



TALL XV

International Trip

China

April 21 - May 3, 2018





***Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr.,
Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership***

*“Preparing men and women in agriculture for
leadership responsibilities.”*



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Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr., Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership

MISSION

TALL will create a cadre of Texas leaders to help ensure effective understanding of and encourage positive action on key issues, theories, policy and economics that will advance the agricultural industry.

GOALS

To identify, challenge, develop and support emerging leaders.

To serve as a catalyst for mentoring and networking among agricultural leaders.

To increase personal involvement in state and local activities that contribute to the growth and enhancement of Texas agriculture and rural communities.

To heighten knowledge of current issues and encourage leadership in the development and implementation of sound local, state and national policy.

From farm and ranch to processor and supermarket, Texas agriculture faces unabated change. How it changes in response to current forces—such as environmentalism, new technologies, consumer issues, governmental regulation, and global markets—will profoundly impact agriculture for years to come.

The Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program helps people realize their potential for leadership during this time of critical change.

Educational Leaders

The TALL program enables men and women from all areas of agriculture to:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of agriculture and related industries in the context of today’s complex economic, political, and social systems
- Learn the processes of organizational decision-making and the role of political institutions
- Acquire a greater appreciation of how agriculture must interact with society as a whole
- Develop skills necessary for leadership at local, state, and national levels and put those skills into practice

Participating in TALL

The TALL program is designed for men and women to enhance their leadership skills. Each class consists of at least 24 people, all of whom are associated with agriculture. Participants come from every sector of agriculture and all parts of Texas.

Candidates apply for admission, indicating their reasons for wanting to participate. Successful candidates have demonstrated leadership potential and willingness to serve in decision-making roles upon completing the program.



Ramon Alvarez
Rio Hondo
District sales manager and seed specialist for Golden Acres Genetics, focusing on corn and grain sorghum. Also, manages a beef cattle and wildlife operation and a farm producing grain sorghum, corn, cotton and hay.



Brett Bamert
Muleshoe
Vice president of Bamert Seed Company, specializing in providing over 500 species of native grasses and wildflowers for prairie restoration and wildlife industries throughout the United States.



Jennifer Blackburn
Shallowater
External affairs director for the National Sorghum Producers and United Sorghum Checkoff Program. Communications specialist for Blackburn Farms, a family farm producing beef cattle, sheep, wheat, grain sorghum and hay.



April Bonds
Saginaw
Operations and market strategist for Bonds Ranch, a cow/calf, stocker and beef feeding operation with a farming operation that produces corn, soybeans and hay.



Lee Burton
Albany
Manager of Nail Ranch, a cow/calf and stocker operation, a wildlife management program and a farming operation producing wheat.



Clifton Castle
Lubbock
Manager and sales consultant for Kunafin “The Insectary,” a family-owned and -operated supplier of fly parasites to cattle feedlots and dairy, poultry, horse, hog and kennel operations.



Sarah Fitzgerald
Lubbock
Director of communications for Capital Farm Credit, a member-owned cooperative serving agriculture and rural Texas. Also, partner in a family-owned farming and ranching operation producing alfalfa and beef cattle.



Patrick Dudley
Elgin
Special assistant to Texas Agriculture Commissioner and government liaison for the Texas Department of Agriculture. Family involvement with ranches includes Dudley Brothers Registered Herefords, 4J Ranch, and Hardin View Farm.



Lauren Echols Decker
Stamford
Director of operations for Muleshoe Ranch, a family operation producing purebred Hereford and Angus cattle, wheat and hay.



Grant Groene
Lubbock
Technical product manager for DuPont Pioneer responsible for the High Plains, South Plains and Coastal Plains of the U.S. Also, partner in a family-owned operation producing wheat, grain sorghum and alfalfa.



Shane Halfmann
College Station
Research and Germplasm Specialist at Americot, Inc. Also, a partner in a family operation producing cotton, wheat and beef cattle.



Cody Harris
Palestine
President/broker of Liberty Land and Ranch specializing in farm and ranch sales and consulting landowners on row crop production, beef cattle and wildlife management in Texas and Oklahoma.



Lacey Hoelting
Lubbock
Executive director of the Bayer Museum of Agriculture focusing on agriculture education and advocacy. Also, co-owner of H Bar Cattle Company, a commercial Angus beef cattle operation.



Scott Irlbeck
Lubbock
Owner and operator of Irlbeck Farms producing wheat and grain sorghum.



John Coleman Locke
Hungerford
Partner and operator of the Locke Division of JD Hudgins, a purebred Brahman cattle operation and partner/operator of Healthy Livestock, LLC, a premium livestock supplement supplier for SweetPro Feed and Vitaferm.



Josh Louder
Bedford
Regional sales manager for Koch Agronomic Service, a division of Koch Industries, Inc., and responsible for managing Ag Chem products for production agriculture.



Daniel Luehrs
Odem
Field representative for Edcot Co-op Gin in the Coastal Bend assisting in cotton ginning operation and providing consulting on varieties and marketing strategies for local producers.



Alicia Meinzer
Weatherford
Attorney with Eggleston King, LLP; co-owner/manager of Meinzer Livestock, LLC, a cutting horse and beef cattle operation; and partner in Daugherty Ranch, a family-owned cow-calf operation.



Thomas Miller
Brashear

Loan officer for Texas Farm Credit, a customer-owned cooperative that finances agricultural production, rural land, agribusiness needs and country homes. Also, owner and operator of Esperanza Jerseys, a dairy operation.



Heath Reeves
Corpus Christi

Regional agronomist for Bayer CropScience, focusing on cotton and soybeans in South and East Texas.



Jeffrey Sarchet
Decatur

Beef technician veterinarian for Zoetis, Inc., the world's largest producer of medicine and vaccinations for pets and livestock.



Kyle Watts
Tyler

Branch manager for Texas Farm Credit, a customer-owned cooperative that finances agricultural production, rural land, agribusiness needs and country homes.



Remi Wright
Bryan

Regional sales manager for Biopesticide Sales, Certis, USA, providing services to producers of fruit, vegetable and tree crops.

Action-Oriented Program

TALL is a practical, action-oriented, two-year program in which participants meet eight times. Six of the meetings are held at different sites across the state.

Seminars with experts and group discussions enhance participants' knowledge and understanding of key subjects for today's agricultural leaders. Topics include leadership development, communication skills, economics and policy, international trade, agricultural institutions and agencies, urban/rural relations, and issues affecting agriculture, such as water and energy.

On-site tours and studies of agriculture-related businesses and industries help participants discover firsthand procedures and problems in production marketing and financing.

Meetings with leaders of government and business complement seminars on local, state, and national issues and are a focus of the first year of the program. TALL participants travel to Washington, D.C., and New York City for direct exposure to the varied social and economic conditions impacting agriculture.

International study is the highlight of the program's second year, with TALL XV traveling to China. The tour focuses on international communications, ecology, government policy, economics, social problems, and educational opportunities. Participants return with greater insights into agriculture's global problems and challenges.

Supporting TALL

The TALL program is conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a member of The Texas A&M University System. This intensive leadership development program also depends on the backing of individuals in agriculture and agriculture-related industries and public-spirited citizens. We invite you to consider participating or encouraging others to join us in providing support for the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program.

TALL Advisory Board

TALL is guided by an advisory board of 24 outstanding leaders with the following officers:

Chairman—Jim Prewitt
Vice Chairman—Loy Sneary
Executive Secretary—Roddy Peebles

Alumni Association

At least 10 years of experience is needed to reach the educational level of TALL graduates. As a result, alumni of TALL become a valuable resource to rural Texas and the agriculture industry. Graduates use their new knowledge and skills to garner leadership roles. Many become active in local organizations, while others pursue even loftier positions.

TALL Mission Statement

TALL will create a cadre of Texas leaders to help ensure effective understanding and encourage positive action on key issues, theories, policies, and economics that will advance the agriculture industry.



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200 copies, January 2018

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



Governor Dolph Briscoe Jr.
Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program

Class XV
2016–2018
Program Participants



Sunday Morning, April 22, 2018
Sarah Fitzgerald, Patrick Dudley, Jeff Sarchet

Our flight departed around 11:25 a.m. Saturday or Sunday, time is still a confusing figment when it comes to traveling overseas; eat your heart out Marty McFly. We met around 8 a.m. in the morning at DFW International airport to make sure the entire cohort were present and accounted for before going through security. Dr. J never lost a TALL class and he was not about to now (though I am sure he felt the urge to leave us a time or two). Our motley crew of agricultural misfits found one another with cheer, embracing and reconnecting, we were bright and chipper; excited to see one another on our last voyage together, would it last? Time would tell. The excitement of flying overseas I am sure was intense for all of us who had not flown that far, I know it was for me. For me, the flight was just the beginning of a great adventure to the orient.

Buh! Flying thirteen hours can get monotonous. Though thoroughly impressed with the automatic tinting windows, I would love to be able to look out and see the sights as we traveled over Alaska and parts of the Arctic. With the windows darkened I am unable to verify if an actual woolly mammoth has been sighted, the travel status shows it to be a balmy -59 degrees outside, so it is possible. As hours eight and nine start to set in, everyone is in various states of "trying like hell to make it the remaining four hours!" With lights out and the windows darkened, reading is out of the question. Some of our group are sleeping, others watching movies. Shane I believe is trying to find a way to walk around outside on the wing if he can; any fresh air would be great right now. The circular pattern I believe goes something like this: watch a movie or nap, get up use restroom, walk around or stand for a bit, come back to seat, look at travel status, find an unconventional way to sit in your seat for any amount of time; then repeat.

Hour ten was looking much like eight and nine, and then midway through I uncovered the secret to flying overseas. Get up and go to the back of the plane and make friends with the flight attendants. Ramon did the same and we ended up spending at least an hour and a half in the back of the plane, talking and enjoying drinks. Apparently the ladies were thrilled to see real cowboys enter their plane. After regaling the attendants with the wonders of TALL, we were brought up to speed of all the great stores in Beijing to visit

and how to tell counterfeit RMB from real RMB (I was even given a small black light to check for counterfeit RMB). Upon leaving our little party I went away with eight small bottles of vodka and believe Ramon with scotch, over all a very productive first meeting of our trip.

