



International Collegiate Agricultural Leadership (I-CAL) Program



Student Portfolio

I-CAL is designed for students to learn more about international grain marketing, global agriculture and acquire a unique cultural experience.

Program Objectives:

- Create awareness regarding markets for international grains and grain products
- Understand current international trade and cultural issues
- Apply newfound knowledge to future career and education
- Discover careers in international agriculture and marketing
- Develop specific awareness of the U.S. Grains Council and its function and role in the U.S. Grain Industry

During the 2014 program to Japan, students toured farms, feed mills, open air markets, livestock operations, food processing plants and grocery stores to help get a feel for international agriculture.

Past I-CAL programs:

2014 – Japan

2013 – Brazil

2012 – Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore

2011 – Colombia and Panama

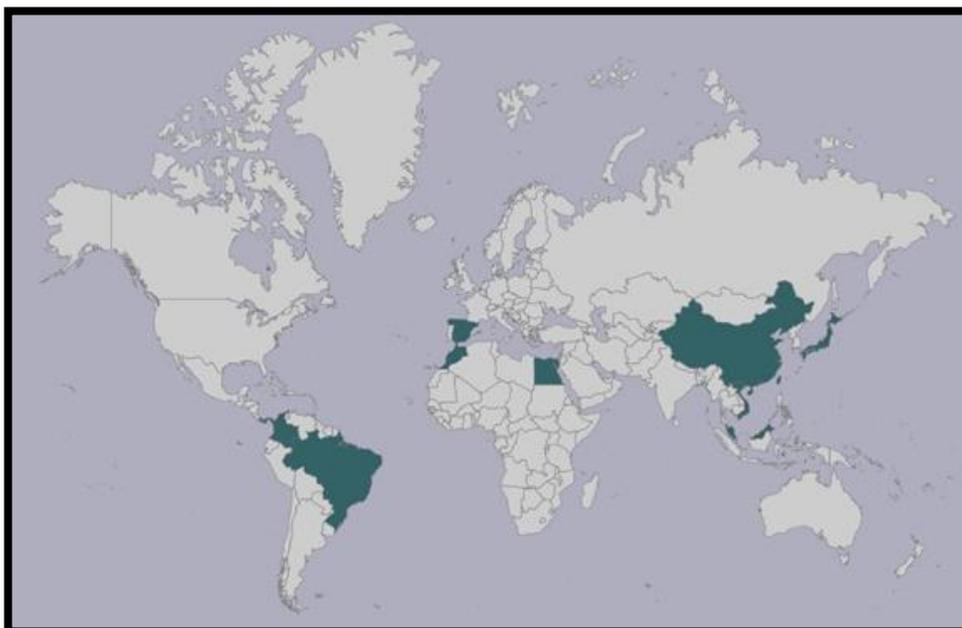
2010 – Malaysia and Taiwan

2009 – China and Vietnam

2008 – Egypt and Morocco

2007 – Egypt and Morocco

2006 – Morocco and Spain



Alyssa Barrett

Mississippi State University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I was really surprised that they did not use any GMO's in their country. They have about 180 varieties of GMO's market approved, but absolutely no grower is using them in Japan. They have to import the majority of their foodstuffs and GMO's could possibly help with their in-country food shortage, but due to public demand they are not used. .

What was your favorite visit/tour?

