

Day 10: Saturday/Sunday, May 25-26, 2013

Katie McConnell and Caitlyn Krueger reflection:

Greetings from Nanjing, China!

Yesterday we had a busy and educational day learning about rural agriculture in the Nanjing region. The day started with our group going to see a Confucius Temple. This temple is known as an examination temple. Long ago when citizens wanted to work for the emperor, they had to take an exam. This exam would be taken at the temple we visited and last for 9 days and 8 nights. The exam was only given every 3 years and the average number of people that would take the exam at a single time was 20,000!

Next we boarded a government bus that took us to another part of Nanjing. The area we traveled to was very rural and agricultural with many people along the roads and in the general vicinity all busy harvesting crops, managing gardens, and other activities. The Pukou Taishan government in this region of Nanjing hosted us for tours. Saturday we spent the afternoon visiting a local hog farm with roughly 90 sows and an output of 3000 head annually. Learning about and seeing the type of facilities they have to work with was quite interesting and really puts into perspective the type of farming operations livestock producers have here, in comparison to the United States. We also spent time at a local fish hatchery where they raise 4 types of fish and are taking advantage of a large spring to supply a regulated temperature year round. They produce 4.5 million fry per winter and are currently letting local citizens come and fish in the ponds as a local attraction and to increase their revenue.

Saturday night we had the pleasure of sitting down with local government officials for dinner. We enjoyed some interesting dishes such as traditional noodles, turtle, and other seafood courses. Later we enjoyed some peace and quiet as we sat out in a gazebo on the fishery located right across from our hotel. The peaceful and beautiful night made us all remember home and we found it hard to believe that within 20 miles of where we were sitting in this rural region of China were 20 million people.

Katie McConnell reflection: looking at the swine operation we visited in Nanjing and listening to the farmer speak about the operation in detail was a good experience. The woman that owned it told us a lot about how the government has supported her financially in starting her farming venture. She also showed the group some details of her operation including Chinese breeds, a walking tour of the facilities, and a methane digester. Putting this experience into words is hard, but it has definitely given me many different perspectives about our own agricultural systems in the United States. This trip has opened all of our eyes to the importance of global trade and communication with agriculturalists from around the world. With a better understanding of what is going on in the world of agriculture, this trip has helped provide us with information and comprehension required to succeed in our future endeavors, whether they are agriculturally involved or not.

-Katie McConnell

Caitlyn Krueger reflection: thinking back on our experiences throughout this trip thus far has made me think about how different it is here compared to the United States in relation to the different social classes and how people live. Here in China there seems to be a large division between the rich and the poor. For example, I was stunned to find myself looking at the front of a glitzy and clean hotel we were staying in, and then compare it to the alley just behind it where people are living in near poverty standards. I went walking with some friends one night and was amazed at the fact that most of the homes people live in are simple hallways in between buildings or else run down little “shacks” nestled in between street vendors. It is hard to describe just exactly what I have witnessed when it comes to living conditions, but it is truly mind-boggling for me. Many times throughout the trip the issues of sustainable agriculture and the complexities of feeding a growing global population have been discussed. This trip has been an eye opening experience for me both professionally and personally.

-Caitlyn Krueger