With hour ten and eleven out of the way I felt it fitting to get in a bit of a nap. We left at 11:25 a.m. and should be landing around 2:30 p.m., truly the longest three-hour flight of my life. With the time change, we only have a few hours before we all can go to bed. If Doc Browns calculations are correct, a one-hour nap will allow me to be able to hit the sack pretty well during China's normal bed time, but also stay up during the first leg of our journey. As I drift off to sleep, there are a number of things running through my head, excitement for the upcoming adventure, what we will experience, the history and culture we will learn, and knowing how blessed we are to all be experiencing this trip together. Next stop Beijing!

Sunday Afternoon, April 22, 2018
Lacee Hoelting, Scott Irlbeck & Grant Groene

We arrived at airport and met our tour guide for the entire trip, Ling. We grabbed our bags and took about an hour and a half bus ride through Beijing (on the second loop) to our hotel. We were all tired from the plane ride, so we freshened up, had a drink in the lobby, and sat down for our first Chinese style dinner in the hotel restaurant. We had a casual speaker, one of Josh Louder's co-workers at Koch industries.

Sunday Evening, April 22, 2018
Shane Halfmann, John Locke & Remi Wright

We landed after our long flight in Beijing a little out of it and ready for bed but in Dr. Jim fashion it was time for our first session and a quick dinner. We met with Koch Agronomic Services leader in China. Koch Agronomic Services is part of Koch Industries and focuses most of its efforts on enhanced efficiency fertilizers. We met with Liqun Kou who had over a 20 year career at Pioneer in China and now is leading Koch's business there. He is working to get their products registered in the country and doing the necessary trial work

to gain approval from Chinese government. He believes these technologies will be good for the Chinese farmer and the environment. He also feels like Trump and trade negotiations will end well and frankly needed to happen for sustainable growth and balanced trade.

Monday Morning, April 23, 2018
Brett Bamert, Josh Louder, and Tom Miller

This session took place in our meeting room within our hotel tell room in Beijing. Still a little jet legged from arriving to China the night before we began by hearing from Dr. Liu Aimin with the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Leaders from ChinaTex.

Dr. Liu (pronounced Leo) gave a long-detailed presentation on the overview of China Agriculture and Agriculture economics. This was a good speaker to start with as it gave us a high-level view of much of the diverse Agriculture within the country of China and also their needs from other countries to feed their growing population. Some of the take-aways my group took note of were-

- Northern China
 - Traditionally droughty
 - Bulk of Ag economy
 - North East
 - Corn, rice, soybeans and others can have multiple crops per year
 - Biggest import of 955 million tons per year most of which is for human consumption (GMO, even though their country won't allow them to grow GMOs but they can import for human consumption)
 - North West is majority of cotton production
- Southern China
 - More moisture- Winter Wheat and Rice are main crops

- Rice production where they generally have 3 crops per seasons and main food ingredient for population.
- Largest animal protein is pork and they slaughter 688 million pigs per year, but many think this number is drastically under estimated. This represents approximately 2/3 of meat consumption.

Dr. Liu had a great presentation with a lot of information but working through a translator some of our questions were missed and it was hard to learn more about some of his data. Domestic beef cattle breeding continues to decrease as imports increase. This also seems to be the case for corn as demand and price continue to decrease. Soybeans and Rice are going in the opposite direction as demand continues to stay strong. China is a large vast country, but Agriculture is limited to certain areas as villages have grown to medium cities (In China 4 million people is considered a medium sized city, roughly the size of Houston). Per capita land that is used for agriculture is .23 acres per person.

ChinaTex leaders came to visit with us and learn more about Cotton production in Texas and some of the risk farmers face and choices they make and when. Some of the members of ChinaTex were proficient in English and others utilized translators. They are a state-owned company that works in textiles trading and manufacturing cotton, wool, and other fabrics. If anyone in the country wants to buy cotton or other materials for textiles they must buy from ChinaTex. The leaders were very interested in Texas cotton and how it was marketed, what makes a good or bad crop, and making sure we have cotton to supply their needs. One question our group asked them was regarding their female CEO. The question was do you experience any challenges being a woman in the agricultural industry. She responded through the translator, that in the past there were but as time goes forward less and less and with a good team around her it is not an issue. Summary of the Q and A was that they are dedicated to the cotton industry and would like to grow in and with Texas where it makes sense.

Monday Afternoon, April 23, 2018
Lee Burton, Alicia Meinzer and Kyle Watts

During our time in Beijing, we traveled outside of town to the Great Wall of China. One



of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Wall is a sight to behold. Construction of the Wall began in the 7th Century B.C., and the remaining portions of the Wall are predominately from the Ming dynasty (about 600 years ago).



Throughout the years, the Wall has been used for various purposes, some of which being national defense, border security, and trade along the Silk Road. Some even say the Great Wall can be seen from outer space.



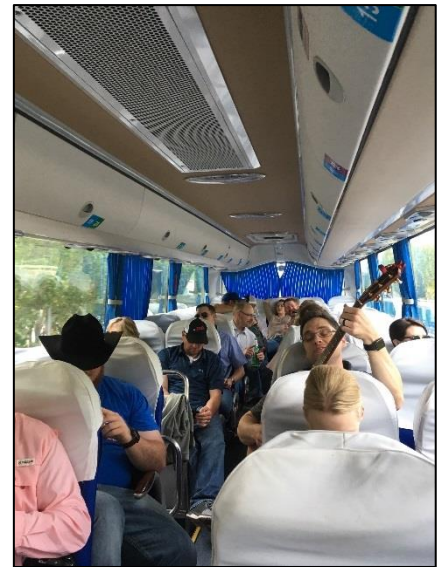
Having been constructed so long ago, it is amazing to see what the workers were able to accomplish with absolutely no mechanized equipment. Dr. Jim, always thinking ahead, brought both the American flag and the Texas flag, which we flew with great pride while on the Wall.

Monday Evening, April 23, 2018
April Bonds, Daniel Luehrs, and Heath Reeves

We gathered on the bus for the drive back to Beijing following our hike up the wall. We shared stories about how far each of us went and what all fun things and people we encountered along the way. Clifton brought his guitar along, and he reworked the song “5000 Miles” to reflect our climb up the Great Wall.

Once we arrived to the 5th Ring of Beijing, Lin began to tell us his story regarding Tiananmen Square and the Student Movement as well as speaking to what Tiananmen means - gate to heavenly peace. Lin actually was a part of the Student Movement in 1989 and had been in the Square less than one hour before the shootings began. You could see the heartbreak on his face as he began to share the beginnings of his history with this period of Chinese history. He would go on to share more and more bits as our trip would go on.

After returning from the Great Wall, Bryan Lohmar with the US Grains Council spoke to our group. Bryan was a great resource to talk to about the current trade climate between the US and China, specifically the new tariffs on sorghum. The week prior to our departure to China, China announced a 178% tariff would be placed on all US sorghum entering China, effective immediately. At the time of this announcement, there were 20 ships full of sorghum heading to China with an approximate value of \$20 million USD per ship. Each of these ships halted their current route, and new buyers for the grain had to immediately found. Most of these ships were now being sold at a value of \$3-4 million USD per ship, a loss that may prove catastrophic to the Chinese importers who owned the sorghum on these ships. Mr. Lohmar informed us that due to the recent work with Spain to increased their demand for sorghum many of these ships headed for Spain. They purchased some of the ships at a large discount which negatively impacted both the growers and the importers. These tariffs will last for 5 years and could be renewed.



Clifton Castle singing the Cohort back to Beijing.

Mr. Lohmar was quick to point out some of his personal opinions on the Chinese government. He pointed out that China has stolen intellectual property and manipulated currency. He believes the US needs to address these issues but not so vocally and not so non-transparently as President Trump has recently done. He suggested Mr. Trump might be



Bryan Lohmar, US Grains Council, speaking to the TALL Cohort.

more effective to be quieter and should start putting pressure on the Chinese with renewed interest and involvement in the Trans Pacific Partnership. Something that is particularly interesting is that the Chinese media does not report on tariffs or their effect on the economy. Because of this, the Chinese government cannot make a deal that even hints that they backed down and neither can Trump/US. The solution to the potential trade war is quiet negotiations.

Mr. Lohmar also discussed biotech in China during his talk. Currently, it is a mixed bag in China. One faction believes GMO is bad; the urban educated faction is part of this. The other faction welcomes GMO with open arms. The Chinese are very similar to US in this regard. The camp that believes in science is trying to open China up to GMO and global market.

Land and research were other topics that Mr. Lohmar addressed based on some follow up questions our class had following the morning sessions, and he was quick to point out the hypocrisy in both. Hearing about land usage and the arable land in China being used up from two different speakers in the morning, he pointed out what many of us had been thinking, "Why is a country that was built on taking away the land from the people now forcing those people to now look to buying land elsewhere as a way to solve its

productivity needs in the future.” We also had questions and concerns about the numbers that we had heard earlier in the morning. He told us that he has 20 years worth of experience working on research and with the Chinese “numbers” and encouraged us to not believe everything that we hear while in China. He said to trust your gut if something does not add up.

Following Mr. Lohmar’s chat with the class, the group split into three groups for dinner. One group who was struggling with jet lag went immediately to bed. Another group went to a restaurant in the shopping center next door to the hotel. It was quite the culinary adventure since no one spoke the language or knew what they were ordering. They finally realized they had chosen a Korean BBQ restaurant. The final group joined Mr. Lohmar at one of his favorite restaurants in Beijing called Lost Heaven, which served Yunnan folk cuisine. This group had a wonderful meal that they all praised.



Some members of the Cohort enjoying a Korean BBQ restaurant.

