



Experience of a Lifetime

Kassidy Kampen

The Brazilian Agriculture and Food Production Systems Study Abroad was an amazing opportunity that allowed eight students including myself and Margaret Baird to meet with farmers, ranchers, Co-ops, and local ag business professionals throughout Brazil as well as experience the culture of their country. Our 19 day trip began in Manaus and continued south through cities such as Brasilia, Catalão, Uberlândia, Rio Claro, Cascavel, Foz do Iguaçu, Porto Alegre, and Florianópolis. As we traveled through the country, we learned about the different techniques used and the struggles they encountered in Brazilian agriculture.

Some ranches and farms that the group visited include *Pamplona Farms*, a division of SLC (Brazil-based agricultural producer), where we toured fields of coffee, soybeans, corn, and cotton and *Fazenda Mundo Novo*, owned by Eduardo Cardoso (son of Dr. Fernando Cardoso, who was one of the top 5 people who made Brazilian agriculture what it is today), where they raise Nelore cattle on a beautiful ranch in São Carlos. Also during the trip, the group toured a John Deere factory, where our group watched as a piece of sheet metal was turned into sugarcane harvesters and spray rigs.



This article is only a taste of what we actually experienced and I believe all of the students who went would encourage others to seriously consider this study abroad program next year. I promise it will be an experience of a lifetime!

Opportunities for those interested: Students can either contact the Texas A&M University Study Abroad office or connect with Kassidy Kampen (kpkampen@neo.tamu.edu) and Margaret Baird (mbaird@tamu.edu) to know more about their experience and gain valuable information.

The Master of Agribusiness Program is celebrating it's 15th Anniversary in 2014. We will be celebrating with a variety of activities over the next year. Stay tuned for more information!



We also participated in some educational sightseeing along the way, which includes: the *Veiling Holambra*, a wholesale florist for South America, *Casa Valduga Winery*, where we tasted several kinds of wine and toured the gorgeous winery, and Foz do Iguaçu, which the group got to see up close and personal on a raft!

Brazilian agriculture has a rich history and a promising future. It was a great opportunity to see the many different aspects of it first hand as well as speak with people who are passionate about its success.



WHOOOP! for a New Wildcat

Arjun Shanker

The addition of the fifth Wildcat to the original four signifies a paradigm shift in terms of significance of a graduate student's role at Texas A&M. A fifth Wildcat creates an individual niche for graduate students, which eventually shall blend with the traditions and culture of this university.

The Wildcat symbolizes the hard work and every laurel that a graduate student brings to the institution. It could be regarded as an Aggie expression of approval; each academic class has its own wildcat. The Graduate Wildcat upholds all the traditions, yet has a whiff of freshness to it. It shall serve as a mouth piece for the scores of proud Aggies from diverse backgrounds who believe in progress and preserving the values ingrained in A&M.



Photographs courtesy the Graduate Students Council

Brittany Bounds, Graduate Students Council (GSC) President, and her team have been at the forefront of its passage, from the very initiation to its implementation. This was followed by the creation of a "move". The GSC called for video entries by the graduate student community that would decide the signature move for the new entrant to Aggieland.

Travis Kiser, a History graduate student, clinched the honor of creating history on March 1, where he displayed his move at the Men's Basketball game (A&M vs. Ole Miss) in Reed Arena. This act goes in sync with the repertoire of traditions wedded to the Aggie Spirit.

A bright future holds, as I visualize it, sparking a new generation of Aggies. Gig 'Em!!

Industry Leaders Forum with MetLife

Agricultural Investments

Arjun Shanker

The MAB Leadership Forum with the MetLife Agricultural Investments on February 12 at the Memorial Student Center was a quintessence of the MAB program's mandate: To network, to hone our leadership skills and showcase it to the world.

We had the privilege of listening to speakers S. Peter Headley, Managing Director and Head of Field Operations, Daniel V. Serna, Associate, Southern Regional Office Field Representative and Laura Linden, Associate, Central Regional Office. They each shared their views on the functional aspects and career prospects at MetLife.

The forum included one-on-one interactions and thought provoking group discussions focused on the challenging environment of the corporate world and tips on succeeding. In addition, we did a case study where we reviewed a loan application with Ms. Linden and had a session with Mr. Serna on life after graduate school.

It was truly an informative session. Thank you to Dr. Victoria Salin, MAB Program Director, and her staff for organizing the forum.



Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) welcomes all students in the Dept of Agricultural Economics to actively participate. The GSA promotes academic, professional, and social interaction among the department's graduate students and between the students and faculty.

To connect with us and learn more: http://agecon3.tamu.edu/graduate/graduate_students_gsa.html

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tamucagegrads/>

The CME Challenge

Ramses Gonzalez

For the first time, the MAB team participated in the Chicago Mercantile Stock exchange (CME) Trading challenge. Team members Thiago Parente, Trent Hester, Yao Hu and Ramses Gonzalez navigated through the ups and downs of the Commodity futures market throughout two exciting weeks in February and March 2014. The challenge is an engaging online trading game connected to the actual pricing in the market. The rules require five trades per day, in contracts for S&P futures, energy gold and live cattle.

This year there were 500 teams from every corner of the world competing for the top spots. Unfortunately, the MAB trading team finished just short of the top ten-percent mark and did not advance beyond the preliminary round. The team finished 79th out of 500 teams. The Aggie Trade team is now looking forward to the 2015 CME Trade Challenge, where they plan to build on the lessons they learned this year and go to Chicago with the other top teams

Lessons learned: How hard it is to make money with a short-term perspective and how fast information moves in the market.

The team would like to thank Dr. Dmitry Vedenov for advice and is grateful to the CME for creating this opportunity.



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 29th—Big Event

March 28th to April 4th—I-Week 2014

April 8th—2014 Community of Scholars Dinner and Dialogue

April 10th—AGEC Seminar Series—Cathy Kling from Iowa State University

April 24th—AGEC Seminar Series—Susan Chen from the University of Alabama

September 13th—Tailgate (TAMU vs. Rice)

November 15th—Tailgate TAMU vs. Missouri)

Southern Star Brewery

Blake Murrah

In December, some of our current MAB students needed to unwind after a challenging academic semester. I spoke with my boss, Dave Fougeron '95 of Southern Star Brewery, and arranged a group tour at the brewery. This event was free to all MAB students and was a perfect networking opportunity for those MABs that would be graduating the next weekend. In addition, it paved the way for our students continuing in the program to learn more about one another in a social setting outside of campus.



The evening began with a short drive to Conroe, Texas. Upon arrival, the MABs were given a tour of the production brewery and told the process of making beer from start to finish. After the tour the MABs were encouraged to stay for a complimentary pint or two provided by the Southern Star Brewery president. The event was a great success and everyone had a wonderful time.

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