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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Clearwater Farmer Welcomes Chinese Delegates to Tour Soybean Fields**

CLEARWATER, MN – August 31, 2011 –Clearwater farmer Jamie Albrecht welcomed 12 China Food Soybean Team members, who are potential buyers of U.S. and Minnesota food-grade soybeans and soy products, to his farm on Friday, August 26. The team flew into Minneapolis from a Seattle convention where they met with Midwest Shippers Association to learn about the logistics of shipping soybeans and met numerous soybean exporters.

On August 25th, they received a firsthand look at the production side of food soybeans when they met with University of Minnesota's Associate Professor and Extension Agronomist, Dr. Seth Naeve, and Minnesota Crop Improvement Association Executive Director, Ben Lang. The team learned about U.S. certified seed and soybean breeding to grow certain varieties for specific food uses. Dr. Naeve explained the quality sampling that MN and U.S. does each year to maintain the seed identity and purity. Then the team toured a soybean field plot that had over 300 individual tests taking place. While in Minnesota, the team also toured the SunOpta Aseptic soy milk processing plant in Alexandria.

The trade visit was sponsored in part by the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council (MSR&PC), which works with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and Midwest Shippers Association to organize farm tours so that international trade teams can learn about farming, soybeans, production and processing advancements in the United States. Minnesota is a leader in research, production and export of food-grade soybeans.

In 2010, every fourth row of Minnesota soybeans was exported to China. All of which was in the form of livestock and poultry feed to meet the country's growing appetite for protein-rich meats.

This meeting was the very first time that a food soybean team from China visited the U.S. "Many other Asian countries regularly bring food soybean users and customers to the U.S., but this is the first time that China has participated in any food-grade soybean tours," Curt Petrich, General Manager SunOpta Moorhead stated. Claudia Chong, American Soybean Association marketing manager based in Shanghai and translator for the team added, "This is a good opportunity for the Chinese users to see exactly what the exporters, U.S. farmers and soybean processors are doing when they grow, process and export food soybeans."

Albrecht who farms land with Dennis and Tracy Wurm near Clearwater and Sauk Center grows over 600 acres of corn and soybeans. Because different varieties of soybeans are better for different food products, Albrecht grows multiple soybean varieties to meet diverse needs of overseas soy foods markets. For example, the soybeans used to make tofu are not the same variety that would be used to make miso, a soy-based soup product traditionally favored in Japan. However, according to Chong, "It is more cost effective for each food sector to be using the soybean specific to its final product."

The tour throughout the U.S., and specifically to Albrecht's farm, was a multipurpose trip. "This was an opportunity to show the Chinese soy product buyers that we can reliably and safely supply the type of identity preserved, high protein, high quality food grade soybeans that will be required to export to China's human soy foods markets. Soybeans are native to China, and they are considered incredibly important to the nutrition and everyday lives of China's citizens," stated Bruce Abbe, executive director, Midwest Shippers Association.

"It is also good to demonstrate that our farmers care about the food they grow, the safety of that food and the preservation of the land on which they grow that food. In addition, this trip helps build relationships so that one day they may become our partners in this commodity."

Included in the weeklong trip were meetings with SK Food International, Farmer Direct Marketing, Schillinger Genetics and eMerge Genetics and the Midwest Shippers Association's 2011 Grain and Soybean Export Shipping/Midwest Specialty Grains Conference & Trade Show.

The Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council is made up of an elected board of 15 soybean producers from across the state. The mission of the council is to invest soybean checkoff dollars in well-defined research, marketing, education and commercialization programs designed to increase demand and thereby improve the profitability of Minnesota's soybean farmers.

For more information or to set up an interview please contact Jessica Dornink, 952-446-5393 or [jdornink@wideopenthinking.com](mailto:jdornink@wideopenthinking.com).

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