A group shot in New Zealand

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. One of the challenges 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 Danien Cofield explained the process of winemaking and then instructed us in the art of wine tasting.

One of our stops was the Carrick 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. We received a tour of the plant as well as presentations from 2 members of the share-holders 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 65% 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 went free to explore Auckland. One evening we had dinner as a group at a Brazilian style Churrascaria. At this type of restaurant, they bring out numerous cuts of meat on long tongs and you choose the cut you want. The supply of liver 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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Students are welcomed back to campus with band performances in the Union Courtyard.

**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.

- Cassie McMinn, junior in agribusiness, program 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 Gary, sophomore in agricultural economics, Washington, co-coordinator of recruitment
- Dan Gudmunson, senior in agricultural economics, Latham, co-coordinator of communications
- 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.

**NAMA Wins**

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
- 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.

Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns and Sarah Sexton.