



Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council

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PRESS RELEASE

Minnesota Agriculture Draws Visitors From Around the World Trade team members from Japan spend two days on Minnesota farms

MANKATO, MN – June 10, 2011— Three farmers, a magazine editor and an interpreter from Japan recently traveled 8,400 miles to see how U.S. food is produced and processed. They toured two Minnesota crop and hog farms, participated in a pork production and research update educational class at the Southern Outreach and Research Center in Waseca, MN and toured the Farmers Cooperative Elevator and Feed Mill in Cottonwood, MN.

The Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council (MSR&PC) works with the US Soybean Export Council (USSEC) to organize these farm tours so that trade teams learn about farming, planting, livestock feed, edible soybeans and the biotechnology advancements in the United States. “MN Soybean is probably one of the premier state organizations in setting up events like this. These team members can meet with five to ten farmers and leave with a good feeling that their soybeans and pork are coming from reliable and sustainable farmers,” stated Greg Olwig, USSEC marketing manager.

On June 6, the Japan trade team began their six-day journey through the Midwest with two days in Minnesota. Led by the University of Minnesota’s Associate Professor of Swine Nutrition and Management, Dr. Sam Baidoo, the team toured hog barns at the Southern Outreach & Research Center in Waseca. Allowing them to learn what recent research is the best in terms of management and nutrition practices for livestock.

Dr. Baidoo informed the trade team that Minnesota farmers have their animal’s best interest and health in mind and that is why the U of M has several research stations throughout the state. This on-going public research helps farmers better understand the best, most comfortable and safest housing methods, along with the most nutritious food choices for their livestock.

That afternoon the team visited Scott and Vicky Singlestad’s hog and crop farm in Waseca County where they observed and discussed the nutrients that Scott includes in the feed for his pigs. Singlestad stated, “Fifty percent of Minnesota soybeans are exported, and getting to know our customer is very important to us. It was a privilege for us to host the Japanese farmers at our farm and to tell them the importance of feeding soybean meal to our hogs. By hosting the Japanese trade team we had the opportunity to show them how we use good quality feed ingredients for the optimum growth of our hogs.”

On June 7, the trade team had a chance to learn how U.S. soybean products, such as de-hulled soybean meal, soybean protein concentrate, full fat soybean and quality feed, are used to maximize pork production with a tour of the Farmers Cooperative Elevator and Feed Mill in Cottonwood, MN. They then traveled to Danvers, MN to visit Mike and Nancy O’Leary’s farm. They took a moment to look at an emerging soybean field where Mike explained that U.S. farmers are working hard to get the crop planted in a timely manner. He reassured them that the crop would produce a substantial harvest for the needs of our nation and theirs.

Mike stated, "The importance of hosting the trade team is showing them appreciation of their business, showing our interest in helping them learn about how we produce our hogs and crops here. The beans from my farm are shipped to Holloway, MN and then sent to the west coast to the Asian market. The trust and appreciation we build with these trade teams are necessary for our nation's export market and it's a great time to learn more about the team's culture and values. At the end of the day we are all the same, eating food and trying to enjoy life!"

With most of their agricultural background pertaining to livestock production, the Japanese trade team enjoyed seeing the farm machinery used to plant and manage the soybeans that their country imports from the U.S.

Katsufumi Maekawa (Mike) stated, "We are excited to be here to learn more about U.S. crop and hog production, and especially enjoyed seeing the machinery. Many of the farmers are concerned about the pending rising cost of shipping to Japan because of the wet planting season here in the U.S. At this time, farmers in Japan are paying \$20 -25 per bushel for corn and soybean products, which is a large input cost. However, as we continue our tour here that concern has grown smaller."

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) helps arrange numerous international visits with teams coming from countries like Japan, India, China and Taiwan. Team members visit the United States to build relationships with farmers and their families while learning more about farming, planting, livestock food, and the biotechnology advancements in the United States.

The Waseca and Swift County Corn and Soybean Growers Association is affiliated with the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, a non-profit, farmer-controlled membership organization working to assure profitable soybean farming by monitoring government policies, educating the public about agriculture and supporting research and market development activities. The organization works with the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council to share the R.E.A.L. Story (Responsible, Ethical Agriculture for Life).

For more information or to set up an interview please contact Brittany Nussbaum, 612-412-7600 bnussbaum@wideopenthinking.com or Jessica Dornink, 952-446-5393 or jdornink@wideopenthinking.com.

Read R.E.A.L farm stories straight from Minnesota farmers by visiting <http://realstory.mnsoybean.org>.

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