My favorite would have to be the dairy farm. The owners were such a joy to be around and talk to. They beamed with pride as they showed us around and talked about how they started their business, their inputs, why they do things the way they do, and so much more. They even took an extra effort to protect their biosecurity by having us wash the bottoms of our shoes off into a bucket of water as we stepped off the bus. They have so many operations going on the farm (i.e. cattle, processing, restaurant, garden, bee hives, mushrooms, and compost) at one time, it was incredible to see their dedication to every aspect of the operation. We ate at their restaurant where everything given to us was from their farm and it was amazingly light and fresh.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Agricultural practices differ in one major way and that is the use of technology on farmland. There is very little commercial use of land since Japan is such a small country. The majority of farms are small-scale, but we still saw very little technology (i.e. tractors, big machinery) being used. Much of the crops are being produced by human labor. Each farmer specializes in something whether that is rice, mushrooms, fruit, or vegetables and they devote their time and resources to make sure it is the best quality product available. Smaller farms make that easier to do as well. Even though Japan has a very large population to feed, they still desire quality over quantity and are willing to pay a higher price for that quality. The manufacturing plants we visited were the opposite, the use of technology in processing, storing, packaging, and shipping were extremely advanced. So much so that one place in particular, the bread manufacturing plant, only had 8 people on shift at a time manning the entire plant. I'm not able to speak much into the differences between the US and Japan on biosecurity, but each place we went had very meticulous and strict rules about their biosecurity standards. I would say they Japan is highly efficient in their use of resources, capacity, and space, but without the use of on-farm technology and practices, they will continue to shrink in their ability to produce more food. I believe that this will have a continued effect on their sustainability practices.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

Out of all the foods I tried, the boiled egg that was always in our soups was probably the most interesting. The egg was hard boiled and then soaked for a long time in some sort of soup. After taking off the shell, the whites of the egg was lined with a deep gray color and the yolk was a very dark burnt orange. At first we didn't think it'd be safe to eat, but we were assured it was cooked. The egg turned out to be delicious and the yolk was soft and melted in your mouth.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I have already related I-CAL a few times since being back in the U.S. I have been able to share my experience at the Mississippi FFA Convention, speak with leaders at the U.S. Borlaug Summer Institute at Purdue about their experiences and opinions, as well as take the information I learned and put it toward developing thoughts on my thesis. I hope to use this experience in talking to students I teach and mentor at school and in my job in January, where I'm hoping to be working with an international agricultural agency in implementing programs for farmers.



Whitney Barnes
University of Wisconsin – River Falls

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

The population of Japan is declining; therefore the Japanese depend even more heavily on technology to relieve many labor intensive jobs.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

The dairy farm was one of the most enjoyable experiences. Being from Wisconsin, I was able to compare the dairy industry and innovative practices in another country to what is practiced back home. Not to mention, I was pretty proud that the farmer used the University of Wisconsin - Madison's cheese making facility as his template for his own facility.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Many practices are very similar to what we have here in the United States. With their climate, they are able to produce different products than Wisconsin. Sustainability wise, I would say it is very similar.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

Squid - raw squid. We went to an authentic Japanese sushi restaurant, and everyone had the opportunity to try it. Needless to say, some liked it more than others.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I am currently an Agriculture Teacher, so this experience will be helpful incorporating a global perspective to the courses I teach. I'm excited to share my experiences while learning about agriculture in Japan so the students will have a better global perspective as they leave my classroom.



Teresa Fitzgerald Iowa State University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

The thing that surprised me most about Japanese Agriculture was the overall scope. Compared to production agriculture in the United States and especially of my home state of Iowa, the scope of operations in Japan are extremely small. It was a very eye opening experience to see a farmer with 10 acres of rice and him being able to provide for his family off of that small amount of land. Due to their small farm size I was stunned by the amount of products that are imported and how that translates to prices in the grocery store, especially in concern to fresh fruit and vegetables.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

Out of my entire experience in Japan, I most enjoyed the visit at Yuge Farms. I thought it was incredible how they used their own milk to make cheese and ice cream to sell and use in their restaurant. It was clear that they were very passionate about agriculture and serving fresh products that they produced. Whether it was honey on the dessert, herbs on the sandwich, or the milk that we drank during lunch; they were proud of it all. I also thought it was very interesting how they have hopes of moving to the US and opening a similar farm / restaurant. Their dairy operation was impressive and it was evident that Mr. Yuge has adapted western practices to his overall heard management.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

The agricultural practices are much different in Japan. In Japan, the only agricultural product that they are self-sufficient in is rice. Their operations are much smaller than ours. Here we are much more efficient with our land space and production practices that focus on quality and efficiency since we are a leader in agricultural products. If the Japanese, invested more in concerns to biotechnology, I think that they would be shocked in how that would increase efficiency yet still bear the high quality results.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

The strangest food that I ate in Japan was probably green tea flavored Oreos. I thought it was interesting how so many kinds of candy had the addition of green tea to the flavoring. Tea was literally everywhere in Japan!