Tuesday Morning April 24, 2018
Ramon Alvarez, Clifton Castle and Jennifer Blackburn

The refreshed TALL crew was up and at it again getting the full energy and excitement of the city. Add to that energy, we were also heading to a familiar home, the U.S. Embassy! The first thing we noticed was the long line outside the building of Chinese citizens applying for U.S. Visas. Our tour guide Lin, mentioned about 90 percent do not get approved. We entered through the side gate and went through strict and thorough security! Not as bad as the EPA building in Washington, D.C. After our Maze trip through the different buildings and floors, we were greeted by Dr. Christopher D. Bielecki PhD. He was our presenter that day along with Min Xu, Manager- External Relations.

Dr. Bielecki gave us a warm welcome and explained to us his mission while here. He is Deputy Director of the Agriculture Trade Office (ATO). Christopher touched on China trade policy, adventures in ag, trade and a tale of two Chinas. The department has five offices in China. First, to put in perspective, Dr. Bielecki explained to us the enormity of Chinese cities. There are the big cities like Shanghai, Beijing and Chongqing—22-35 million in population. Then there are the what they call the second-tier cities—average 8-10 million in population. What? We had to take a breath and visualize a serene isolated place like a cotton field to keep the panic from settling in. There are so many people in such small places! We are only a couple days in and are realizing that our personal space will be put on hold for the remainder of the trip.

There are 14 second-tier cities which account for 54 percent of U.S. imports. That's a lot of everything coming into China! To name a few China imports Grapes, Apples, Pistachios, and lots more. These second-tier cities are huge drivers of growth for U.S. agriculture. Creating great new markets that are developing for U.S. trade. Promoting lots of products equals more opportunity. Large cities can find more products than we can get in the U.S. second-tier cities are growing before our eyes and gives smaller businesses an opportunity to compete. China's economic development is huge but still uneven. There are a lot of mega projects coming in but still need lots of work paying attention to details. A great example is HoHot Mongolia, population of 3 million people. Very far away from Shanghai but their GDP growth 8 percent! That's insane and super impressive. The only

caveat is the driver seems to be real estate. For example, they borrow more money to build a metro system using real estate as their collateral. Looks great on the outside but internally there are lots of issues. You wouldn't see it if you were an outsider. So Dr. Bielecki found the solution to "real news", Taxi drivers! He mentioned that you learn more from them then you do from the government officials.

Changing gears, the way Chinese do business is by building relationship, then do business. Old Chinese saying, "build personal connection before doing business is very important". Ag was the first sector to get started when Nixon came to China to build relations in 1972. First USDA COOP exchange program was established 1978, first government to government formalized between U.S. and China. U.S. is the largest producer in the world and China is the largest consumer. Fun fact, Texas shipped \$720 million worth of ag products in 2017. Cotton, Feeds, Dairy, Hides and Skins. We are the largest exporter of Cotton. 2nd largest on the beef export side. China is very welcoming. When China says they are going to do something, they actually do it! U.S. government, not so much. Dr. Bielecki's main goal is to promote heavily in these second-tier cities. Because first-tier cities are getting real hard now to compete on price. There are lots of other competitors from different countries. China is becoming a cashless society. E-commerce is a huge growth area. Food safety is big anchor for business in China. They know what they get is a safe product.

Next, we had Min Xu, manager External Relations for the U.S. Meat Export Federation. He briefed us on the progress and challenges with China's relations. In 1976 the federation organized as a non-profit working to create new opportunities. Also have five offices in China. They market to the Chinese population by in country trade shows connecting buyer with seller. They work within international government on trade issues. Also work with individual exporters on problems or issues. Giving the right information about the industry. They provide salesforce training to work with chefs. They do a lot of E-commerce to sell beef and other U.S. products. China is the world's largest beef and pork importer! Growing middle class population needs to eat! Let's eat meat!

Tuesday Afternoon, April 24, 2018
Sarah Fitzgerald, Patrick Dudley, Jeff Sarchet

Tiananmen Square, the city square located in the center of Beijing is interestingly named



after the Tiananmen (meaning "Gate of Heavenly Peace") that is located to its north, separating it from the Forbidden City.

While Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China in the square on October 1, 1949, my previous knowledge of Tiananmen Square was the site where hundreds if not thousands of student protestors lost their lives after acts of military suppression. Accordingly, the juxtaposition of its actual meaning ("Gate of Heavenly Peace") was somewhat startling.

The square (joining up to it in several directions) contains the Monument to the People's Heroes, the Great Hall of the People, the National Museum of China, and the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

After spending a few minutes in the square we entered The Forbidden City. The Forbidden City was home to 24 emperors of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) Dynasties. It served as the home of emperors and their households, as well as the ceremonial and political center of Chinese government, for those almost 500 years until the abdication of Puyi, the last emperor of China.

Considering "old" in the United States usually dates back 200 years, this was astounding.



The Forbidden City received its name as, when it was in imperial use, was forbidden to ordinary people. To represent the emperor's "god-given" supreme power and the thinking that the place where he lived was "the center of the world", all structures within the Forbidden City are arranged on the north-south central axis of old Beijing.

Construction began in 1406, lasting 14 years and requiring over a million workers. The manpower it took to build this was astounding. It covers an amazing 178 acres and is comprised of 90 palaces and courtyards. Thank goodness for its size as, if I remember correctly, about 100,000 people visited the site with us that day!

Tuesday Evening, April 24, 2018
Lacee Hoelting, Scott Irlbeck & Grant Groene

With a short break before dinner, most of the group freshened up or checked out local businesses and sights near our hotel in Beijing. We took a nice little walk to a restaurant for a traditional Peking Duck dinner. I was told by some friends to ask to see the head to make sure it was duck, but with all the appetizers and sides, I completely forgot. We were joined by Ling Zhang, Government Affairs Lead at Monsanto China, and Meng Lian, Corporate Engagement Lead at Monsanto China. It was a little hard to hear between plates and drinks, but Ling and Meng gave us a good overview of their jobs, without giving too many details on impending mergers with Bayer CropScience. We then had a good Q&A session on public perception of GMOs in China and consumer trends.

Wednesday Morning, April 25, 2018
Shane Halfmann, John Locke & Remi Wright

We had been looking forward to Wednesday as it would be our first excursion into Rural China. Rural China is a relative term as this turned out to be more of a suburb of Beijing. We were greeted by the manager of the Fu-Ha Meat Company, Mr. Hu. This feedlot and slaughterhouse is in DaChon county, which has a large portion of Muslim residents and is known for beef production. USA Today has reported the Chinese government forced relocation and reeducation of an unknown amount of Muslim people. I hope no one in this area was affected. This area of China has produced beef for over 600 years and was charged with supplying the emperor's palace during that time period. The packing plant was modernized in 1980 using German made equipment and is one of the plants in DaChon county providing seventy-five percent of the beef consumed in Beijing. We were treated to a hotpot lunch at the onsite restaurant. It was a different way to enjoy beef and has become very popular in China.

Wednesday Afternoon, April 25, 2018
Brett Bamert, Josh Louder, and Tom Miller

This afternoon started with a great "hot pot" lunch, tour of soybean oil processing plant, and then a traditional tea tasting experience. Lunch was at a feedlot which sounds strange, but it was a very nice restaurant which was owned by the same company. We had a hot pot lunch which apparently started in this region but then has become popular all over China. Each person has their own hot pot which you



cook all your own food at. The food is put on a large lazy susan which spins around, and you take piece by piece and put into your boiling broth to cook. It also came with some great peanut or sesame sauce which had Chinese writing written in it.



The meat was sliced as thin as I have ever seen we had lamb and beef and it cooked within 30 seconds.

From lunch we jumped on our bus and headed to a soybean oil factory. This place was impressive. Apparently, the majority of Chinese people cook their food with soybean oil



as opposed to vegetable oil or olive oil. They use it because they are used to it and because of the price point. Most of the soybean that are used to make their product comes from the US and Brazil. They do not have a preference on where the beans come from but US is more reliable due to infrastructure compared to Brazil. Almost all the soybeans they handle are GMO to make the cooking oil. They buy their soybeans from all of the traditional grain

merchants in the US. The company at this location has storage of 800,000 tons of soybeans and process 3 million tons a year. The translation of the company name is something close to “Hopeful Grain and Oil Company”.



After the soybean oil factory, we went to a traditional Chinese tea tasting. It was clear from this that Chinese take their tea and the ritual of tea very seriously and with great meaning. Below are some pictures. But we tried 4 or 5 different teas all had different benefits and ways to serve them. All were brewed in small pots and then served in even smaller cups similar to American shot glasses. The teas were tasty, and the experience was interesting. Most of the TALL folks came home with lots of tea to share with their

family and friends. Some even bought tea sets but I do not think anyone splurge for the one below.

Wednesday Evening, April 25, 2018
Lee Burton, Alicia Meinzer and Kyle Watts

The chosen form of transportation across China is by rail. Prior to the “Bullet Train” that can go 150 miles per hour, there was the overnight “sleeper train” that travels about 60 miles per hour. After our experience in Beijing, we hopped the train and headed to Xian on the overnight train. The sleeping arrangements were “cozy” with two sets of bunk beds in each 6’x8’ cabin. It reminded me of those little beds at the hospital when you’re staying with the patient. Our group basically filled up one rail car which had its own community bathroom (equipped with a western-style toilet) that was shared by all. When we woke up, we gathered in the 3’ wide walkway and took in the countryside passing by. All in all, it took about 12 hours to travel the 670-mile distance, similar to traveling from Amarillo to Corpus Christi.

Thursday Morning, April 26, 2018
April Bonds, Daniel Luehrs, and Heath Reeves

When we woke up this day, we were still a few hours out of Xi’an, riding on the sleeper



View from the train.

train. This gave us a little time to look out the window and take in the scenery of central China. We saw small, broken up fields of wheat and some cows grazing. The hills created significant challenges to growing crops in this area, but some of this was fixed through terracing the land. Dr. Jim kept repeating in disbelief how different the countryside looked now than it did 10 and 20 years ago.



Many of the terraces were empty, and it was obvious that the land was not being farmed as it had. We continued to question how China plans to be self-sufficient in its food needs

when more land is being taken out of production, the younger generation is not staying in the countryside, and China has no more arable land to farm.

