

UNDERGRAD NEWS

Agricultral Economics

Kansas State

A group shot in New Zealand before heading back to the U.S.

If you would like to see more pictures from the trip, visit www.ageconomics.ksu.edu



CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Unfortunately, lamb consumption is gradually declining with time. The Rudds sheared a sheep and also talked about the wool industry. It is challenging for them to find labor to shear the sheep. In addition to this, the price for wool is low. Some students had the opportunity to help John with chores and see some of the countryside. We had delicious meals with the Rudd family. For many students it was the first time to try lamb and Roz did an excellent job of preparing it. After two days of good company and excellent food it was time for us to move on to Sydney.

In Sydney we took a tour of the **Sydney Opera House** and most students walked across the famous Sydney Harbor bridge. Several students also had the chance to visit the Sydney Aquarium. After a stop in Sydney, we flew to Townsville and drove to Charters Towers.

Our next stop was Wambiana Station. It is owned by the Lyons family. They are a working cattle ranch that hosts tourists for a few months out of the year. They diversified into tourism several years ago to help with the cash flow issues associated with their ranching operation. They host several **People-To-People** groups averaging about 1000 guests per year. During their tourist season, they move all the equipment out of the machine shed and build bunk beds for their guests. Most of us had never slept in our machine sheds back home so this was a bit of an adventure for us.

After receiving a welcome speech from Michael Lyons, we had the opportunity to share a little bit about our agricultural backgrounds and learn more about Wambiana. With hay bales as seats on a flat bed truck we were off for a tour of the ranch. A local grassland researcher talked about a grazing research project they have been doing on the ranch for the last 15 years. They have a stocking rate of about 22 acres per head. **Their ranch was about 270,000 acres** which was an average sized ranch for the area. It allowed them capacity for 12,000 head. Cheap financing allowed them to double in size. They were able to acquire loans which only required payment of the interest. The Lyons believe this is a good investment for their family. They expect land values to increase with the increase in the demand for beef globally. They plan to continue to host guests to keep steady cash flow throughout the year. After a discussion on the grazing research, we were divided

into teams and played a competitive round of Aussie Olympics. After an exciting finish we celebrated, relaxed, and headed back to the house for supper. After a delicious meal we enjoyed the evening around the bonfire.

We had three free days in Cairns, Australia. Our first day, we went to the Great Barrier Reef where we **snorkeled** and saw the marine life of Australia. The next day many of the students went to Daintree Rainforest. Some received tours of banana, sugar cane, and pineapple plantations. Banana trees and pineapple plants yield a harvest once every 18 months. Last year, a cyclone hit the area of Australia which is home to their banana production. The banana trees and most of the country's crop were destroyed. Due to the fact that Australia does not allow banana imports, the price of bananas rose to about \$7 per pound. Others learned about Cassowaries and saw the beach. Most students had the opportunity to feed **koalas, baby kangaroos, and wallabies.**

We then traveled to New Zealand to visit Fonterra, the **world's largest dairy cooperative**. We received a tour of the plant as well as presentations from 2 members of the shareholders advisory council. Dairy production in New Zealand is based on a seasonal pasture system. Calving occurs in a 4-6 week period and the cows are dry 2-3 months each year. The industry is highly mechanized to allow labor saving techniques. Dairy remains a vital part of New Zealand's economy. Twenty-seven percent of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) is related to dairy production. New Zealand supplies 55% of the world's value added agricultural trade. After our visit to Fonterra we traveled on to Cambridge where we were greeted by our host families for our farm stays. The experiences were varied. Some students learned about cattle and horses, while others studied sheep and crops. After two nights in small groups, everyone came back together to share good stories. Our last day in New Zealand, we were free to explore **Auckland**. One evening we had dinner as a group at a Brazilian style Churrasqueria. At this type of restaurant, they bring out numerous cuts of meat on long knives and you choose the cut you want. The supply of liver far exceeded the demand at our table!

After a few flights we were home again but this time we had new knowledge, many stories to tell, and souvenirs to show our friends and family.

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Reflections on the AGEC 450 Trip to Australia and New Zealand

By Alena Bosse

After a long flight, we had a day to adjust to the 13 hour time change in Melbourne, Australia. We then journeyed on to Rutherglen to the **vineyards and winery** of the Cofield family. The family visited with us about their overall business plan and the general evolution of their family business. We had the opportunity to drive near the vineyards and the Cofield brothers talked to us about their production process. Some of the struggles they faced included smoke damage to the grapes from the bush fires and a shortage of water due to a 10 year drought. We then went to the winery where Damien Cofield explained the process of winemaking and then instructed us in the art of wine tasting.

Our next stop was the Cargill Beef Plant in **Wagga Wagga**. We followed the process from the kill floor to the packaging. It was very similar to a U.S. plant—highly mechanized yet still very labor intensive. Cargill is struggling with a labor shortage in their plant and are hiring workers from all across the country. The majority of their exports go to Japan and South Korea. They are working to increase exports in the future. Cargill is also developing a feedlot near the plant to ensure a steady supply of cattle for the plant. We met several American Cargill employees with K-State connections and even a few Aussies who had been to Kansas.

We then traveled to Adamaby to the home of John and Roslyn Rudd. **Reynella Rides** is the name of their ranch. It is located in the heart of the Snowy Mountains. The film, **The Man from Snowy River**, was actually filmed there. We saw rolling hills and red soils. The countryside was vast, remote, quiet, and beautiful. The Rudd operation is focused on sheep and horses. Over 30 years ago they decided to diversify into tourism to help with cash flow. It has been a great success for them. Although we didn't go horseback riding due to inclement weather, we still had a great visit. The Rudds talked to us about sheep production and some of the challenges the industry faces.