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I plan to use my experiences that I gathered during my time spent in Japan and apply them towards future agricultural careers, classes and international travel. I believe that the knowledge and cultural experiences learned in Japan will be a learning experience for anyone in either the agricultural sector or beyond. It will be a good resource to apply to future international travel and continue to build those comparisons between agriculture in different countries. The knowledge and skills gained will also be a good way for me to talk to future I-CAL participants and encourage them to participate in this exciting and rewarding program.



Maile Frelinger University of California, Davis

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I have traveled to Japan quite a few times before visiting my mother in my early years, so I somewhat knew what to expect as far as a cultural experience. However, I was surprised on many different occasions due to the fact that I was paying attention to my “cultural intelligence”. I was blown away by the Japanese culture of hospitality which is unmatched to any other culture I’ve ever experienced. Their technological efficiency is amazing in everyday life ranging from subway transportation, restaurant orders, and other technological advancements. Nonetheless, I was most surprised with transparency of the agricultural production community, as well as the relationship between Japan and the United States. Japan’s agricultural production is very small-scaled compared to the U.S., but the majority of commodities are proficiently grown in the highest grade possible. Growers take pride in their work, and are able to market their companies directly on packaging, where that would be potentially dangerous in the United States.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

My favorite location was Yuge Farm. Yuge Farm was honestly a little piece of heaven on Earth, and I would highly recommend any person to visit this farm during their stay in Japan. The family had a dairy operation, a baking confectionary operation, honey bee operation, shiitake mushrooms, as well as a beautiful garden filled with very fresh and unique vegetables. The best part was lunch. The simplest meal was turned into the most elegant and tasteful sandwich, bread with a cheese spread, a desert cheese with homemade jam, the most delicious café au lait, and the most amazing and lightest cheese sponge cake.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

In Japan, the agriculture practices are not as efficient compared to the United States in terms of technology, but production is utilized and never wasted on any acre of land. Japanese production has a lot of variety in certain commodities, and pays closer to attention to aesthetics and appearance than the United States. It depends on what level of sustainability you are looking at in comparison because the largest U.S. companies will have sustainable initiatives where they are capable of using drip irrigation or use solar panels. However, the small-scale family farms cannot afford the investment of certain sustainable practices, somewhat similar to Japan. Sustainability was not as much of an issue in Japan, in comparison to the “non-GMO” effort.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

The strangest food had to have been the natto, otherwise known as fermented soybeans. I have tried this in the past, where I thought it was the most disgusting dish possible. However, I learned that if you heat up the natto (which is how my mother prepared it); it enhances the smell which is not the most appetizing. The texture is very slimy, but I believe it’s an acquired taste. I plan to eat the soy sauce flavored natto with rice, since it’s known as the healthiest dish.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

My future goal is to pursue a career in export sales. I have been fascinated with the Japanese culture from birth, and visiting Japan in a completely different light showed the opportunities for export markets from California. I interned with one of California’s largest table grape producing companies where one of their top customers was a wholesale company in Japan, Royal Produce. I plan to use this experience as a stepping stone to the produce industry in the export market, where I plan to eventually learn the Japanese language from my mother.



Jade Halliburton Southern Arkansas University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

So many things about the Japanese culture and the agriculture industry are different than what we are accustomed to here in the US. My biggest shocks, I can narrow down to two things.

Number 1: The level of efficiency. These agriculturalists have so little to work with; a country that imports nearly everything, has no natural resources, and is made up almost entirely of mountainous terrain. They must also appeal to a market preferring organic/naturally produced product. They do it. Rice farmers terrace paddies down sides of mountains. The government has approved nearly 200 GM products, yet producers use none. They have truly adapted to their circumstances.