At approximately 9:00 we disembarked from the train, met our Xi'an city guide named Bruce

Liu, and made our way to our hotel for breakfast and to get cleaned up. From there we travelled outside of the city for an afternoon tour of the famous Terracotta Warriors. As we drove, Bruce shared some information on the city of Xi'an. The first thing

Bruce brought to our attention was the number of cars in every city, especially in Xi'an. The government restricts the number of cars on the road by only allowing certain license plate numbers on the streets on certain days. As an example, if your plates end in odd numbers, you can drive on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but if you have even number plates, then you can drive on Tuesday and Thursdays. In Xi'an, therefore, bicycles are a very popular mode of transportation and often the only means. The government provides the bicycles for free, and you pay as you use it after you pay an initial deposit. Public transportation in Xi'an is not convenient as it is in Beijing and Shanghai.

Bruce shared a little about the Muslim Quarter in Xi'an and how it is a very popular part of the city. Xi'an was also the capital of China over 2000 years ago, and the Silk Road started in Xi'an. The city wall of Xi'an is the longest city wall in China and as we later saw is quite spectacular especially at night. Most people travel to Xi'an to see the Terracotta Warriors and a Tang Dynasty show, which we would later see both.

As we traveled further outside the city, we saw many different types of housing options. Bruce told us that it is much cheaper to live in a 2nd tier city like Xi'an than it is in Shanghai or Beijing. Housing costs are only 4000-5000 RMB per square meter in Xi'an.



Deboarding the train in Xi'an.



Terracotta warriors that we could not wait to see.

Thursday Afternoon April 26, 2018

Ramon Alvarez, Clifton Castle and Jennifer Blackburn

One of the coolest parts of our trip was about to come to a head! The wheels on the bus go around and round to the Terracotta Warrior museum! We were all very excited to see this relatively new museum and recently discovered Terracotta Warriors. The Terracotta Army remained untouched underground for more than 2,200 years and was **discovered by chance by local farmers** while digging a well in 1974 in Xi'an. This discovery prompted Chinese archaeologists to investigate, revealing the greatest archaeological site in China. The Emperor, born in 260 BC took his position when he was 13. He died and was buried in 210 BC. It took approximately 40 years for the construction and sculptures of the Emperor's Terracotta Warriors and Horses to be complete. There were more than 700,000 laborers working on the Tomb complex and on the Terracotta Army.

Each Terracotta Warrior is unique. Their features are lifelike, made from moulds. Archaeologists believe they were built in an assembly line fashion, with moulds for arms, legs, torsos, and heads being put together and finished with customized features that ensured no two were alike. The Terracotta Army sculptures were made from wet clay that could dry and then baked in a kiln. Then they were painted. There are more than 8 different head shapes which represent various cultures in China. In addition to the Terracotta Warriors there were figures of entertainers, musicians, acrobats, waterfowl, and government officials found in the 20 square mile tomb. The Terracotta Warriors stand at an average of 5 feet 11 inches tall, although some are as tall as 6 feet, 7 inches. Warriors of the Terracotta Army were dressed differently to represent their position, whether foot soldier or scout, or cavalry soldier.

The Terracotta Warriors were originally painted, and today scientists are trying to figure out how to preserve what little paint remains on a few of the soldiers for as long as possible. When found, most statues were broken and archaeologists have been piecing them back together for several years. The Tomb contained four main pits approximately 21 feet deep that housed the Terracotta Army. The Terracotta Warriors were outfitted with real weapons, including swords, spears, crossbows, and daggers. When found they were

well preserved, protected with a layer of chromium. Because the horses had saddles, it is believed that they were invented during the Qin Dynasty's rule. Many of the objects and some of the Terracotta Warriors have been on display at various museums around the world for exhibitions. Emperor Qin Shi Huang had spent his life searching for a way to become immortal but was not successful. Some believe that the Emperor's burial tomb complex was not completed because of the presence of a fourth pit that was found empty.

Thursday Evening, April 26, 2018
Sarah Fitzgerald, Patrick Dudley, Jeff Sarchet

The Tang dynasty was an imperial dynasty of China from 618 to 907. It is recognized as



a golden age of culture and overall high point in Chinese civilization. During that time Chinese enjoyed feasting, drinking, holidays, sports, and all sorts of entertainment, while literature blossomed as it was more accessible with new printing methods.

Tang Dynasty Show displayed the music and dance art

of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) complemented by a beautiful array of costumes and sets. The show itself was comprised of several sections including Butterfly Dance, White Linen Dance and Da Nuo.

After the show we enjoyed a traditional Chinese meal and drink after appreciating the wonderful music and graceful dancing.



Friday Morning, April 27, 2018
Lacee Hoelting, Scott Irlbeck & Grant Groene

This was one of our favorite days on the trip. We finally got out to a rural area in China; Guan Zhong Plain. First stop was a wheat farm where we watched a worker remotely fly a drone spraying what we believe was malathion. The drone had around a 10-12' boom, and the best we could tell was that it was flying freehand. The farm was mostly growing SH33, a Chinese wheat variety for flour milling purposes. They said it has less yield, but better flavor for dumplings, noodles, etc.

The next stop was a poultry operation in Shang Xi, where they had bought hatchlings from Hy-Line in Bryan, Texas. It's ironic to travel around the world to see chickens from Texas. The manager said it took 5 months for egg production from introduction and they will lay eggs for one year and then are sold to market for meat, making room for the next generation of layers. Most of this was learned in an office building. We went through a lot of safety precautions including a chemical spray on our shoes and pants, only to be told we couldn't actually go in to see the chickens, although they let Dr. Jim have a peek. There are around 48,000 chickens at the facility. Contract production and extension is the goal. We learned brown eggs come from red chickens, and while China does have animal rights advocates, they do not have near the influence or media presence of those in the US. We also learned that food labeling, and food Safety are priorities for the Chinese government.

Friday Afternoon, April 27, 2018
Shane Halfmann, John Locke & Remi Wright

This afternoon we had the opportunity to visit an interesting farming community outside Xian. This community was made up of comfortable modern homes centered around a town square and community center. Mr. Shi, a local grower and leader, invited us into his home and shared how local growers have become successful. This area historically grew wheat and the growers were struggling. The government built greenhouses, irrigation systems and homes for the local residents who now provide a percentage of the produce consumed in Xian. Mr. Shi, was very suspicious of these

changes at first but now sees the benefits from this system and explained that price subsidies are not as effective. Not only did the government provide the infrastructure but also the transportation and markets for the produce. We also toured a flourmill that was built in 1958. This mill employed fifty-five people and was relatively automated. It has a 24 ton/day capacity and is required to keep 400 tons of grain in storage for emergency purposes. Our host explained that he is facing a couple large issues. The first is location. The city has built up around the mill causing dust and noise complaints. The biggest issue is the mandated price on wheat. This high price has severely decreased the margins on flour.

Friday Evening, April 27, 2018
Brett Bamert, Josh Louder, and Tom Miller

This evening was spent mostly in transit to our next destination of Chengdu where we would take in some culture the next day and go to the panda zoo. We had dinner at the train station which was a massive hanger with trains coming and going all the time. We even found a Dairy Queen so that had our group and especially Dr. Jim excited. This was our second train experience in China but very different as it was a bullet train that goes up to 200 mph. This was a great experience to travel a great distance and see a lot of country side out of a window at that speed. Our group spent time playing cards, looking at the scenery, and even singing songs to the whole train to pass the time. The train was crowded and a little hectic but very cool.



Saturday Morning, April 28, 2018
Lee Burton, Alicia Meinzer and Kyle Watts

In Chengdu, we had the chance to see the Research Base for the Giant Pandas. The station was started in 1987 with 6 Pandas. The research group owns a total of 185 pandas with half onsite, and the balance dispersed around the world in various zoos. All



in all, there are approximately 500 pandas in captivity. The term panda means “bamboo-eater”. However, there are only a few types of bamboo they prefer.

With urban
sprawl
taking up

much of their migratory range in the mountains, the shortage of bamboo caused the panda population to reach catastrophic numbers.



Thanks to the conservation efforts of dedicated biologists, there are now 1800 in the wild,



which is up 200 from ten years prior. They typically experience a 15-year life span in the wild. We also learned there are red pandas as well as black pandas. The red ones are much smaller and are a completely different species. There are 10,000 of them in the world.

Saturday, April 28, 12:00 noon - 5:00 pm
April Bonds, Daniel Luehrs, and Heath Reeves

After a full morning of visiting the National Panda Research Center, we went to a local restaurant for another traditional meal. This meal was full of bamboo, river fish, chicken, and pork options. There were also some spicy options which is



indicative of the area. After we stuffed ourselves (and Dr. Jim found a small grocery next door with ice cream), we headed for the bullet train to Chongqing to meet the river boat for our cruise down the Yangtze River.

We had a little bit of time to shop around the train station, and WE FOUND A DAIRY QUEEN!!! Some in the group opted for a hamburger and fries from Burger King, but a large group (and of course Dr. Jim) jumped for joy at this sign of home. Being hot and tired, we were much quieter on this train. We also had to fight the crowds (not being allowed to board first this time) since luggage storage space was limited. The train ride only lasted just over an hour.



Dairy Queen in the Chendu High Speed Railway Station. Dr. Jim was so excited!



Chaos of boarding a train without preferential boarding in

Once we arrived in Chongqing, we met our city guide who would take us for an early dinner and a drive around the city before getting on the river boat. Our dinner was a traditional Sichuan hot pot dinner, and it could be very, very hot. They were not lying that the spices were intense! The selections for this hot pot were also very different than the previous meal in Beijing, with no beef options, more pork and lamb, and rice noodles. There were also many tofu options. We also had a surprise dessert of a

yummy cake in celebration of Tom Miller's birthday since it was his birthday that day!



Eating hot pots in the birthplace of the hot pot.

