to talk, so it's hard for me to get a lot of my thoughts out in 140 or 150, whatever it is. Here is the tough part – if somebody is really just putting a bunch of crap out there that really is meaningless, 140 characters is more than enough. But if we're using that thing appropriately, or in my mind appropriately, 140 doesn't do it justice. So you pick whichever side of the fence you're on, I typically, if it's worth my time to read, I want to read more about it. But if it's somebody sitting on a back porch sharpening their knife on an oak branch, I could give a darn.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** I'm just a shade under 45...no, I'm 26, just joking.

**Gender:** Male

**City, State:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Kentucky. [REDACTED]

**Type of farming you do:** I grew up cattle, hay and (inaudible) Since the downfall of (inaudible), we are just now cattle, mainly cow/calf, we do some (inaudible) on the side, mostly as a science project.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** I carry a masters in reproductive physiology right now.

## Respondent 18

### First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** When did I start hearing about it, oh, 2 years?

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I'm sure it was in front of the computer.

**When did you join Twitter?** Probably 10 months, or a year ago.

**Why did you join Twitter?** Needed to way to connect to people.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** I didn't follow anything.

**Does Twitter offer you that you can't get anywhere else?** Yeah, I can't think of Facebook doing the same thing. What it offers me? Connectivity for free.

**Are there any changes in Twitter would you like to see?** There are, but right off the top of my head, I can't think of any. I would like to have more than 140, well I guess there are ways. No, I can't think of anything that would make it much better. There are some features on the old page that I've been working with the new version that I'm not sure where they are going with it. There are some things I like on the old one and there are some things they were doing on the old one, for some reason I can't do any longer and I don't know why.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Use to do both, but I don't do the mobile anymore.

**If you don't use a mobile device, why not?** The technology doesn't handle the number of followers I have. It was a Droid, and it wasn't that effective as I thought it would be.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** Yeah, I use Hootsuite.

### Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** I listen to NPR.

**How about during the day?** I don't necessarily do information gathering while I'm working. I'll occasionally check news if somebody tweets something that I think is of interest. I probably get right from Twitter, because that's where I spend most of my day.

**How about in the evening?** Same way, only on the radio. Occasionally news feeds from newspapers on the Internet, but not much.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** I don't use Twitter to sell product, I don't necessarily use Twitter to find news.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I use Facebook. I have got Flickr, I keep photos there. I don't know if you call that social media. I have YouTube also.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** I hope I talk more or speak more than 140 characters. I don't know how to answer that question. Yeah, it's just changed the way I market. We're in the organic meat business, so any kind of marketing outside of just outside of connecting with people word of mouth and social marketing, everything else has been ineffective.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Has Twitter changed how I do my job? No. I use it to market my organic beef. I don't hasn't changed the way I raise the beef, the way I do my processes or process my livestock.

**So it's just changed the marketing aspect of it?** Correct.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** I don't connect to farmers. I connect to consumers. I don't have time to talk to farmers.

**What ways did you do that before you signed on to Twitter?** What ways did I try to talk to consumers? I tried trade shows, that was ineffective. I tried print advertising, not effective. I tried farmers markets, not effective. It's a niche market, it's a niche inside a niche. So basically I target on Twitter, oh, about 4 niches.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere? From an agricultural standpoint?** No. I've been involved with AgChat, and those people are on a different plane. Going a different direction. I'm not in the commodity world. The idea that they are using Twitter to educate consumers, I think is kind of obtuse. I don't think it's working for them. Whatever it is they are trying to do, I'm not getting it.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** Relationship to farming – how will Twitter be used in the future. Huh. I guess there are several commodity people on there that would track commodity prices, tweet about commodities, or maybe what's happening around the planet. That's the only thing that I could see useful to a commodity farmer, commodity producer. Buying contracts, that sort of thing. I guess they could talk to other farmers. Most farmers talk to farmers that are in their area, they are not going to learn something from a peach grower in Georgia, you know? A grain farmer in Kansas isn't going to talk to a peach grower in Florida. They might say "hi, how are you?" Maybe they could trade a basket of wheat for a bushel of peaches, I don't know. As far as having something in common, I just haven't seen that. Then again, I'm not following farmers. I'm using it as a marketing tool to find those niches.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Now you are getting into top secret stuff. It's fairly simple. It's people that are foodies, people interested in connecting to where their food comes from. These are people that are interested in connecting to how it's done. They know organics, they understand what organics mean. They are looking for it and they can't find it in their supermarket, and the reason they can't find it in their supermarket is because of the system and the paradigm we have in place doesn't allow it. So I use Twitter to go out and find individual customers that I then bring to my website for purchasing.

**How many people follow you?** Right now I'm at 2,507

**How many people do you follow?** Less than 2,000. I run a following of about 260 (?), but every once in a while I go through and whoever isn't following me, I ditch them. I de-friend them.

