

Day 7: May 22, 2013 - Yangling, Shanxi Province, China

Ni'hao

Today was another amazing day in China packed with regional agriculture. As a group we visited a large agricultural research and culture garden, a company (Kingbull) that produces Wagyu-cross beef cattle, a commercial beef feed lot, and the Northwestern Ag & Forestry University Animal Science research facility. All of these visits provided us with a newfound appreciation for global agriculture.

The Yangling Modern Agricultural Demonstration Park Development and Construction Company was our first stop. The Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University uses this facility to showcase various plant research varieties and demonstrate a large number of plants that are vital to China. Buildings included an Australian Hi-Tech Agriculture Display Center, the Ecological Feast, the Western Characteristics Exhibition Hall, and the Super Veggie Hall. The demonstration park provided a glance into China's crop production.

Kingbull was the next stop on our journey. Kingbull is a privately owned vertically integrated company that specializes in marketing high-end, highly marbled beef. Good management practices and intense animal care is used to make this high-value product. The cattle of Kingbull are massaged, given beer, and exposed to a soothing variety of music to promote the highly prized marbling that is desired by consumers. The visit to Kingbull offered an excellent look into another sector of specialty animal agricultural.

Our group then ventured to a commercial beef operation that offered an opportunity for us to compare and contrast Chinese beef production to American beef production. Native breeds of Chinese cattle—Qui Chuan—were being raised along with red and black Angus. While talking with management, we discovered how the increase in beef demand is driving producers to cross breed animals accustomed to the native environment with higher yielding breeds, such as the Angus. Seeing the adjustments of agriculture around the world to raise efficiency and meet rising food demand is amazing.

The last stop for our day was a tour of Northwest Agriculture and Forestry College and a meeting with fellow professors and students. This visit offered a great look at an advanced Chinese agriculture research facility. Research was currently being performed on dairy goats, beef cattle, dairy cattle, and swine. The facility offered a glance at new breeds and varying production practices. Professor Zan Linsen was our host. Dr. Zan is the Director of the National Beef Cattle Improvement Center in China, the Vice Dean of the Animal Science and Technology College of Northwestern A&F University, and the Vice Chairman of the Breeding Association of Yellow Cattle in China. Dr. Zan and his team gave us a brief overview of the issues confronting

Chinese Agriculture. It has been wonderful building relationships with people who are working to solve similar problems in agriculture.

Overall today was another wonderful learning experience about agriculture in China! The highlight of our day was comparing and contrasting the research at the Northwest A&F University and NDSU. Both Universities are working towards the same goal; creating more food for the growing population. However, it is still being done in different ways. This has opened our eyes to a completely new way of thinking. Another thing that we have realized is how agriculture does not need to be the same all over the world; it needs to be customized in ways that work best for each individual region. The three different types of beef cattle facilities showed a division in quality and how there is a division between rich and poor. No matter what any persons financial status is we need to find a way to put food on their table. Overall, there is no way to replicate the experience we have had here in China and the ways we will think about political and agricultural systems in the future.

Sincerely,

Courtney Beer and Bayleigh Antonsen