Chongqing is an interesting city and quite different than any of the places we had visited so far. One of the biggest differences is the terrain. The city is built into the landscape of the mountains, so roads can be built on top of each other as you go up or down the



Streets are often only connected by steps as streets are above and below each other.

side of the mountain. As our city guide, Bill, said, the city needs a three-dimensional map to be able to navigate through the city. Thus, we didn't see any bicycles in Chongqing.

One of the other unique things about Chongqing is that it is a municipality with oversight from the federal government in Beijing. The municipality is about the size of South Carolina and is 33 million people,

but in the city itself, there is only 9 million people. One of the reasons why it is a federally controlled municipality instead of just a city is because of its importance as a military and



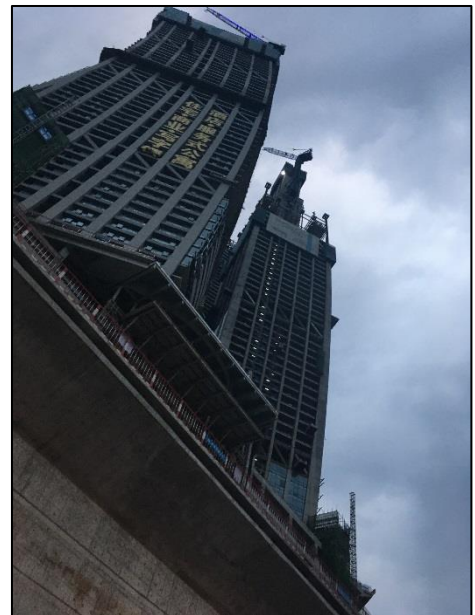
One of the many bridges in Chongqing.

goods were shipped, it would take them 3 months to arrive to Europe.

Chongqing's role as a technology hub has grown the city substantially in recent years. Bill told us that in the early 1990s, the only way to Chengdu was by sleeper train that would take over 12 hours. Eventually the cities were connected by a highway weaving through the mountainous terrain, and today you can travel from one city to the other in just over one hour. As the city has grown, the need for more bridges across the river are also imperative. In 1980, there were only 3 bridges that crossed from one side to the other of the city. Today, there are 20 and plans for 10 more in coming years.

We also began to understand why the hot pot was created here. The area is called one of the four furnaces of China. It can get as warm as Texas in the summers, and there will be no breezes and high humidity because of the mountains. The winters are cold and humid, and most people do not have central heating. The hot pot was created as a way for the meat processors to sell meat to people in the winters when most people would not venture out or getting enough protein. The meat processors would walk through the city

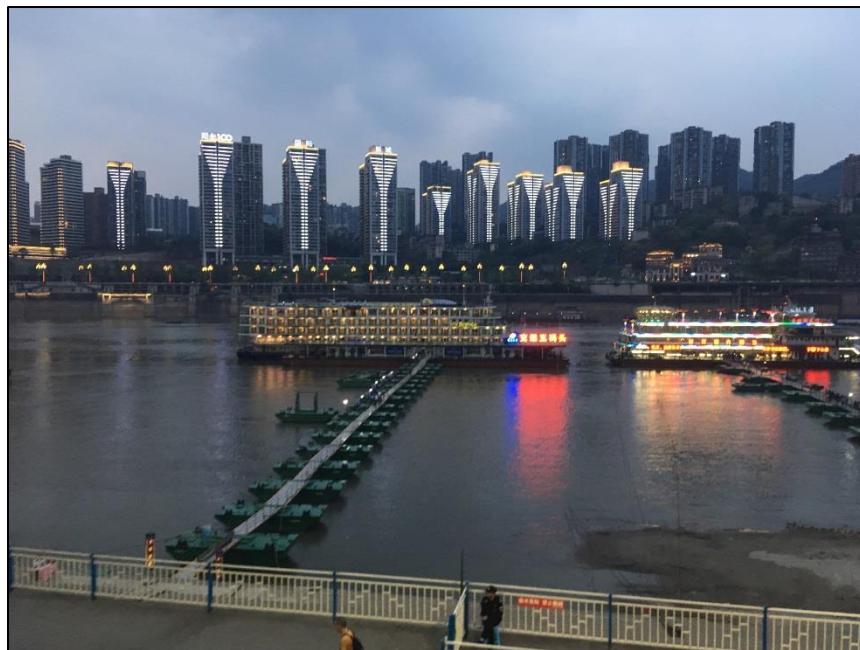
industry base. Taking advantage of the resources of inner China, Chongqing played a significant role as a military site as recent as World War II. It was also identified as an important route for transporting electronic goods to Europe. Today, Chongqing is connected to Europe by 700 miles of train lines (the beginning of the Orient Express) that by shipping goods via rail. If these electronic



Streets and buildings are layered on top of each other.

with a big vat of boiling water filled with broth and spices and allow the people to choose meats to throw in to feed their families. The custom developed into what it is today.

As we boarded the ship, we could tell that this would be a highlight of the trip. It would be nice after the hustle and bustle of such large cities to be in the beauty of rural China and enjoy some quiet. We were also looking forward to some fun and shenanigans with our classmates. As we waved goodbye to our 4th city in 3 days, we pulled away from the dock and sailed into the night.



Arriving to board the My Sophia.

Sunday Morning, April 29, 2018
Sarah Fitzgerald, Patrick Dudley, Jeff Sarchet

Our cohort traveled down the Yangzi River for one evening and look to tour the Temple of the Jade Emperor at first mooring. All fall into line and depart heartily to our bus in the city of Fengdu or the City of Ghosts located on Ming Mountain. Having nearly two thousand years' history, the Ghost City combines the cultures of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism with the mystique of its ancient ghosts.

After a rousing bus ride to Wuyu Mountain (home of the Jade Emperor) we fell out in a jumble and anxiously awaited our entry into the temple to learn a deeper knowledge of Chinese Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. We were greeted by the Jade Emperor, his wife, and two of his many daughters. We learned this was a temple that included all three of the ancient Chinese religions.



The conspicuous yellow statue of the Jade Emperor is worshipped there at the mountain peak. Based on the spiritual concept of 4 phenomena, 5 elements and 8 diagrams, more than 30 traditional temples and 208 holy statues of deities are for all to see at the Jade Emperor

Temple. The temple aims to present visitors the real traditional Taoist culture, and the typical combination religious culture of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in China. Each level of the temple contains one aspect of the before mentioned religions. Once past the welcoming Jade Emperor family we entered an elevator to take us to what turned out to be the beginning of our destination. As we entered a courtyard and looked upwards, it immediately occurred



to us we would be making another grand scale climb. While not as intense as the Great Wall, our legs were still somewhat hesitant to make another hike.

It was an interesting experience to learn a little more about the different Chinese religions, however as we ascended the mountain one couldn't help but think of it being more of an amusement park/tourist adventure than actual ancient temples. A wave of sadness and sympathy for the Chinese people came over me when my previous thoughts were confirmed, these were not original temples at all, but poor replicas of the original 2,000-year-old temples the government destroyed during the construction of the Three Gorges Dam.

Once it was explained this temple was only around 20 years old and was built to appease the Chinese population, I noticed the shoddy construction used in building this replica.



In the Forbidden City we learned the important significance the number and types of animals that were placed on the eaves of the ancient structures in Beijing. Where any visitor could see the animals on the eaves in the Forbidden City were painstakingly carved, the animals recreated in the Jade Emperor's temple were cheap knock offs puttied on. I couldn't help

but think of someone burning our Constitution then writing it down with crayon on a piece of notebook paper and saying, "Here ya go. Good as new!" The way their historic sites were carelessly brushed aside, then hastily recreated reminded me how cautious we should be when it comes to giving away our liberties to our own government.

Once a people's history is destroyed, it is gone for good. While on the mountain, I tried to imagine what the original temples may have looked like. The fanciful artwork, the hand carved rock and wood images of koi and cherry blossoms, stone steps carefully arranged as a walk through a beautiful water feature; the feng shui of each temple generating

balance and harmony to all that enter. There were no discussions when these temples were destroyed. The people in China didn't get to vote on the actions taken by the government, they were told succinctly this was happening. With the building of the Three Gorges Dam, numerous historical sites were covered over with 30 meters of water.

Our triumphant ascent to the top of the mountain brought us to the Jade Emperor's Temple. As ruler of Heaven he rewarded us all with one free pass down his magnificent granite slide. While the slide was truly awesome, I am somewhat hesitant to believe it was a replica of any ancient slides that may or may not have been torn down.

Sunday Afternoon, April 29, 2018
Lacey Hoelting, Scott Irlbeck & Grant Groene

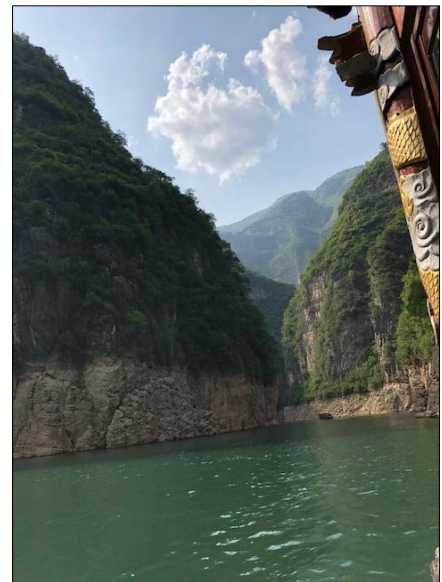
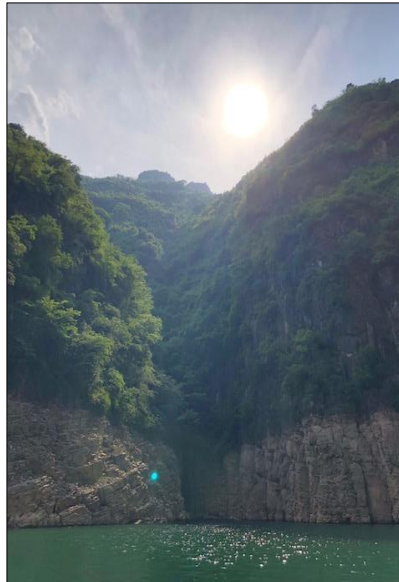
Our first full day on the river cruise. That afternoon gave us a little time to explore the boat. We met the captain at the welcome reception along with a group of tourists from Poland, Dr. Jim's people. Many of us got some rest, called home, or tried to catch up on emails, but the Wi-Fi in the middle of the Yangtze was limited at best. I believe Tom said he was going to have "Panda time" which he explained meant eat a little and sleep a little, then eat a little more.

