

Trade Mission to China, South Korea a Success

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman and a delegation of Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusiness leaders have returned from a successful trade mission in South Korea and China intended to initiate further cooperation with Kansas agriculture.

“While both South Korea and China have enough food to feed their people today, as both countries continue expanding, it was clear that Kansas agriculture can help play an important role in feeding their people in the future,” said Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman. “From our meetings with governmental leaders to our visits on farms and ranches, production, processing and marketing facilities and tours of food retail operations, I am confident Kansas farmers and ranchers will help meet demand for safe, high-quality, nutritious food products from Korean and Chinese consumers.”

While in South Korea, Secretary Rodman met with Deputy Minister for Trade Jong-Jim Kim. Kansas agricultural exports to South Korea totaled \$125.2 million in 2011, and implementation of the South Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will lead to increased export opportunities for Kansas and all U.S. agricultural products. The FTA, which went into effect March 15, 2012, is the most commercially significant free trade agreement for the United States in almost two decades and immediately eliminated or began phasing out tariffs and quotas on a broad range of agricultural products.

The delegation toured the COSTCO retail store with the largest sales volume in the world and Emart, the largest discount retailer in South Korea, where they had the opportunity to see agricultural products from the United States, including several from Kansas, on retail shelves. The visit in Korea also included a tour of Hanjung Cold Storage, which holds meat imported from other countries, including the United States.

“Seeing the U.S. Department of Agriculture stamp or the brand of a United States agribusiness on food products was proof that consumers outside our borders rely on and enjoy the safe, wholesome food produced in the United States,” Rodman said. “With 96 percent of the world’s consumers living outside the United States, increasing exports of Kansas agricultural products into these fast-growing markets is critically important.”

The delegation arrived in China and participated in meetings at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing to gain a better understanding of current and future food needs for Chinese consumers, especially the growing middle class, and how Kansas farmers and ranchers can help meet those needs. The group also met with Chinese governmental officials and industry leaders where a common theme was improving agricultural technology in China. Secretary Rodman and members of the trade mission also met with agribusiness leaders potentially interested in investing in Kansas agriculture.

Throughout the rest of their time in China, the Kansas delegation spent time learning more about the Chinese agricultural system in the Liaoning province by touring a large feed mill, a meat market, an agriculture research university, a cattle breeding station, a dairy operation, a boar farm, corn farms and a crop research station, as well as the Haoyue Islamic Beef Company’s feedlots, processing facility and headquarters. Rodman said meeting with farmers in China was a highlight for the Kansas delegation.

“While we are accustomed to seeing several combines in a field to harvest corn in Kansas, the fields in China are most often harvested by hand. The technological advances in our American agriculture

system differ a great deal from those that the Chinese farmers practice,” Rodman said. “We can work with China to improve its food production systems, advance its agricultural technology resources and help feed its people. Agriculture is a global business and the more Kansas farmers and ranchers understand about agricultural production systems around the globe, the more competitive they will be.”

Representatives from Kansas Farm Bureau, the Kansas Beef Council, Kansas Pork Commission, Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Soybean Commission, Kansas Corn Commission, Agtech, Inc., and SureFire Ag represented Kansas on the mission.

To learn more about international agricultural marketing efforts in Kansas, contact the [Agricultural Marketing team](#) at the Kansas Department of Agriculture. To view pictures from the trade mission, visit the department’s [Facebook page](#).