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Savannah International Trade Center Lower Concourse

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAMMING IN THE YUNNAN PROVINCE OF CHINA

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Objective

The main objective of the trip was to represent the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Bayer Crop Sciences, and Southeast Ag Research, Inc. in building relationships with farmers in Southwest China, diagnose current production problems, evaluate current methods of production, make recommendations for possible solutions based on available pesticides, fertilizers, and equipment in the area, and initiate demonstration and research plots for Chinese farmers to observe.

Background

China is a country with approximately 1.3 billion people with almost half of them involved with farming. Farming in China is still done primarily by hand with a hoe and rake and an occasional water buffalo for tilling the soil. Occasionally you will find a small piece of machinery like a small tiller, but that is rare. Chinese farmers currently use some pesticides and synthetic fertilizers but the majority of the fertilizers used are manures. Pesticides are sprayed by hand with a back pack sprayer. Before we made the journey to China, each member of the group wrote a short fact sheet about various topics including variety selection, fertilizers and liming, and pesticide handling and safety. Our translator took these fact sheets and

translated them into Chinese which were then distributed to farmers during the next 10 days.

The Journey

The team began the trip by flying the first leg of the journey from Atlanta to Seoul, South Korea which took approximately 14 hours. The next leg was from Seoul to Kunming China which took an additional 4 hours and the last leg was a bus and van ride from Kunming to Xiaguan China which took an additional 4 hours. The delegation stayed in Xiaguan for the next 10 days which is a city of about 500,000 people. Xiaguan is near Myanmar (Burma) in the foot hills of the Himalayan mountains.

Conclusion

The entire delegation came home with a truly different prospective about life in China and were totally amazed at the scope and size of agriculture which has been in place for literally thousands of years. The Chinese government offers no agricultural research based expertise or help and farmers could not believe that 4 guys from America would come so far and work out in the fields with them. This was truly a once in a life time trip for our team and maybe we will be able to return one day to continue representing the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.