Number 2: how deeply tradition infiltrates their production practices. From taking your shoes off in the lobbies of mills/processing plants to the primitive methods of mushroom production... tradition is a very strong component at every level of production in Japan

What was your favorite visit/tour?

My favorite experience was the visit to a Japanese Supermarket. I chose the supermarket because it was the first eye-opening glimpse at how different of an industry I was experiencing. From consumer habits, to marketing, to the aesthetic appearance of the products, to the countless brands, to the amount of imported meats, and so on and so forth; it was definitely the point of realization for me.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

It is hard to say that they are more or less sustainable or efficient, because I believe American producers and Japanese producers function with two different mindsets. Of course, if I were to stay in my American mindset I'd say that yes, there is opportunity for them to grow and become more efficient. However, we typically tend to operate with quantity as a goal, whereas, Japanese focus more on quality. Japanese strawberries were a good example of this. They were small, much smaller than we see in our supermarkets. However, they were juicy and more flavorful than any I've had here. They were grown with the concept of quality over size.

I do feel like they could utilize technology more in order to become more efficient. Japan is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, yet we do not see that being utilized in agriculture. Many practices are primitive and still done by hand. Here in America, we focus mainly on "What's the latest and how do I get it?"

I also feel like a more widespread acceptance of GMO products would help them in becoming more self-sufficient. It is hard to feed a nation on organic practices alone.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

I didn't try anything I didn't like, and I tried a lot. The octopus would have to be the only thing I wasn't a huge fan of; it was kind of rubbery.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

International travel helps you become aware of yourself, your actions, your background, and where you came from more than anything else. Seeing and understanding a foreign industry really helped me to put our own markets into perspective. It helps me to appreciate what we, as American agriculturalists, have: arable land, mass amounts of consumer education programs, technologically advanced practices, self-sufficiency. I cannot wait to bring information that I have gathered home to various commodity groups so that they can understand what "Made in Japan" really means. Maybe my experiences can help them achieve the same understanding of the role we play on an international level as I have. This experience will also help me as I move into the field of education. I will definitely pull from the information I've gained when writing and developing curriculum; especially in the areas of agribusiness, agrimarketing, and ag communications.



Delaney Howell

Northwest Missouri State University – Maryville

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

One of the biggest things that surprised me about Japanese agriculture was the emphasis they placed on tradition. The Japanese are very traditional people and I definitely observed that through some of the practices and customs they did. They didn't use much technology which I was extremely surprised about because they still do things by hand as that is what tradition has done. They are also very traditional in the way that they treat their guests. Even though we were the ones who should be thanking them for hosting us and being so gracious to us, they seemed even more thankful to have us there. Overall, they are very generous, hard-working, pleasant people.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

My favorite farm/agriculture exhibit we visited would have to be the dairy farm. Although most of us considered his approximately 60 head farm small, to the Japanese people this was considered a medium to large sized farm. It was very interesting to see his operations and the way he had his robotic milker. He had one automated stall that read the cow's ear tag which then entered their information into the system. The machine knew exactly what cow it was, how much milk she would give, their age, and how much feed they would be allowed after they were done milking. It was truly amazing to see such a technologically advanced piece of equipment in this farm that was otherwise not advanced. I also really enjoyed being able to ask questions to the farmer about his operations.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Japanese and U.S. practices are extremely different. Although most of us assumed Japan would be much more technologically advanced than the U.S. I would say as a whole they aren't. The Japanese seem to have a completely different mind-set about agriculture than we do here in the U.S. For example, they regard GMO's as the worst thing that could be on the market; but they are also notably more educated consumers than those in the U.S. Another difference is in their final product. They place a huge emphasis on quality vs. quantity. In the U.S. we think bigger is better, but in Japan they regard presentation, aesthetics, and quality as the most important aspect in all products whether it is produce, meat, or even processed goods. Their agriculture is also a lot smaller scaled than in the U.S.'s tying into the quality vs. quantity. For their aging population, and demographics as well as terrain, the smaller scaled farms seem to be fitting for the Japanese people.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