To see pictures of the trip visit the Ag Econ Department website.

NAMA WINS 2ND CONSECUTIVE TITLE



The Kansas State University National Agri-Marketing Association student team won the 2007 National Agri-Marketing Competition, finishing first for the second straight year. The competition, at the National Agri-Marketing Association's annual conference and trade show, was April 10-12 in Dallas, Texas.

For the competition, students chose a product and developed a plan to successfully bring their product to the marketplace. David Lehman, K-State instructor of marketing and team coach for the competition, said the K-State team developed a marketing plan for a new text messaging service for feedlot owners and managers called **Cattlyst**. The service would provide actionable, timely and accurate market information to aid in marketing decisions when selling cattle.

"We believed in our product and the plan we presented and that showed in our presentation throughout the competition," said Stacyycommunications and journalism, Garden City, and a team member. "It was great to come out on top in the end. Many people told us that we couldn't win two years in a row. We knew if anybody could, this team would."

Teams from 31 universities participated in the competition, including three teams from Canada. K-State competed against the University of Florida, Sam Houston University, Ohio State University, University of Wisconsin-Platteville and the University of Guelph in the finals.

In addition to winning the marketing competition, the K-State team won the "Best Product" award.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

UNDERGRAD NEWS

Students are welcomed back to campus with band performances in the Union Courtyard



Agricultural Economics

Kansas State

Fall Calendar

August

- 26 Last Day to Drop/Add on KATS
- 28 College of Ag Watermelon Feed, Weber Hall, 6:15 pm

September

- 3 University Holiday
- 9 Last Day for 100% Refund on Classes
- 11 Ag Econ/Agbus Club Meeting
- 16 Last Day for 50% Refund
- 18-19 University Career Fair, Bramlage Coliseum 11-4:00
- 22 Family Day
- 24 Last Day to Drop without a "W"

October

- 1 Student Holiday "Fall Break"
- 3 Academic Major Fair, Union Ballroom, 10-3:00
- 22 Enrollment for Spring Semester Begins
- 26 Last Day to Drop a Class

AG AMBASSADORS CHOSEN

Kansas State University's Ag Ambassadors have selected 16 undergraduates to lead the student group's support of the College of Agriculture. On and off campus, the Ag Ambassadors promote the college among prospective students, alumni and industry leaders. They also work with the college's faculty and students. Ag Ambassador officers for 2007-2008 from the Department of Agricultural Economics include:

- Cassie McMinn, junior in agribusiness, program co-coordinator for College of Agriculture training, Burden
- Daniel Anderes, senior in agribusiness, Hope, president
- Melissa Bigham, senior in agricultural economics, Meriden, vice president of communications
- Andy Gigstad, sophomore in agricultural economics, Nortonville, diversity and international opportunities coordinator
- Dalton Henry, sophomore in agricultural economics, Randolph, vice president of development
- Morgan Gauby, sophomore in agricultural economics, Washington, co-coordinator of recruitment, events and visits
- Kristen Schulte, sophomore in agricultural economics, Pemberville, Ohio, co-coordinator of recruitment, events and visits

UNDERGRAD NEWS

Life Outside the Box

By Sarah Sexton, Senior Agricultural Economics

To be quite honest, life for twenty years has been lived inside a box. I grew up in Chapman, Kansas on a family farm. My move to college took me only an hour away from home to a great campus but not really a change in culture. Although my agricultural economic classes taught about the world and places outside of box, I had not experienced them first hand.

This past spring I experienced life outside my box. On January 15, 2007, my plane landed in Washington, D.C. as I began an internship at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Programs (GIPSA). All I had was an address and two very full bags for the upcoming semester. The next day I started my internship in a building that was twice the size of my hometown with almost 9,000 people working in one government building. In fact over my lunch hour if I wanted a workout I could walk around the third floor and cover a mile.

At GIPSA I initially served as an economic assistant to their Industry Analysis Division, later in my experience GIPSA needed an individual to cover



Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns and Sarah Sexton

the position of confidential assistant to the administrator, Mr. James Link, and I moved into that position. My internship was definitely not just sitting at a desk killing time. From writing congressional testimony for the administrator, developing new policies, to conducting statistical analysis on investigative functions my learning opportunities were endless. Highlights of my semester were sitting in strategic meetings with Undersecretaries and the Secretary, hearing the President speak, and attending a State Welcoming Ceremony for the Queen.

Life outside the box was great mostly because it gave me a better perspective inside my box. I developed a new viewpoint for the world around me. The educational value this experience has added to my KSU career is endless. No matter what you intend to do in life, find a chance to for a moment live life outside your box. Take a jump, a leap into the unknown and in the end you will discover that you can see your box much clearer.

NAMA Wins

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Two K-State students also were chosen for scholarships awarded at the conference.

Along with Mayo, K-State participants included:

Katie Morris, senior in agribusiness, Arkansas City; Jeff Pio, junior in agribusiness, Edgerton.

From Franklin: Vincent Hofer, junior in agribusiness, \$2,500 National Agri-Marketing Association scholarship recipient, and David Widmar, junior in agricultural economics, \$1,000 National Agri-Marketing Association scholarship recipient.

Sarah Coover, senior in agribusiness, Galesburg; Annie Whitehill, senior in agricultural communications and journalism, Latham; and Sam Selee, senior in agribusiness, Manhattan.

From out-of-state: Chelsea Good, senior in agricultural communications and journalism, Parker, Colo.; and Jen Albrecht, junior in agricultural economics, North Platte, Neb.

The National Agri-Marketing Association was formed in 1957 and serves the food and fiber industry, focusing on members' professional development by providing access to solutions and opportunities in agribusiness.