The “Hill” is crazy! I’m pretty sure some of the people there are too, but you could say that about anywhere I suppose. I have spent quite a bit of time in the field, scratching up the soil, crop scouting, and working with farmers—where the boots hit the ground and all of the hard work is done. What CCAs, CPAg’s, and CPSS’s do is truly hard work; you are scientists, business partners, and managers all rolled into one. I could not respect you more. However, after my first time making congressional visits in Washington, DC in March, I have a brand new respect for the work that is done on Capitol Hill. CCAs, students, researchers, and staff from the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) only spent one day doing what some lobbyists and state constituents do on a daily basis. I think it is safe to say that we left the Hill that day exhausted and ready for an adult beverage.

The day definitely did not start as early as it would have if I were back in the field, but once it started, it was fast and furious. Don’t get me wrong—we had plenty of time to eat lunch and explore the Capitol, but the day was full of activity. Getting from the Senate side to the House of Representatives side was actually a fun process, and it took multiple modes of transportation from underground tunnels and taxis to my favorite—the Capitol tram system. We were not allowed to ride the presidential tram (to be expected!), but nonetheless, it was a great experience. Navigating DC, in general, was easy and the public transportation system got you where you needed to be. Our meetings with legislative staffers and/or members of Congress were relatively short and to the point, and we spoke candidly about what we knew—agricultural advancement.

For someone who never did this before, it can be somewhat intimidating, but the ASA DC office staff did a great job of training and informing us before we made the visits.

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