

Global Encounter-China

Food Systems-Group Report Out

Procedure used to generate this document:

This document represents the summary of group discussions related to their self-selected area or interest/expertise in one of three topic areas (Education, Environment and Food Systems). Individuals first wrote responses to these specific questions related to the topic to be considered:

What current or future focused areas of teaching, research and/or outreach (engagement) extend from the topic as it relates to China?

What resources (existing at MSU or working in collaboration with MSU) extend from the topic as it relates to China?

What advice concerning this region and this topic would you like to pass along to future groups following through on these ideas?

After the pre-writing period, the group discussed the topic. These report-out notes are taken from the presentation the group facilitator made to the plenary session.

Food System

- Engagement
 - Faculty are consulting with corporations on doing business in China
 - Participation (attendance and presentations) at professional meetings and conferences
 - A faculty member is on the Board of Directors for the Tsinghua University China Retail Research Center supported by Wal-Mart
 - Entrepreneurship

- Research
 - Commercial buyer supplier relationships, transaction costs/economics, New Product selection, role of buying committees in the role of food production/retailing. Differences in foreign v. domestic relationships. Models that explain satisfaction/commitment. Long-term institutional trust, role performance, Personal relationships. Guanxi [Note: This term has no precise English equivalent, but does connect to our concepts such as relationship, connection, obligation and dependency. The more we understand the Chinese “world view” from their perspective, understand some of their fundamental values (e.g., collectivism, large power distance and intragroup harmony and avoidance of overt conflict in interpersonal relations), the more successful our project(s) will be. However, this approach is very seldom understood on the experiential level. An excellent introductory resource on Chinese values and behavior is *Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans* by Hu Wenzhong and Cornelius L. Grove, published by the Intercultural Press.]
 - How do you connect 800 million countryside to the opportunities in the city, e.g. supermarkets, Walmart.
 - Performance of agrifood systems, how policy is made re: agriculture and food.
 - Role of food systems and distribution in the market; what are the meanings of civic agriculture and citizen engagement in the marketplace
 - Grades and standards, are there multiple standards set, publicly, privately, domestically, internationally. How does China participate with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and CODEX Alimentarius? [Note: The Codex Alimentarius, or the food code, of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) has become the seminal global reference point for consumers, food producers and processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade. The code has had an enormous

impact on the thinking of food producers and processors as well as on the awareness of the end users - the consumers. Its influence extends to every continent, and its contribution to the protection of public health and fair practices in the food trade is immeasurable. The Codex Alimentarius system presents a unique opportunity for all countries to join the international community in formulating and harmonizing food standards and ensuring their global implementation. It also allows them a role in the development of codes governing hygienic processing practices and recommendations relating to compliance with those standards.]

- Food safety:
 - what is the situation
 - how does policy respond to outbreaks and is there surveillance
 - Food security:
 - adequacy
 - access
 - affordability
 - bioterrorist aspects
 - Changing or developing market structures, supply chain relationships
 - Nutraceuticals, packaging quality/extending shelf life, food processing waste and slaughterhouse waste
 - Food fears, consumer beliefs about GMOs.
- Teaching
 - Degree and certification programs in retailing, distribution, health communications, food regulations, GMOs, organic farming, animal welfare, turfgrass, food safety (traceability, HACCP, supply-chain management, thermal processing)
 - Undergraduate courses
 - Grad courses
 - Online vs. face to face
 - Whole masters programs

- Resources
 - OID support to assist with funding opportunities, grant writing, budget development, proposal assistance
 - OID researching other existing partnerships with Chinese institution
 - CASID, CIBER, WID support for curriculum development, travel and related grant support
 - ISE, IIA, IAH, and related Centers and Institutes
 - CASID/OID – research initiatives, curriculum development, visiting scholar support, collaborative research
 - Travel funds

- Advice
 - Encourage and support “wild” ideas/creativity
 - Innovation is needed to be more successful
 - Encourage university-wide conversations: where do we overlap, where can resources be combined
 - Must go through the political process and approval for China; face to face meetings essential in this culture

This material was generated from Global Encounter-China, <<http://www.isp.msu.edu/globalencounter/china>>, held at Michigan State University on May 18, 2006. This interactive and participatory event was designed to obtain input and to elaborate in a country-specific forum on relevant themes, opportunities, issues, and opportunities affecting MSU's current and future engagement in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.