**How often do you Tweet?** I got 9,373 tweets. Whenever I get the chance to sit down at the computer and connect with people, I do it. I use the search function in Twitter, which I find to be very valuable to find people who are having conversations about food.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** My friends, they are all communicating with thousands of other people. So there conversations I don't pay much attention to. Hopefully there, I would say on Twitter, my average, I look at how many people are following them, and I would say my average is 250 to 300 people. That would be the average number of followers that a person I'm following would have. So I don't follow people that have 3 million followers, those people are out there gathering their own nest. They are not so much interested in what I'm doing. Although I've had a few of them retweet some of my tweets, so that's a big plus.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Absolutely. In fact, that's a lot of what I spend my time doing. I look for a lot of bloggers. Especially foodie bloggers and people that are into health foods. I connect with those bloggers and if I feel they have enough of a following then I look at what they've done in the past, I look at where their minds are and what they want to do with food, and then we'll work together to develop a giveaway or a tasting or a review.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** No, I don't. Sometimes I do, but not much. I probably tweet more politics, because food is politics. I constantly hit them with stuff that I've gather over my time on the planet. Some people are awake and others are not. I don't spend much time with the ones who are asleep.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes. All the time.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** If they have them, yes.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Not too often.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** No. I just want people to think. Hopefully that's what they do.

**To think about their food choices?** Yeah, think about their food choices, and what their choice does to marketplace and to how we treat the planet.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** If people got more things to say, there is..I don't know, I've never used them and don't know how to, but where it's a continuation, you can lengthen it. If you want to read the whole blurb, you can click on it and go their whole write, whatever it is they want to say. So I don't know. It's kind of a pain, but at the same time, if it was bigger than that, it would probably get too wordy.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** I think that I'm unique in that I'm certified organic. I'm not looking for a market..well, I am looking for a marketplace, but what I see the other conversations with farmers mostly bitching and complaining. But that's what you get at the coffee shop too, and that's one of the reasons I don't follow farmers. I've watched them and what they're doing and I don't think it's that effective, but that's just my opinion. Anyway, what was the question again?

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?**

46-64...that's pretty broad.

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** I live in Wyoming. [REDACTED]

**Type of farming you do:** organic meats, we raise grass and have cows eat it. We raise them organically.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Bachelor's.

## Respondent 19

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I started hearing about it, I guess maybe a year or so after it came on in 2006. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. A good way to keep in touch with our [REDACTED] was kind of Twitter and some of the industry itself. I didn't really become a part of it until just last year – in 2010.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** It was at my place of employment, so my supervisor, my boss.

**When did you join Twitter as a rancher?** It was really not too long ago. Probably either late October or November 2010.

**Why did you join Twitter?** It was because I just made the switch from my old place of employment to coming down and taking over the family ranch, and I thought it would be a good way to interact with potential customers and others in the industry and keep informed about other non-business type things that I was interested in as well.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Let's see, a lot of things that deal with agricultural industry. I try to follow a lot of other – a big issue that some producers can face or are facing currently. Kind of tech related industries as well. Just to keep up with what new things are out and what is available. Financials, and then just kind of – that's pretty much the main categories.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Let's see, I don't know about that I can't get anywhere else. It's just a lot quicker and easier to get that information. Maybe I'm signed up on a newsletter or I have a bookmark on a website that I might go to every once in a while. But if I have a feed coming from Twitter that says "oh, you should read this article," then I am way more likely to just jump on it then and there, then randomly going to that website. I guess not, but it sure makes things a lot easier.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** Changes, changes, changes. Well I guess not really, videos would be great. I guess it's easy to just do a link to Vimeo, or (inaudible), or YouTube or something like that, so I guess that works out well for them. I understand it's difficult for them to install and photo and a video thing, but those would be my only – something you could directly post through Twitter would be photos and videos.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** Not really. I use both the Twitter App for my iPhone and also the Tweetdeck. Not that I know of.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** (see above). I don't right now, I just read yesterday that Twitter came out for something for Mac desktops, like an application for Macs, so I might look into that, I'm not even sure what it was. They acquired the

company, I can't remember the name of it, but I might look into something like that for my desktop.

**Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** Let's see, morning is really just an update. At least I haven't yet, I haven't been like a... as far as directly related to my work here on the ranch. Maybe I follow something say, another industry, and they might say something like mortgage rates and I'll apply for refinance based on a tweet that morning, but nothing as far on the ranch just yet. Other than just in the back of my mind just thinking about reading about the grazing permits that are coming under fire from BLM and National Forest Service. So I'll read that and it sparks me, and I'll try and focus on that during the day and try to think of ways I can relay that information or help out that way.

**How about during the day?** I guess it's a combination - my iPhone and my computer. On a variety of things, not necessarily just Twitter, but on websites. I guess are you kind of asking on media types like magazines or newspapers?

**Yeah, if you have specific sources or what are your means of getting information if it's the TV or the phone.**

Actually, rarely become the TV recently, just like in the last 2 months. I'd say it's 90% Internet. I guess it's a tough one to differentiate, but there are some newspapers that I don't get the actual paper, but I check online, so I guess if I'm a subscriber to that newspaper. But 90% is done online, via my iPhone.