I am not an adventurous eater so Japan definitely tested my comfort zone. I did I try almost everything. We had sushi, tempura (breaded usually fried on shrimp), buckwheat noodles (soba), curry, rice, Miso soup and so much more. I would have to say the strangest food that was tried, not by me but by a couple others, was octopus. A couple of the other kids bought these fried round balls and weren't really sure what was in them so they took a big bite and found out there was octopus in them. Watching their reactions was enough to know I didn't want to try that myself. The best food I tried was the tempura.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I absolutely love to travel and see the world. Japan marked my sixteenth country visited and I hope to continue to see more of the world. Japan helped me improve my goal to become a well-educated, global citizen and consumer. I would one-day like to live internationally and work for an agriculture company; Japan was awesome to see and helped me see other options of places to live/work someday. Of course the information learned while on this trip will be helpful as well. Seeing as many different perspectives of agriculture as possible will only help me further educate myself as I strive to become more globally aware. Japan was unlike any country I have ever been to so I am glad to have had this experience on I-CAL.



Courtney Leeper University of Missouri

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I knew farm sizes were going to be small, but it surprised me how small they were. Especially the rice fields because rice is Japan's major commodity. I also find it incredibly interesting that Japan seems so high-tech and progressive in many aspects, but they are very careful about how they implement technology in some aspects of their life, including agricultural production.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

Each visit was interesting and worthwhile, but my favorite was the rice farms. I don't have a background in rice production at all, so it was neat to see something completely different and something that's important to Japan's culture. I feel like rice production, specifically on the terraces in the mountains, is an iconic image of Japan, so I was glad to see it in person. It's interesting to me that Japan's major commodity is grown on such small plots of land. And that Albert, the rice farmer we visited with, and many other rice farmers don't farm full time. In some cases, their families come back from the cities to help with the work. And in a way, farming is treated like a vacation. While we also have many part-time farmers in the U.S., I can't picture people from the cities coming out to help with planting or harvest. You can definitely see that although Japan is extremely urban, it seems to have better urban-rural relations than in the U.S., and agriculture is not looked down upon like it often is here.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Agricultural practices in Japan are focused more on quality than quantity, whereas in the U.S., I'd say we're more focused on quantity. However, I also believe we do a great job of getting quality in our large quantities, which was evident as we learned about how Japan likes to import U.S. grains because of consistent quality. From what we saw, it seems like Japanese farmers do not use as much technology. They seem to try and stay away from as much chemical use as they can. And, production consists of a lot of manual labor. Because of this, prices seemed to be higher and marketing was done more locally than in the U.S.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

The strangest food I ate in Japan was natto, or fermented soybeans. It's sticky and smelly, which is not a great first impression. Even though it is supposedly very healthy for you, I think it's an acquired taste I won't be acquiring any time soon. Although, it's not as bad as I was anticipating. And I don't feel bad about not liking it because a lot of Japanese people don't even like it.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

Already, I've given a presentation to my community to share what I learned. And I plan on doing at least a couple more. I also shared my experiences in the column I write for the Missouri Ruralist. It's been great to have this layer of experience in the back of my mind as I read stories about what's going on with the Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations. I'm currently at an internship with the Noble Foundation in Oklahoma, and one of the summer scholars I interact with frequently is from Japan, and so we were able to talk a bit about Japanese agriculture and culture. This trip has opened my eyes to the value of U.S. agriculture internationally, and it's helped put things in perspective for me as far as understanding how we work with other countries' agriculture industries to feed the world. What I saw and learned on this trip will stick with me forever, and I anticipate using it to provide more credibility and understanding as I communicate agriculture with ag audiences and the general public in the future.



Corinne Madison
California Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I wasn't expecting the size of Japanese agricultural operations to be so small compared to the United States. For example, the average size dairy farm in Japan has about 30-65 head of cattle and most rice paddy farmers only have a few acres.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

I enjoyed the shiitake mushroom farm visit the most. I had never seen a shiitake mushroom farm, let alone even think about the operation behind it. I was fascinated by how the mushrooms are grown and the care that the farmer puts into his work. From reenacting thunderstorms to feeling each log to make sure it's ready, I was blown away at how interesting and different shiitake mushroom farming is!