Sunday, Evening, April 29, 2018
Shane Halfmann, John Locke & Remi Wright

Our group had a couple options for entertainment this evening. A large portion of the group enjoyed a phenomenal show in the city while others visited and played games on the cruise ship. We continued our journey downriver throughout the night.

Monday Morning, April 30, 2018
Brett Bamert, Josh Louder, and Tom Miller

We had a fair amount of fun late into the night prior that involved dance offs and dance floor wrestling. I think the boat staff did not know what to make of us. Those activities led to a little slower pace morning around the bought for the TALL Cohort. We spent the morning moving into the Yangtze Gorges on the boat, taking pictures and videos, and having breakfast.



Monday Afternoon, April 30, 2018
Lee Burton, Alicia Meinzer and Kyle Watts

During our Yangtze River cruise, we traveled through the Wu Gorge, the second gorge of the Three Gorges system on the Yangtze River. “Wu” means “Witches,” and the gorge is named for such because of the mystical mist that often hovers over the river in that area. This particular gorge is formed by the Wu River and stretches approximately 28 miles from Wushan to Guandukou. Goddess Peak, the highest of the 12 peaks in the gorge, resembles a slim, graceful figure of a maiden kneeling before a waterfall.





We also learned of the hanging coffins that are found throughout the gorges. The hanging coffins are an ancient funeral custom of some ethnic groups, including the Bo people. These coffins were mostly carved from one whole piece of wood. The belief was that the hanging coffins could prevent bodies from being



taken by beasts and would bless the soul for eternity. The Bo people viewed the mountain cliffs as a stairway to heaven and believed that by placing the coffins up high the decedent would be closer to heaven.

Monday Evening, April 30, 2018 April Bonds, Daniel Luehrs, and Heath Reeves

Monday evening ended with us attending the Captain's Dinner about our river cruise



Bean curd – a kind of tofu.

ship. This was a special dinner that was prepared by the crew as a special thank you for choosing their cruise line. Some of

the dishes were very tasty, but it is unlikely any of the cohort will eat bean curd in the future.

Tom Miller was surprised at this dinner by the crew who found out it was his birthday. He was then sung "Happy Birthday" to in Chinese, English, and Polish by some new friends we made on our voyage. The rest of the night was spent making memories with our classmates and playing Mahjong.



Lee Burton focusing on his next move playing Mahjong.



Toasting our last night on the river boat.

Tuesday morning, May 1, 2018
Ramon Alvarez, Clifton Castle and Jennifer Blackburn

On this morning, after we settled our accounts and we were definitely excited to arrive in Yichang to disembark off our cruise boat and see our final part of the Yangtze River tour. We headed to one of mankind's modern marvels with the development of the Three Gorges Dam Project, and we were fortunate to be able to use the ship elevator to continue our path down the river. Being able to descend 300 feet in less than 40 minutes in such a huge vessel was a cool experience! More than 1.2 million people were displaced over this project; however, it serves such a huge area and creates an impact for commerce and thoroughfare.

We continued our dam tour off the elevator and boarded a bus to take us to see the ship locks and the Three Gorges Dam from Tanziling Ridge overlooking some 700 feet to capture the scenic view of the ever flowing, busy Yangtze River. The construction of the Three Gorges Project is a great achievement and compliment of the wisdom and endeavors of all participants that will render benefits for future generations. We then headed over to meet our new guide Ginger and head for lunch.

Tuesday Afternoon, May 1, 2018
Sarah Fitzgerald, Patrick Dudley, Jeff Sarchet

After finishing the Royal Gorge tour, we headed to lunch before a quick afternoon in Yichang.

After lunch we were able to have some free time. The group split up into two groups, getting a traditional foot massage or visiting a local museum. With tired feet and in dire need of a good nap, I chose the first option! What an absolute treat. We then joined back together for a quick tour of the city.

Yichang, with a population of over four million, has existed since ancient times (known as Yiling then) with records detailing wars and battles dating back to BC times.

To think a city of over four million inhabitants is considered "small" is still crazy to me! I guess, considering Shanghai has 29 million citizens, I can see why by comparison.

Yichang is a prefecture-level city though meaning it has a total population of four million plus with urban population of about 1.5 million.

A prefectural level city is often not a "city" as we might think, but instead an administrative unit comprising of a city in the usual sense (usually with the same name as the prefectural level city), and its much larger surrounding rural area containing many smaller cities, towns and villages. Yichang covers 8,141 square miles in Western Hubei Province, on both sides of the Yangtze River. The Xiling, the easternmost of the Three Gorges on the Yangtze, is located within the city.

I believe most travelers overlook Yichang, traveling straight through to board or disembark from a cruise. However, Yichang, nestled among trees lining the Yangtze, had a freshness and quaint nature to it with cute shops, restaurants as well as beautiful public spaces, while still offering urban advantages like an airport. I could have definitely spent more time here.

Tuesday Evening May 1, 2018
Lacee Hoelting, Scott Irlbeck & Grant Groene

In Yichang, there was no set itinerary, so our group split into two, half going for Chinese foot massages and a few of us walked some of the downtown area, even went into the first Christian church we saw, which was Catholic. Lee and I had a great discussion with a staff member about the strict limitations placed on their church by the government. Also found it interesting they don't consider themselves to be Roman Catholic, just Catholic. Check in at the Yichang airport went smoothly enough, but as a rainstorm came through, everything was delayed. We spent several hours in the airport just waiting. When it was finally time to board, they crammed us on to a bus, tighter than cattle on a truck. The airplane was less than new and smelled a little funny. Dr. Jim said he would encourage the travel agency to stick to rail in the future. Made it to Shanghai past midnight and caught a quick nap before an early morning.

Wednesday Morning, May 2, 2018
Shane Halfmann, John Locke & Remi Wright

This morning we spent in the city of Shanghai and worrying about Remi in the hospital. We were able to visit several markets and speak with local community leaders. The highlight of the morning was visiting an elementary school. We were greeted by a kindergarten class who sang several songs and gave us each an origami figure. Some of our group had gifts for the children as well and it was a great time interacting with these young people.

Wednesday Afternoon, May 2, 2018
Brett Bamert, Josh Louder, and Tom Miller

As our trip wound down we had a few stops left both touristy shopping and agriculture focused. One of those stops was to local market and then to a special in-home family lunch. The market was the vastest assortment of items I have ever seen. Everything you could imagine when it comes to fresh ingredients and produce. Crabs, crawfish, live ducks, avocados, all fruit, all vegetables, turtles, ect; basically, if you could think of it to eat you could find it or something similar. This place was packed with people and apparently the market goes from 5 am to 7 pm every day.



After walking through the market, we got to have lunch in a private home. The TALL group split into three homes. Each home was about



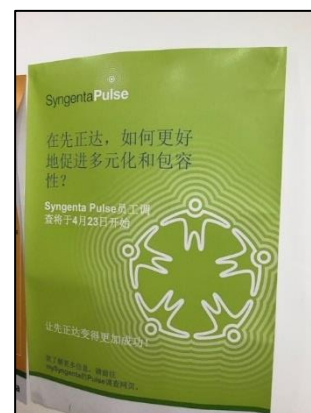
600 square feet and had either two or three people living there. Our hostess cooked all day for 8 of us in this small kitchen. It makes our Thanksgiving cooking look easy.



After we parted ways with our hostesses we headed to the Syngenta office in Shanghai. Syngenta is a major Agribusiness manufacturer of chemicals and seed. Approximately

16-17F	好时（中国）投资管理有限公司 Hershey (China) Investment Management Co., Ltd.
19F	欧姆龙（中国）有限公司上海分公司 OMRON (CHINA) CO., LTD. SHANGHAI BRANCH
21F	先正达（中国）投资有限公司上海分公司 Syngenta(China) Investment Co., Ltd.
23F	易安信电脑系统（中国）有限公司上海分公司 EMC Computer Systems (China) Co., Ltd. Shanghai Branch
25F	资生堂（中国）投资有限公司 SHISEIDO CHINA CO., LTD.
26F	资生堂（中国）投资有限公司 SHISEIDO CHINA CO., LTD.
27A-D	欧姆龙电子部件贸易（上海）有限公司分公司 OMRON ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS TRADING (SHANGHAI) LTD BRANCH
27E	欧姆龙电子部件（香港）有限公司上海代表处 OMRON ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS (HONG KONG) LTD SHANGHAI REP OFFICE

two years ago Syngenta was purchased with government run ChemChina. It was great to be able to meet with them as they have a unique perspective on agriculture and China relations within the world of Ag. James Duan was the Syngenta leader that visited with us for the session. He is Chinese but spent many years working at Syngenta's US headquarters in North Carolina. He



talked about why ChemChina was interested and bought Syngenta. He said that they were interested in a strong growing business that would make sure there was diversification in the Ag sector as consolidations have been continuous over the last 20 years and more even in the last few years. In China James told us that yields on almost all crops are half of what they are in the US and they use 2x the amount of pesticides and fertilizers. The market is incredibly fragmented and while they have about 20% market share in the US they have about 6 in China. They also have a 4 or 5 step distribution to ours in the US which is 2 or 3.

Wednesday Evening, May 2, 2018 Lee Burton, Alicia Meinzer and Kyle Watts

Some of the best discussions we experienced were with the impromptu guests we



connected with through peer contacts in the country through our cohorts. One such gathering was with an investment company that explained how they manage assets for various investors in China. It was a very enlightening presentation, and we are very grateful to them for taking the time to visit with us. Remi was the one that orchestrated the guests, and unfortunately, she was at the hospital at the time of our meeting.