**How about in the evening?** Internet as well. Occasionally I'll probably watch the local news on TV and that's it.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Probably...that's a tough question. Right now, probably 70%. And to go back to the other question, radio actually, in the morning, I do radio. A radio channel to get national weather and national news as well.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** That's a tough question. I have other accounts, a LinkedIn, I do have a Facebook but I don't use it. I have them I just kind of use Twitter way more – it's like 95% Twitter, and the other 5% split between LinkedIn and Facebook. I beginning to run a video blog on our website as well, I don't know if that would count.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Yeah. Everything is just very rapid. The speed at which you can get information is amazing, and being able to fine tune what you want to hear rather than what's stuffed down your throat from a very wide, general news broadcaster and information sources.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No. It doesn't change anything on how I do it, it just changes how I, I guess, talk about it. I suppose it's marketing or how I get information out about the business.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Telephone, e-mail, and conferences. I guess conferences would be No. 1. Then just newsletters from certain organizations.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** I would say it's larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I would hope to say I'd be more informed. I guess equally just informed as others, but maybe a lot sooner than others.

**Are there any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Let's see, I'm sure there is, I just can't think of a specific instance right now. None are coming to my brain at the moment.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I definitely think marketing and exposure for the biggest, and that's just because, no matter even if you're not sending updates on maybe a picture or diving into a conversation with others or putting out a recipe, eventually people will look at that. You might not be sending it out as marketing, but in the long term, I might have an effect on that individual's perception of that business, be it good or bad, and potentially have any influence to buy a product or buy a product of that industry, which is what I'm hoping.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** I choose to follow specifically organizations that I'm a part of so that I can get information from them. I'm a part of their newsletters as well, but I find that Twitter is a lot quicker and touches on things that aren't in newsletters sometimes. I guess like specifically the Farm Bureau, and I'm a part of the American sheep industry on Twitter. There is the American Lamb Council and the American Lamb Board. The main reason is to kind of keep up to date on what our issues, but then I also specifically like the Wall Street Journal, a magazine called Ink Magazine and another one called FastCompany, which kind of do a very entrepreneurial kind of business, from a business standpoint, but then also anything on electronics to gas prices. You know, there is very informative. Then there is one individual who is very - [REDACTED] - and he does a lot with wine, and what's hot with the web, and technology and things I'm also interested in. I follow him as well because he's got a huge following and he does very good at what he puts out there as well.

**How many people follow you?** I think right now it's just 20.

**How many people do you follow?** I think I saw it was 90 or 91.

**How often do you Tweet?** That's a good question. Maybe like between 3 and 5 times a week. I try to do at least one daily, and I try to do something of substance rather than just "hey, I'm at Walmart" which is just a waste of people's time, I think.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Really depends on the day, but averaging probably just once a day.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** No. Only for, maybe not only, probably if it involved a business, related to the business in some sort.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yes. Sometimes.
- **Political views or views on the news?** I try not to get into politics, but I do send out tweets about issues that could affect producers/farmers/ranchers that are political as far as just putting out facts so that people are aware that this could happen to producers if this goes through. I'm not trying to bash anything, but more just trying to show others the producers standpoint.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Yes.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yes, and that's rarely happened yet. Do you mean by an instant, @ message or if I'm just searching and I see a random question?
- **Any question that you see on Twitter.** I try to, as long as it pertains to the business side of my side twitter account – like as long as the industry is lamb, or sheep, or wool.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yes.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Not really. I mean, it's been minimal.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** Not that I can think of at this point.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I definitely enjoy the brevity. It's one of the big attractions.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** ██████████ Colorado

**Type of farming you do:** we're a sheep ranch, and we run about 1,000 head. So we do lamb and wool, our main products. I'm trying to get into a few other things, but right now it's just lamb and wool.

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** I guess just a bachelors of fine arts from the ██████████.

## Respondent 20

*This man had spotty cell service, so parts of this conversation were inaudible.*

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Last summer. I actually had an account, and I deleted it so I had to start over. I tried to link it to my Facebook account and it deactivated it, so I had to start over. So it was about 6 or 8 months ago.

**Where did you first hear about Twitter?** I think on the radio.

**Why did you join Twitter?** I started out just trying to keep up on current events, and then the more I did it, I found it was a way to be a positive advocate for agriculture.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Some like (inaudible), and then the more I dived into it the more agriculture stuff was on there.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Probably not. If I looked hard enough I could find something. I think it's quick and easy access.

**Are there any changes in Twitter you would like to see?** No, I think it's pretty good.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** It's on my phone, I don't have time to sit at the computer all the time.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** No.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** No, I started using Tweetchat, or Twitterchat, I think that's what it is. I haven't dived enough into it yet though.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?** I will turn on the local television news. Other than that, it's basically through Twitter and Facebook.