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

In Japan, they have much less land to work with, the Japanese value quality instead of quantity. They are very resourceful with the space that they do have but do not try to jeopardize the quality of their products. They typically try to stay away from using pesticides and fertilizers so in that sense; I'd have to say that they are more sustainable. However, they could probably increase their production and yields by using some fertilizers and pesticides like in the U.S.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

Natto. While we were visiting a soybean processing plant, the host gave us Natto, which is a slightly fermented soybean meal. I'm still not entirely too sure what it was but it was sticky, had an awful smell, and had an interesting taste and texture.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I plan on using my experience in Japan to further increase my knowledge and awareness about the global marketplace. I learned so much about foreign agriculture, trade, and culture that I can use later when establishing trade and business partners. I-CAL made me much more aware of the United States' presence in the global agriculture market.



Lauren Schwab
Miami University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I was surprised the most about the average age of a farmer being 72 years old, the lack of farm land available, the average farm size relatively small and the lack of technology used in farming. The Yuge Dairy Farm we visited consists of 17 acres, 60 dairy cows and several different kinds of vegetables and herbs in their garden. This is the average size of a dairy farm, while in the U.S. it is quite larger. I was impressed with the farmer's connection to their land and animals and pride they displayed in their products.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

The Yuge Dairy Farm would have to be my favorite. I really gained a sense of appreciation and new aspect of Japanese family farming. I enjoyed how the cows roamed the mountains and the family displayed their dairy products which started with the cows in the barn and finished with their store and restaurant. I enjoyed the meal they served us and took away a new understanding of Japanese agriculture.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

I would say they are very sustainable. They seem less efficient in their farming methods in the U.S., but really focus on quality rather than quantity. They are very prideful and cater to the Japanese customer. I feel they have much potential and can continue to build a good trade relationship with the U.S.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

The strangest food I ate would have to be these sweet wheat balls that came as a dessert with my soba noodle meal. They were small and chewy, but tasty.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I plan to use this firsthand experience in Japan in both my career as a pig farmer and journalist and blogger. Japan is the number one importer of U.S. pork and it is important to continue building a good relationship with them and continue providing a quality product they want. I plan to write and blog about my experience to increase the cultural intelligence and awareness of those around me.



Kalli Weber

Iowa State University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

I was really surprised about the role that JA Zen Noh played. It seemed to be a powerhouse over everything else. This made me wonder what farmer's inputs were on JA and whether they felt it was a positive or negative system.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

I really like the shiitake mushroom farm. I thought the dairy was a lot of fun and very well set up for tourist but the shiitake mushroom farm was a completely different aspect of agriculture that I had never seen before. I also felt that the owner did a wonderful job explaining to us the procedures and why things needed to be done certain ways.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Agriculture practices in Japan seem to be a lot less technically related. Farmers in Japan like to keep things much more "simple" and basic. They try to avoid biotech products at all cost which, I personally feel, is less efficient. They also don't use very much machinery which makes for more time spent doing work that, in the U.S., could easily be done by machine. I thought that they would have a better plan for preventing erosion but even then there seemed to be some gaps that weren't yet filled in.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

Hands down fermented soybeans, debatable whether that will ever happen again, but hey I tried them!

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I hope to use this experience in my future career to bring a different type of perspective into my work environment. I feel that by having this opportunity I have become a more rounded individual with a better background and knowledge of how international agriculture works. I am also much more aware of how much the U.S. truly does supply to surrounding countries. It gives me a sense of pride to know that my country serves as the backbone for many other countries. All of these lessons that I learned while in Japan will continue to help me for the rest of my life. This was a once in a lifetime experience and it's hard to even make a dent on the amount of things that I learned while visiting. I do know this experience will help me a lot throughout my career. I have already found being back in my small-town atmosphere that people have many questions about Japan and agriculture there as well as what the U.S. contributes to Japan's agriculture.