Thursday Morning and Afternoon, May 3, 2018
April Bonds, Daniel Luehrs, and Heath Reeves

Thursday morning was our last morning in China. We were all ready to end our epic journey, but we still had a little more energy to do some final shopping. We went to the Yu Gardens for shopping and bought silk, fake bags, and even a few more pearls.



Ramon Alvarez in a store that sold fake Louis Vuitton bags.



Kyle Watts shopping for a Chinese outfit for one of his twins at home.



Produce in a very familiar style of grocery store.



Tired and ready to depart of the good ole USA!

After this, we visited a local shopping mall and grocery store to see how these places compare to their American counterparts. They are very similar. In this shopping center, we toured a silk embroidery production store and ate some lunch. After we completed shopping, we headed to the airport where we said goodbye to our tour guide as well as to China.

TALL XV Paradigm Shifts

Lacee Hoelting

Reflections: “With limited travel abroad experience, I wasn’t sure what to expect in China. I actually really enjoyed our trip. The people were extremely friendly and genuinely interested in us and our group. Several of us were pulled into selfies by the Chinese, and while many didn’t speak English, their enthusiasm for our group was easily translated. I felt very safe everywhere we went, and most places were extremely clean. Every inch of outdoor space seemed to have beautiful flowers, plants and landscaping. Even overpasses had flower boxes hanging along the sides. We saw large numbers of bikes and pedestrian traffic, and learned in some provinces, people are entered into a lottery system to win the chance to purchase a car. This is a means to reduce air pollution, although we rarely witnessed the smog often portrayed in the media. Of the Chinese we asked, there seemed to be either an admiration or indifference to President Trump and his political style and trade policies. Many seemed to respect him. This is a message we also don’t see in our own media. I think in a country where the government controls everything, the people have respect for political leaders that use their influence and power to better their country.

Regarding communism, I went to China expecting to see oppression, people scared to speak the truth and scared of governmental retribution. While there were traces of that, what I saw were people, farmers especially, who were genuinely grateful for the government giving them jobs and giving them opportunities to support themselves and their families. While the rest of the world may view China as a bully that manipulates trade and world markets with unfair subsidizing and stockpiling, surprisingly the Chinese citizens seem to view it as the government putting their country’s priorities first. While we saw a variety of living conditions, we rarely saw homeless and very few beggars asking us for change. We did see large amounts of elderly people, all of who seemed to be very active. Every park seemed to have exercise equipment, and open spaces would have Tai Chi classes. Homes are multi-generational, with each family member pulling their weight. Nursing homes and even day cares are foreign concepts to the Chinese. Your home is always with your family. The oldest generation takes care of the children, while the

parents are at work, and in turn, the family takes care of the elderly in their homes. Maybe it was the one-child policy, which has now been lifted, but there was such a high value placed on family, that is was very heart-warming to me as wife and mother and left me wishing there were such strong generational ties in our country.

Where they lack certain individual freedoms, I found they have societal reassurances. Their country has never seen a mass shooting in a school or otherwise, their prisons rarely see repeat offenders, and crime nationwide is extremely low. Everyone seems to want to work and the government provides them jobs. Retirement is required at age 55 for women and age 65 for men. The average work day and school day runs from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, and students nationwide take an exam at the same time on the same day across the country. This one test determines what university they can attend or trade school they may enter, with the cost of secondary education being barely 1/4 of the cost in the US. This exam has a thousand-year-old history, from when the emperors would use the test to find common people to employ in the royal ranks.

I was also expecting to find more historical buildings and villages, but it seemed much of this has been cleared to make way for more modern high rises. In fact, everywhere we went seemed to be under construction, some areas just seemed demolished with no immediate plans to rebuild. While they seem to be embracing new technology, like the state-of-the-art dam we toured, other areas like agriculture seem very behind in technology. It seems like a country at odds with itself at times, a massive population, cities with more than 20 million people, racing to build more infrastructure, yet still holding on to thousand-year traditions. The government is the ultimate authority, but the people don't know any different. It was an eye-opening experience, and a place that I hope to visit again in the future."

Jeff Sarchet

Reflections: "Changes to my perceptions about China are the people have more freedom than I expected. The country is more capitalistic than I expected although I'm not sure about how much those opportunities for having a legit business are determined by the government. The pollution is out of control and anyone from the U.S. who suggests the U.S. is responsible for climate change needs to visit China. The people were friendly and

curious about Americans. China's vulnerability is food security and integrity. Interesting that they are trending toward more capitalism, and the U.S. continues to become more socialistic."

Kyle Watts

Reflections: "My biggest takeaway from the China experience is the culture. I went into the trip thinking it was an experience to see a country I'd never visit personally. I was dreading the food and unknowns of what we'd be eating. The food was much better than anticipated. A lot of my snack food was left in China as I didn't need it as I planned. The people were great and very welcoming. I am very appreciative of what freedoms we have here within the United States. Although the bureaucracy can get a little crazy and excessive at times, the benefits and freedoms we see as a result are second to none. Our air, land, and water quality are much appreciated after visiting China who doesn't value those qualities the same we do. America is a land of opportunity and hope. Both countries have a lot to learn from each other. I was deeply impressed by the strong family bond that remains in China. I look forward to visiting China again one day.

Grant Groene

Reflections: "Before going over to China, I did some research on the country like anyone else would have. I figure the people would've been oppressed (communism) and that agriculture would've been very archaic. The people surprised me as far as their freedoms and outlook on things. The agriculture, although smaller scaled and less mechanized, was more advanced than I would've guessed. I was extremely impressed by their feats of engineering, like bridges and buildings. I would say I would go back to China, but I wouldn't necessarily do all the things we did again. Some of that stuff; once was enough to see it."

Patrick Dudley

Reflections: "Reflecting on our trip to China, my paradigm shift focused both on China and the U.S. In visiting China, much of what I said in my interview was realized. Being abroad made me appreciate what we have in the United States and how blessed we are to live in our country. Having never been to China before, I had no expectations regarding what to anticipate. Travelling with a complete open mind allowed me to take in each

experience as just that a new experience; it allowed me to appreciate all the new sights, locations, culture, history, and education in China while valuing even more what we have at home. One thing that did take me off guard was how comfortable I felt in China. I was a bit apprehensive about how I would feel walking around in cities of 24-29 million people; the picture in my mind being worse than New York City. It was amazing to me that I felt more comfortable in Beijing and the other cities than I did in New York City.

Again, my reflections came to me in two ways:

1) **China Reflections.**

Our generation will be dealing with a country full of only children who are used to getting their own way. We'll have to play it tough in order to negotiate effectively in the coming years to meet our nation's goals. Their government is not going to do anything to make themselves look weak, so we will have to keep that in mind when working with their government and use it to our advantage. They have many more people depending on their government and have less leverage than we think.

Being in China while the U.S. was involved in tariff threats, showed me how much more political it is on China's end than we realize, when it comes to things like trade. It is a game of cat and mouse. While the U.S. may be looking for an agreement to benefit everyone, China has a rich history and culture of keeping China first. Regardless of how well they may treat tourists and how much they value trade, the entirety of the country has one thing in mind, China first. Sometimes I think we fail to understand that.

This trip also affirmed for me communism still creates more problems than it solves; whatever the government can give you, it can also take away. We should be cognizant of this and should not be afraid to use our constitutional rights if forced to. Communism, it seems, has kept China as an un-advanced nation for some time, only recently showing signs of development. While there is a lot of technology in China, they are still 100 or so years behind more fully developed countries. Women are still not equal to men in China.

I had an aha moment when touring the feed lot, which illustrated why the Chinese are just now eating beef within the last 80 to 100 years. For the centuries the ox or bovine was used as their work animal, it provided for families. The Chinese revered the ox as its work

animal and would not eat the animal they revered. The pig was more like our bovine, plentiful and a viable food source for all families. It helped me understand one of the reasons why it is difficult to get the beef market going in China. With new generations, this will eventually change. I believe it is just a matter of time and patience for the beef market to fully open up in China.

There were many aspects of China I was looking forward to learning more about; their history, art, and culture. Seeing their history and the peoples love of their history made me realize how much more we should cherish and defend our own history and culture. China's national art was breathtaking, the beautifully sculpted jade, pearls, silk embroidery, all extremely guarded and cherished. The Chinese have an extremely strong work ethic and their family unit is very strong. These were two aspects of life in China we could take away and apply a little better as a nation. These observations are neither negatives nor positives necessarily, these are aspects of the country, and facts of life that helped me understand how things are done in China. It isn't right, wrong or indifferent, it just is. Overall, my Chinese experience was very positive, and I will definitely go back to China at some point in my life.

2) **U.S. Reflections:**

Traveling through China made me look in the mirror to what our nation has become. We are a spoiled nation, impatient, and we don't really know the meaning of the word hardship anymore. As a country we need to take more pride and care of our history and our heritage, because once it's gone – it's gone. Our producers need to stop being so querulous and fretting over possible short-term hardships when there is more at stake and could possibly see longer term benefits, like our recent trade concerns. The world does not necessarily tick on our clock and we should acknowledge that. Most producers have been in a state of worry and too quick to show all their "aces" regarding possible barriers and tariffs. It did not seem to me we were looking at the bigger, longer term picture; unable to see that some of the threats were not realistic. We need to realize there are some things bigger than us as an industry and realize that sometimes it means standing firm as an industry and not backing down. We have the greatest, safest food supply in the world and we need to act like it. It is important to note, I do not suggest

industry sit idly by and wait for the walls to come crashing in either. Always have a backup plan, always be strategic in your actions, be extremely patient, but void of emotion. If not we will lose every time. In sales and city government I learned when making a deal, throw down the offer and shut up, the first one who talks loses. As a classic sonnet once pointed out:

"You got to know when to hold 'em,
Know when to fold 'em,
Know when to walk away,
And know when to run.
You never count your money
When you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin'
When the dealing's done."

We don't have it that bad in the U.S. – we can own our own land, we have freedoms and liberties other countries do not; we have our own history and culture to be proud of; we are uniquely American."