**How about during the day?** Twitter and Facebook.

**How about in the evening?** I watch the local news, but for the most part, it's through Twitter and Facebook.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Like a percentage? I would say probably 70 – 75% of the time, I get it through Twitter.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** No.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Absolutely. I can talk to people (inaudible). I have followers from Canada and Australia. It's a fast, easy way to exchange ideas and kind of vent and do things like that. I have communications with people that I've never met face to face before.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** No, it hasn't changed how I do my job. I see no reason to change how I do my job. It's changed how (I tell people differently though?)

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** It was basically locally. (inaudible statement). We're pretty isolated, so unless it was face to face, and you go out and do it.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Immensely larger. I can throw it out there and 100,000 people will see it in a couple of hours if I hashtag it right or if it's a questions. Whereas before it, it was phone calls and that was about it.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** I'm absolutely more informed.

**Do you have any examples of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Not right off the top of my head. I can't think of one off the top of my head. Oh – ok. There was a farm bill in Kansas that people were talking about on there that I would have known absolutely nothing about had I not seen it on Twitter.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** It kind of all depends on how the farmers pick up Twitter. I think it's a great form tool to discuss ideas, I think it makes the world a little bit smaller. Farmers can collaborate together, instead of everyone and their own separate ideas, I'd hope we'd be able to come together a little more on it and have a more uniformed voice on the issues.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Mostly anymore, I'll follow a lot of agriculture-related people...(inaudible).

**How many people follow you?** Probably around 50 or 60

**How many people do you follow?** Probably around 50 or 60, probably more.

**How often do you Tweet?** On a normal day, maybe oh a couple of times a day. Or I'll have a couple of days were I'll get real busy and not have time.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Four times average.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** Not yet I haven't.

What do you Tweet about?

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Yes.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Yes.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Not as often as I should, I've been doing that a little. (inaudible). I don't do that very often.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yeah, I'll get involved in discussions like AgChat or trending topics that come up. I try and answer, yeah.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yep.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yep.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** No, not really.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I like it, I think it's short and sweet and to the point. It's almost an art form deal to get your point across in 140 characters.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Utah

**Type of farming you do:** dairy farmer

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Junior college

## **Respondent 21**

### **First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.**

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** Oh, it was probably 2009 – the summer when there was some elections going on. And I heard about it before, but never thought much about it until I knew that John McCain was on it. Then I thought I'd get on it and you know, hear from the real person. Because I don't like to hear the news from the news sometimes. That's why I started getting into it, and John McCain was probably the first person I started following.

**When did you join Twitter?** I think it was about 2009 – the presidential election.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Mostly politics, at first just politics.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** Yes – the contact with people. You know I don't tell everything of course. Although, it's a little bit about contact, it's not very personal. It's very direct, short, and to the point.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** Well it's kind of tricky because I use a Blackberry and sometimes I use an iPad, and sometimes I use a laptop. It works differently in each one of them. I really have (inaudible) certain quotes that I want to put into like Facebook or something else and it's so much easier to do it on the Blackberry than others. The situation that I find sometimes is that I'm on the iPad and wanting to do things on my Blackberry and vice versa, so you just kind of get use to things you like doing and the (inaudible) on the way into work, so I guess more homogenous way of working with the devices.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** Both.

**If you tweet from a mobile device, do you experience any problems?** The rural area for instance, there is not very good coverage for the 4G and the 3G phones. They tell you there is and they charge you for it, but they don't have it over here.

**Do you use a secondary application for Twitter like Tweetdeck, etc.?** I have tried it but I just don't have that many accounts to be able to need that.

### **Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.**

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?**

Probably about the first thing I do is start my computer and check my e-mail. I go to the Twitter and open my Facebook, and then if I find something from the Growers Associations that need to be broadcasted a little more, I start with that and then if I find something that I have an opinion, I include that. A lot of times I have some other friends, religious, or family issues on there to kind of compliment (inaudible).

**How about during the day?** I usually watch the Fox News, but it's mostly...when they start repeating things, then I just go to..or when they tell you what they digest of a speech or something. I just hear the speech and then I change the channel. I don't like them telling me what to think. Then I go to Reuters sometimes I tweet about things that people don't know about. In the winter, or in the growing season, sometimes it's easier to take pictures on the farm. One that really caused a lot of interest, for instance, I got pictures of something that didn't look like it was going to do so well and I tweeted that. I think that the Monsanto people contacted us right away. So I think...you wouldn't have that contact otherwise. The local representative was on top of that. He had instructions from really high up because we were tweeting about that...you wouldn't get that attention otherwise. There was another rep asking my nephew "hey, does your aunt tweet about everything?" I was like "no.." You wouldn't get that attention otherwise. There has been some really good contacts otherwise.

