

Chinese Soybean Buyers Tour Iowa Farm, Elevator and Biofuel Facility

May 17, 2007 - When 30 Chinese importers visit soybean channel locations after signing record-breaking \$2.07 billion in soybean contracts, news spreads fast in the farm communities they visit. Farmers who dropped off grain at Dunkerton Co-op in Dunkerton, IA., on May 16 asked about the crowd of Chinese visitors outside the front office. When farmers were told the group bought 210 million bushels of soybeans at the Chicago Board of Trade two days earlier, they shook their heads in awe.

The delegation from the China Chamber of Commerce for Imports/Exports of Foodstuffs, Native Produce and Animal By-Products (CFNA), is signing contracts at the CBOT and the Iowa statehouse, and visiting farms, shipping terminals and a biofuel plant on the way to talks at the USDA in Washington, D.C.

“The local farmers here see it as an honor to have them stop in our town,” says Grain Merchandiser Will Manweiler. “They asked a lot of interesting questions about how many acres of soybeans are being planted and how a farmer-owned coop works.”

The group also visited the farm of American Soybean Association First Vice President John Hoffman in Waterloo, IA.. While Hoffman described his operation, guests munched muffins baked by Hoffman’s mother, Darlene. Many visitors also had colleagues snap photos of them sitting on the fifth-generation homestead’s front porch or sitting in the living room rocking chair. For Hoffman, giving the guests a first-hand look at where some of their soybeans are produced is a great relationship-building opportunity. “The importers showed a huge interest in my opinions about the upcoming crop year,” Hoffman said. “These farm tours are a lot of fun and a great way to build friendships and business partnerships.”

Eleven of the visitors had never seen a U.S. soybean farm before. The first-hand look changed opinions about the value and reliability of the U.S. soybean crop. According to Mr. TANG Weicai, Assistant to G. manager, Guangzhou Green Oils Cooperation Ltd., the farm visit was very informative. “The Hoffman farm is very well managed, with good techniques,” TANG said. “I was also impressed by the environment-friendly production methods. I have even more confidence in the U.S. soybean crop after visiting an Iowa family soybean farm.”



Chinese soybean importers tour Dunkerton Co-op elevators in Dunkerton, IA, where they asked many questions about the coming crop year and the U. S. co-op system.



American Soybean Association First Vice President John Hoffman describes his operation and the U. S. producer commitment to China during a tour of his farm in Waterloo, IA.



The activities of the U.S. Soybean Export Council to expand international markets for U.S. soybeans and soy products are made possible by producer checkoff dollars invested by the United Soybean Board and various State Soybean Councils, support from cooperating industry, and through the American Soybean Association's investment of cost-share funding provided by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