Remi Wright

Reflections: "How Americanized is Chinese food? Will we encounter exotic meals such as rat on a stick with a side of grasshoppers? Are there vast tracts of agricultural land that will put American production to shame? What will almost 1.4 billion look like? How "great" is the Great Wall? These were just a few of the questions that swirled in my mind in the weeks leading up to the TALL Class XV cohort's trip to China.

To start with, authentic Chinese food is pretty darn delicious! The Hebei province, in which Beijing is located in, heavily favors dishes with peanuts and peanut flavoring. As we moved inland and south, peanuts gave way to various hot peppers. Throughout the meals, vegetables played the leading role with appearances by lamb, pork, beef and some chicken. One thing is for sure – I'm big fan of hot pot! As for the 1.4 billion Chinese residents? Well, they were EVERYWHERE! My mind is still boggled by the fact that "rural" China is often defined with main cities of multiple millions of people. While I think any town of 50,000 is large – and anything with more than 100,000 is a big city – to the Chinese, anything less than 10 million is just quaint! However, the divide between urban and rural is just as prevalent in China as it is in America. Agriculture must fight urban sprawl no matter where you reside in the world!

Secondly, the Great Wall is pretty great! It was a blast, though a true physical exertion to climb the steps. The trip itinerary managed to provide a good balance between work and learning about Chinese agriculture and enjoying the cultural history. The amazing sites of the Great Wall outside of Beijing, the intricacy of the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, the beauty of the Three Gorges and the Yangtze River, as well as a stunning production of a popular legend combined to showcase some of the rich history of the country.

During the whole trip, I kept expecting to see vast areas of production similar to the commodity production in the Midwest or the fruit and vegetable production of California. However, all I took away from the trip was the feeling that while China has a lot of land, it's production systems underutilize it. Most of the acreage I encountered was in small blocks of less than 5 acres and farmed using primarily hand labor. The few larger tracts of land, mainly seen outside Xi'an, did show some modern mechanization. The one thing I could have done without was getting appendicitis and having an appendectomy on the second to last day! (I'm still torn 50/50 on which system of healthcare is better.)

Overall, I felt that the Chinese did a splendid job of showing us exactly what they wanted us to see. I expected to see more grandiose views of agriculture, but instead left feeling that they have a long way to go to be able to modernize the country's production. The food was top notch (though a bit tiring after three meals a day for 12 days!), the crowds overwhelming but individuals welcoming, and the skyscrapers impressive."

Shane Halfmann

Reflections: "I expected the people to be upset about the government and how they are treated. Most folks we talked to were content or happy. These sentiments may or may not have been true. Everyone seemed hard working and optimistic. The lack of land ownership was something I could not grasp. Our families land is very important to me, and my father taught me the importance of owning and improving land for future generations. Finally, Grandma food is grandma food. Those ladies can cook - no matter the language."

Lee Burton

Reflections: “The takeaways of the China experience for me are the similarities and differences between our two countries. We all desire peace, harmony, prosperity, longevity and happy families. The difference being the Chinese Socialist government wants the people to depend on them to provide those things and we believe in equal opportunity through freedoms to achieve our destiny. Neither system is perfect. Both function well in the global marketplace. However, having seen the American Dream and all it allows in a free-market system, I believe hope is more easily realized in the U.S. I'm thankful for our freedoms in this country and will stand stronger on the conviction in the future now that I've witnessed first-hand the alternative framework in governance.”

April Bonds

Reflections: “China as a country had always intimidated me. Between the language, size of country, and the food, I didn't know what to expect besides what my Chinese friends had told me. Our timing of the trip we knew would also make the trip more interesting - would people actually tell us what they thought about the trade battle beginning. In the end, China was everything I expected and more. The people were so friendly and yet respectful. The diversity landscape was overwhelming, and the paradox between rural and urban staggering. The government control is tight, and yet people are learning to speak their minds (reservedly). It is hard to put into words what we saw and what we think about China because you have to see it to fully understand it.”

Daniel Luehrs

Reflections: “China is a mysterious country to most of the western world. Since I have been back from our trip I have had everyone I know, and complete strangers ask 'You went to China? How was it? What are they like? How was the food?' Every time I tell the accounts of our trip I add a little flare to keep the monotony on my end from being boring. 'The people where amazing! The food was mostly good, a few questionable meals, there was this one crêpe like sandwich thing that was AMAZING! We went to see the farming practices over there and got to do some sightseeing too! We did way too much sightseeing! It's a shame that we couldn't have seen a textile mill while we were there! If you ever go the Terracotta warriors are a hoax and tourist trap made by the

government!'. Every time with enthusiasm and pictures to follow which ever part of the trip I am highlighting.

Syngenta was in my opinion the most educational visit. The notes I took in that one hour are slowly making their way through every coffee shop in South Texas. My only complaint is we didn't see a textile mill or a warehouse with an unknown amount of cotton bales in them. Texas can produce a one-third of the U.S. crop. With 9.2 million bales in 2017 cotton was a \$3 billion crop. I was embarrassed after I got back and the Texas Cotton Ginners Association asked me to speak at the annual meeting next month about the trip and I had to tell them we did see any cotton, mills or warehouses.

In all, the trip was very well planned, organized, and timed. The entire trip was like clockwork, as Dr. Jim is known for."

Brett Bamert

Reflections: "Everyone had a smart phone. LTE cell service everywhere we went. People had more freedoms than I expected. I was also surprised by some of the automation they had in manufacturing even though labor is so cheap. How small their average farm size. The history, seeing things that were thousands of years old as compared to the U.S. where things are hundreds of years old. The sheer number of security cameras (176 million cameras in 2017 and expected to be 626 million by 2020) CCP are always watching. Food wasn't anything like what we eat in the U.S. Chinese government has ownership in most large corporations. When a Chinese company gets over 50 employees they are required to have a government employee on payroll to ensure that what they are doing is line with the Chinese Communist Party."

Alicia Meinzer

Reflections: "The biggest thing for me was the vast amount of people there. We hear about the numbers and the statistics, but I didn't fully realize and appreciate (and I think most probably do not) the huge market that exists there until I was fully immersed in the culture and people. Also reestablished my appreciation for everything I have and for being fortunate to live in Texas!"

Josh Louder

Reflections: “China was an amazing experience, but I was surprised and shocked by the diversity between the amount of people the technology they adopt vs technology and concepts they do not. On one hand we were told they get “everything delivered through online apps” and have trains that cover the country at over 200 miles an hour and the other hand that has non potable water everywhere and such high amounts of pollution that it affects their everyday life. In the end every culture is different and values different things but in China there seems to be more contradictions than in other societies.”

Clifton Castle

Reflections: “My expectations about China were better than I expected. I was surprised to see the big cities were clean and very low on crime. Also, I was told the cities were big but couldn’t imagine being that big. I was blown away by the endless views of tall buildings going for miles. My expectations on their economic boom is real. There are big things happening across 2nd tier cities and there is tremendous opportunity for growth.”

Heath Reeves

Reflections: “I was blown away by the new and shiny infrastructure, but very disappointed with the pollution. I also was disappointed with the lack of wildlife. I suspect it’s due to the pollution. The people were very nice and welcoming. I wasn’t sure what to expect from them. I enjoyed hearing their view on the United States as well our government and trade war.”

Scott Irlbeck

Reflections: “The country is much more modern than I thought it would be. They seem to have a great infrastructure. I never felt unsafe. All the cameras everywhere didn’t make me feel unsafe but made me question what it was for. It seems the government is allowing for a little more flexibility than a strict communist rule that was in place maybe 20+ years ago. Much of the land area it was beautiful to look at. I am impressed with the cultures and traditions that the people continue to keep up with.”

John Coleman Lock

Reflections: “After traveling to many countries around the world but never to a communist country, I did not know exactly what to expect, but I had some preconceived notions. I pictured the feeling of oppression being palpable. I pictured a dirty country mostly because it had to be overcrowded with 1.3 billion people, but partially because communism surely sucks the life out of you and nobody would care enough to clean the place up a little. After all, you're only working for a government you have no say so in.

I was surprised how clean and safe China felt. The people seemed very happy and confident. There was no apparent feeling of negativity or oppression. I feel like there was a lot of pride in Chinese people, and no feeling of animosity towards Americans like I expected.”

Sarah Fitzgerald

Reflections: “The government involvement (property, business, etc.) was disheartening and surprising. They are (slowly) moving in the right direction. Nonetheless it was far more far reaching than I expected. China has a noble history, dating back over four thousand years. Nonetheless they are much farther behind politically, socially, economically, etc. than would be expected. Would imagine imperial leadership and, most recently, communistic leadership has much to do with it. China's 1.4 billion people are changing the way the world grows and sells food. As more Chinese crave Western-style diets, they are trying to industrialize an agricultural economy long built around small farms. The balance between domestically produced food (which is nowhere near enough or stable) and their dependence on foreign produced food and inputs will be a consistent issue for as long as I can see.”

Ramon Alvarez

Reflections: “I was intrigued about living in a communist country. I wanted to know how different the cost of living may be from U.S. I was intrigued to learn about their customs, food and farming practices. I learned that Chinese folks live quite freely as one would expect for a communist country. I was intrigued to learn that many items were about 80 percent of U.S. value and some were considerably lower. Learning about property values in major cities shows an interesting disconnect from other parts of the country. I was impressed that they grow so many different crops, especially corn.”

Jennifer Blackburn

Reflections: “Although this was not my first time to see China, we certainly experienced it in a unique and profound way during our two weeks there with TALL. Going into the trip in the midst of an international trade case involving the commodity I work for and the country we were visiting, I had many questions and concerns about what we would see, who we would talk to and what the sentiment on U.S./China trade relations might be within China. What I felt I learned was that people in China were a lot more aware of the sorghum cases and the issues at hand, more so than many people in America. They were hopeful for resolve and felt that the cases with sorghum and tariff applied would not remain. I’m happy to eventually see that become true with China dropping the cases and tariff just two weeks prior to our TALL graduation.”