**How about in the evening?** Well it kind of depends. For instance I go on... [REDACTED], so I haven't been able to be on the AgChat much, but I try to get on the tail end of it once we get done with homework and dinner and everything. So depends if I'm on the road, because we live in the rural area, I take them into town, so if I'm doing that, I'm using the Blackberry to get news. On Twitter, I follow breaking news and other news services. Then use (inaudible) for environmental.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Well if we are going somewhere and my husband is driving, a couple of hours I believe. In the morning, it's ½ hour at the most. It just kind of depends on what our schedules are and how much I have to do here at home.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** No, I think I have my plate full with the two of them (Twitter and Facebook). I guess I forgot to mention that when I started Twitter, I wasn't very familiar with it, I protected my tweets. And when I was more comfortable with it, I opened them up, which was nice to do.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** It really does, because sometimes I think I use the phone a lot less. It's just so much more convenient for me to just...yesterday I remember we didn't call somebody I needed to make a meeting with. So we sent an e-mail, he's not on Twitter, but there was another person I needed to get ahold of and his phone wasn't charged and my Blackberry wasn't having, because we were in another country and I wasn't having a signal to my phone but my Internet worked via the Twitter and the DM and that kind of thing. You are more – you don't just open up your mouth and let everything go out. You just think really well because it's going to public, and direct messages – it could become public if somebody got ahold of it. So you just try to be more positive and more respectful, keeping in mind that whatever you share can become public at anytime.

**Now, I'd like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Yes, well, in terms of what we do, it's more the ability. I'm from the city, so being able to have more contact with the outside world is fantastic because you don't feel so isolated.

It's kind of nice to see that for other people can get interested in the pictures we upload and the kind of equipment we use. To see that there is no fight. Because sometimes I think it seems..the media seems to show a fight between organic and conventional farming, and the chemicals are bad. So when we show that we have the environment foremost in our mind and that we operate very coconscious. We should support one another, that's my basic philosophy. There is always going to be someone in the world that we can feed, so if we try to focus on that and show that's the reality as opposed to what other media want to show, I think that's a very good way to educate people.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** There were some of our meetings with growers where they mentioned who was on it, so we started following one another, and making comments on one tweet and adding comments to that. So that's how it's gotten -- when we have a little bit more coordination, it's nicer.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don't use Twitter?** Larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don't use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** More informed. Also the ability to connect with people directly on the news business. Like there were some people on the news who were talking about on Fox News one time, and I contacted directly the person that was saying the wrong things. So I contacted that person directly and said "hey, I farm, so I know about this...without being disrespectful, they just don't know about it." Making those connections is also important -- connecting with others who are telling people about farming.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don't think you would have learned elsewhere?** Yes. I follow somebody who does some software for agriculture, and I found them and what they are working on, so that is nice to be able to find out. He actually told me on a direct message, because I was referring to what he said, and then I answered and I asked him something and he answered on direct message, so that was really cool too. Software, I think, especially when it's related to (inaudible) or precision agriculture is homogenous way of working and farming.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** My view of it is that there will probably be more uses than I haven't even thought about. You know, just a means of communication is just a fantastic thing. You don't have to be given permission by anyone. You just speak what it is and also a lot of people what is not. But it's more direct form of information. I don't think it can get anymore direct and to the point. You just never know how it might be using it any other, just like we never thought we'd be using some of our cell phones to control our equipment too.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Well, I follow, like I said environmental groups, environmental news, (inaudible) agronomy, a couple of software people. What else...some of my favorite news people and politicians as well. Like the senators for Nebraska and I follow people who have like “famous women” or something like that, and there is another one I follow in Spanish...If you retweet a few of those, then they are interested in your point of view too. Also the USDA and the (inaudible). I wish they would do a little more. But they seem to do well for a couple of days and then they don’t do it as much. Also like when we were traveling in [REDACTED], there were some roads, and I don’t know if [REDACTED] has one, but since we are in the rural area again and we travel so much by car, we use some of the news on the road, and breaking local news like [REDACTED] and such, so just the information.

**How many people follow you?** I have gotten a lot that are selling something. 289 followers, I don’t know how many of those are selling me something.

**How many people do you follow?** I follow 291 following me, and 523, I follow. I remember that you are almost that you are a tweet stalker if you are following more people than are following you, but I guess I disagree. I am not that interesting. Another person that I follow that is interesting – they tweet about genetics, and corn, and biotech, so those are two topics that are really important to me because we need to let people know truthful information as opposed to scary ones that are out there.

**How often do you Tweet?** At least once a day. At least one tweet a day, and sometimes I go a little more, it just depends on what’s going on. I also go on a lot of foodchats and sometimes I’ve been on the meat chat, so there are a lot of things I’ve done on there and some people that came that have the wrong information. Like there was one there that said weird thing about the cows, we work with a dairy, so when there is something about a beef, specifically when they talk about the hormones in the meet, it’s just you have to be there to really be on top of things and call them out on the fallacies and the silly ignorance out there that is in the public.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Every day, every morning. At least in the morning, if I have a little more time, I would check every other hour if I’m kind of busy.

**Have you ever met someone in person that you met on Twitter? If so, why? If no, would you consider it?** There are a lot of corn growers and soybean growers in our association, so we know them personally, and there are some people who I have met on Twitter that we’ve also met.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** Well, it just kind of depends on what’s going on. If we tweet and say, “oh, I’m going to have dinner.” If they saw a picture of what they’re having, then that’s interesting. But if they tweet “oh, I’m going to go and have a glass of water” I’m like oh, why did you tweet about that? There sometimes where I think they just write to write. So, I don’t do that. I don’t want to be stalked by myself.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Yeah.

- **Links to resources/articles?** Sometimes I do. What I do is if I have enough time to check that link, I'll do it. Because sometimes there will be links that will appear to be one thing. Just when I was new to Twitter, and there was someone selling to one of those traps where you click to see a picture and it seems very decent, and I think it was a porno thing. The guy went to it and I think it got into his Twitter and it was broadcasting, and I just thought "that poor guy." It's tough to not fall into that, so think you have to really analyze whether you should click on the link or not. If I haven't read the article, I don't tweet it. Because it may say one thing on the headline, so you should read it and just decide. I've seen it before where they just go for it and retweet something and they probably haven't even read it. So I'm really careful about that.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** Yes, I do.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yes, I have, yeah.
  - o **If so, do people respond to you?** Yes.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** Well, about food. It's something that we all respond to it, especially if I upload a picture. I have really enjoyed that. I think everyone is interested in food at one time or another. On my Facebook, I have a whole album called "food." So anytime we go to a restaurant, sometimes if I know the owner then I just take a picture and upload them and tag them and they really like that. You know sometimes, it's the people in the restaurants that have direct contact with people who eat and want to know about the food and so on. So there really is a trend about wanting to know that. So you know, when they have a more direct resource of a farmer and they tell people about it, then all of the fallacies can come down. I also follow Whole Foods, and (inaudible). They promote a lot of things that I don't agree with, but you have to be out there and make your opinion known and respect yours as well.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter. Others like the brevity. What do you think?** When I really want to expand myself, my devices go to Tweetmore, and I just do that. But I like that...I was a ham radio curator when I was younger, so I was use to talking short in a conversation, so if you do 2-3 tweets, some people I see do a continuation. I don't know if they don't have Tweetmore or if they just don't like it. I kind of like to do that too. Because people are going to click on more of your tweets. So if I have a lot to say, I just try to condense it or say the most important thing. Or do it in 2-3 continuing tweets. But I like it, I think it makes it much faster communication.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** female

**City, State** ██████████ Nebraska

**Type of farming you do:** soybeans, corn, alfalfa, corn silage

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Master's in business

## Respondent 22

### First, I'd like to ask you to tell me about how you got acquainted with Twitter.

**About when did you starting hearing about Twitter?** I've heard about Twitter for probably 2 years, is when I really started paying attention to it. I probably got started with it about a year ago, I can't really remember, probably somewhere in that time frame. Probably a year to just less than a year – one of my [REDACTED] had been on Twitter for awhile and he was quite (inaudible) on it, so he kind of got me to join it – that's the biggest part of it.

**Why did you join Twitter?** He was probably a big part. He farms out there by [REDACTED], and he uses it quite a bit for just ag stuff and also for sports and other things like that. Just to get it for more information. I probably see myself more of the like, if you're doing categories, more of an early adopter for technology. I did quite a bit of work with precision technology in graduate school and on our current farm now. I am just kind of interested in technology anyway, so.

**What topics or issues did you first follow?** Probably a lot of the ag interests. I just started going through, basically finding them. I got 5 or 6 followers that my friend started following and they started following me. I would just kind of peruse through people that they followed. Points that were of interest of me starting with ag interests, then jumped over into politics, and started with some news reporters, so that's how it started anyway.

**Does Twitter offer you anything that you can't get anywhere else?** I would say Twitter is very much more of an instantaneous news source. I'd like to qualify that and say not so much of a news source as it is information. From the ag perspective, planting and growing seeds harvest time, you get real-time updates from other people in your field from all over the country. (Inaudible)...other issues like diseases and insects during the summertime, the growing season. That's the biggest thing that I find, is what issues or diseases others are facing, whether it's diseases moving our direction or weather issues, that's probably an instant source of information you can't find in any news media outlets.

**Are there any changes in Twitter that you would like to see?** I'm probably not proficient enough to offer a qualified opinion on changes. I probably maybe follow 170 people right now, so it's not...I don't use a lot of like Tweetdeck or any of those to kind of manage lists and all that. I don't have enough information coming in that I would need to sort through it quickly. I can do it mostly all on my computer at home or phone.

**Do you tweet from a mobile device? Computer? Or Both?** I would say predominately from the mobile phone, I've got a Blackberry. Predominately that's where I send my tweets from. I send very few from the home computer. The operating system on my phone, a lot of stories that are linked on Tweets, whether they are from a blog or a news article, those websites don't imply show up on my phone. If I want to read some of those stories, it just takes too long on my phone because I'm scrolling back and forth all the time.

### Now, I'd like to talk to you about your overall communication habits.

**First, can you walk me through how you get news and information you care about during a typical day – how do you get information in the morning before you leave the house?**

Usually I'll start off the day and watch our local news program – their 6 a.m. broadcast, just kind of get a local news updates. To put it bluntly, I can't stand to watch any national news. To me, it's become more sensationalized and a rumor mill than an actual news source. If I'm going to watch the news or anything that's happening in the world, I don't care about some prince in Britain getting married and his new wife. I don't want that being put on my news source for me, so I don't watch national news channels at all. If I have time, I like to read a newspaper, but I just don't take time to read them. The vast majority I read online, typically from my home computer because it's easier to read. That's where I gain a lot of my news from is reading things online. Otherwise, information, I text quite a bit with my wife and probably my father, and that's probably gravitated more toward texting probably in the last year or year and half. I text a lot more than I used to it. It's usually simpler than calling someone something that you can say in a text or two. Interact with family members or co-workers. On the farm we text back and forth quite a bit if we have a question about something, or to say something like "ok, this pivoted this far around, it will most likely make it to the next morning or it should be shut off," that kind of stuff. Immediate information we still try and call – you know, some of the stuff you have to take care of right away. Just general information and updates we try and send texts if we can, just to let everyone know what the status is.

**How about during the day?** During the day, if I'm out and about, a lot of it will be Twitter. There is @Breakingnews, I think their handle is, I follow them, and a couple of local news media sources, I follow them on Twitter. Typically, if there is anything big happening on the national scale, someone I'm following will tweet about it. But that's my main source for the day unless I'm listening to radio. I listen to a lot of talk radio. Only about 1 or 2 nationally syndicated shows, the rest of it is all local in the morning or afternoon.

**How about in the evening?** Yeah, up until there is like a drivetime home that I listen to in [REDACTED] that carries news and politics in [REDACTED], and I listen to that until about 6 o'clock at night, and if I'm not doing anything else, I try and watch the 10 o'clock local news as well.

**How much time do you spend on Twitter in comparison to your other news and information gathering habits?** Probably if you take all the information you take that I gather in a day as a whole, I would say that Twitter constitutes not quite 50%, but more like 40% range. Of all just the whole messages and things that are coming at me or that I absorb probably in that 35-40% range.

**Do you use other social media sites, and if so, which ones?** I have a Facebook page, but I don't really use that at all. Facebook fell out of fashion with me when it started getting all those dumb apps and games and requests for this and that it really fell out of favor with me. I didn't care how sick your kid was or where you were going that day. I kind of fell out of favor with Facebook. At least the people I follow, I don't get a lot of that information on Twitter, so that's why I gravitated more toward Twitter.

**Do you believe Twitter has changed how you communicate? If so, how?** Oh yeah. Take for example just this weekend, I tweeted about a mapping software that I use to the manufacturer, I

sent them a tweet, “do you use your software on netbooks?” I hadn’t heard about it, and I’m looking to expand my business a little bit and do that and they responded back with a DM to me on Monday and I sent that on Saturday. That’s something that would have taken a phone call or something else that would have taken more time to do than send a tweet or a direct message. That’s one example of how it’s changed things.

**Now, I’d like to focus on how Twitter fits into your lifestyle.**

**Considering that you are a farmer, has Twitter changed how you do your job? If so, how? If not, why not?** Not really, I would say. I can’t think of anything that I’ve changed about what I do based on Twitter. I’m not sitting back..well, I guess after some of the training I’ve done this winter, I’ll be thinking more about how I can send out tweets about what I do, just to help educate people who are from a non-ag background. I wouldn’t say it’s changed how I do things.

**In what ways did you connect to other farmers and learn new techniques and information before you signed on to Twitter?** Oh, you use to take actual face-to-face meetings, like with organizations I’m involved with annual meetings, conferences, field days for seed or chemical companies, just any kind of event where you had face-to-face meetings. But the number of those were just very limited throughout the year, and all the probably out of the year a handful or 1, 2, or 3 of those events contained people that were not from a 30-mile radius of where our base is. You gained a pretty good local perspective, and at the larger ones you gained a pretty good state perspective, but you really didn’t get beyond your borders very much about the perception that’s going on and communicating with others. So that’s the probably the biggest thing with Twitter in that I can see an advantage with that. I can follow a guy from Texas and they’re probably going to start planting corn here in a week or two. The new machinery companies are looking at how things are progressing there, and when we get started here, there already going to be up and going there. I wouldn’t gain that perspective otherwise. The contact down there, I can keep communication with.

**If you had a question about farming, would you say your network to ask people is larger, smaller, or about the same as those who don’t use Twitter?** Larger.

**Comparing yourself to other farmers, ranchers, and producers who don’t use Twitter, would you say you are more informed, less informed, or about the same on issues and breaking news related to agriculture?** Interesting question. It might be pertaining to the issue of whether I’m more informed or not. Some of the local issues, say involved roads funding or building issues, I’m probably less informed than they are because they are tied in more with guys that been on county boards for decades and know each other real well. So I’m probably less informed there, but in terms of larger issues on new products coming out or new technologies, nationwide issues, or breaking news, I’m more informed than they are. I couldn’t group that into an answer I guess, it’s more issue specific.

**What would be an example of something related to agriculture you learned on Twitter that you don’t think you would have learned elsewhere?** I would say some of the issues with alfalfa. We don’t have any livestock and that’s really not on the top of my things to learn about, so I’m not really engaged on the discussions of alfalfa. But some of the dairy guys that I follow

on Twitter and some other guys at pork producers, they are much more tied into it than I am. So reading some of their blog posts or stories they post about it, that's probably something I wouldn't have gained without Twitter. Also a lot of the marketing information, that's probably the biggest thing on Twitter that I've started to see. I follow quite a few marketing people on Twitter right now, and they usually give updates on what's going on in the market and things to watch out for, or this large company is buying so much paper in this option, or whatever. That kind of information, I wouldn't have found without Twitter most likely. Without reading some sort of information every day from these marketing companies.

**In relation to farming, how do you think Twitter will be used in the future?** I think it's going to keep expanding, as the farming population...the more people I talk to, the learning curve is maybe a little steeper with Twitter than other new technologies, it's essentially like learning new language for people that haven't been using Twitter. With any other new technology, for people that weren't early adopters with auto steer or some of these other precision ag technologies, they learned a whole new language to learn that new technology, they had to learn a whole new set of things, so I think with time it will become more adopted with the younger generation. I don't look for the older generation, say in their 50s and older to really be adopters of Twitter. Some of them are on Facebook, but I think they use it more for catching up with high school classmates and grandkids, stuff like that. I think it's kind of a different beast than Facebook. I don't see a lot of the older side using it as much. I see some of the younger people getting into ag, and some of the younger than their 50s being the ones that adopt Twitter than the older ones.

**Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what kind of topics you tweet about and who you follow.**

**Who do you follow on Twitter and why?** Early on, I just kind of got to where people that look interesting because they were involved in ag. People I follow now are off of retweets, you know, someone will retweet something that someone tweeted about, so I'll look at their profile and their timeline and try to follow them if they are interesting. Just some of the things about politics – I think I'm gravitating more toward getting good information about that. I like some of the sports stuff too, now that [REDACTED] is going to the [REDACTED], I'll probably look at some of the sports writers and get their take on things. I follow a lot of the local sports writers, in [REDACTED] about their sports. So that's probably how I mostly follow, so ag and people who have common interests – like precision ag. I try and find as many of those people that I can just because precision ag is a technology that's changing constantly, so it's good to keep up on that information.

**How many people follow you?** I think about 100 followers

**How many people do you follow?** I think somewhere about 125 or 170.

**How often do you Tweet?** I like to get it towards once a day or once every two days. Depends on what I'm doing – it could be once a week. It kind of varies with the seasons. Once I'm more active and out doing things in the field, that kind of stuff, I'll probably do a better job of tweeting about that, more like once a day. Whereas now about once a day, it's not that often. Probably in the wintertime, it's one or two times a week. As the weather gets a little nicer, once a day or once every two days.

**How often do you check into Twitter to see what others are saying?** Kind of depends on how the day is going, but at least once an hour, I would say.

**What do you Tweet about?**

- **Daily activities/what you are doing?** I would kind of say what's going on more, versus great philosophical debate kind of stuff. We got back from the conference we were at this weekend, and my grandpa was out shoveling now, and we didn't go to church because of snow, and at 10:30 in the morning, he was still out there shoveling snow, so I tweeted [REDACTED] so stuff like that. Kind of during – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I try not to tweet stuff that is inconsequential data, just more like “wow, the oatmeal was good this morning.” I really try to stay away from that because that's one of my pet peeves. I try to update more on what's going on especially on the farm. Not so much anecdotal stuff, more like what's going on.
- **Political views or views on the news?** Not yet. I've tried to play more of that stuff closer to the chest, but I'm thinking that's going to have to come to an end at some point.
- **Links to resources/articles?** Not frequently. I say on rare occasion I do, but not very frequently.
- **Do you answer people's questions?** I try to, if I can, I do.
- **Do you ask questions and seek advice?** Yes, I do.
- **If so, do people respond to you?** So far, mostly.
- **Any other topic I've left out?** No, I think that pretty well covers it.

**Some people complain about the limited number of characters that can be used on Twitter.**

**Others like the brevity. What do you think?** I like the brevity, I think that's the appeal of Twitter. It's not something you have to spend a lot of time with. It's something you can breeze over quickly and take in a lot of information in a short amount of time. I can see it going to 150 or 160 characters, but that's about max. Some people I follow, and I'm not sure how they do it but they put a link to the story and the entire web address is on there, and that takes up a lot of space. I don't want to look at that entire web address, I just want to see a short url, the link to it. So I like the brevity.

**Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about you:**

**Which age category do you fall into: under 45, 46 to 64, or 65 plus?** Under 45

**Gender:** male

**City, State:** [REDACTED] Nebraska

**Type of farming you do:** row crop – corn and soybeans

**What is the highest level of education you have completed?** Master's degree