Matthew Wood
Salisbury University

What was one thing that surprised you about Japanese Agriculture?

One of the things that surprised me about Japanese Agriculture was their operation size. More specifically, since Japan has very limited land space, it was just really interesting and different to hear farmers talk about owning and living on a large farm. Most of these larger farms were about 10 acres.

What was your favorite visit/tour?

The farm that I enjoyed the most was the Yuge Family Farm. I loved seeing the husband and wife work so hard to run the dairy, restaurant, and store, and to see how passionate they were about the agricultural industry and about their operation. They were the sweetest people and were so hospitable.

How do the agriculture practices in Japan differ from those in the United States?

Agricultural practices in Japan differ in a lot of ways to the United States. The most obvious difference is farm size. Back home in Maryland the average farm size is about 150 acres, whereas in Japan, farms were very small, only a few acres. Other differences were that Japanese farmers and consumers don't really believe in and frown upon anything that is genetically modified, so GMO's are pretty non-existent in Japan. Japanese farmers and consumers are all about having fresh and healthy products and they will go to great lengths in order to secure these resources. Japanese farmers don't depend on things like machinery, whereas the U.S. does. In the end I think Japan is very independent and efficient.

What was the strangest food that you ate while you were in Japan?

I was actually surprised that by the food in Japan. Honestly, the food really wasn't that bad. I think the one thing I was surprised about was that the Japanese don't eat sushi as much as what we think they do, and that curry inspired dishes are a huge staple in Japanese cuisine.

How do you plan on using this experience in the future?

I plan on presenting workshops emphasizing on the importance of international agriculture, what Japan has to offer, and also to emphasize to FFA members the many opportunities the organization offers following high school. From this experience, it has encouraged me to keep pursuing international agriculture opportunities and to seek out other study abroad programs.



Lucas Fuess
I-CAL Alumni, 2010
Malaysia and Taiwan

What is your current job/title? Do you have any ties with international agriculture?

I am currently employed as a Dairy Analyst by Glanbia Foods, Inc., the largest American-style cheese processor in the United States, with facilities in Idaho and New Mexico. My roles include market strategy, price and production forecasting, and policy and communication work. Within my role, I also work closely with our sales and marketing team. Over five years ago, my company started to sell cheese and whey products into international markets, and my current ties to international agriculture deal with market research in foreign countries. I help analyze foreign markets to make a case for building our business abroad and in turn, increasing our sales and profit. This international agriculture tie is one of the most exciting aspects of my job.

What was a benefit of participating in the I-CAL program?

The I-CAL program changed my career track and exposed me to an entirely new subject of global agriculture. I-CAL showed me the tremendous opportunities that US agriculture has to grow foreign markets and the ability the U.S. has to ship products to every corner of the globe. I-CAL showed me how strong and diverse U.S. agriculture is, and how lacking some foreign countries are in certain products. After participating in the I-CAL program, I added an International Agriculture minor to my program of study at Cornell University, and participated in other international agriculture trips before graduating college. Then, when searching for careers, I specifically looked for jobs that included an international agriculture element. In turn, I believe many companies saw my I-CAL experience and valued me as an applicant. I-CAL shaped my college experience, exposed me to an entirely new world of global agriculture, and ultimately set me up for future career success.

How do you plan to further your involvement with international agriculture in the future?

Because of I-CAL, I have chosen international agriculture as a career path. It will always be a part of my life, and in the future I hope to continue furthering US agriculture by promoting and shipping our bounty of products around the globe. I also hope to give back to programs that have helped me, including I-CAL, to ensure future generations of students are exposed to agriculture on a global scale. I truly believe I wouldn't be where I am today without the I-CAL experience and the support from the US Grains Council and National FFA Organization.



Adrienne Bradley
I-CAL Alumni, 2011
Panama and Colombia

What is your current job/title? Do you have any ties with international agriculture?

I currently hold a Bachelor of Science in Managerial Economics with an emphasis in Agricultural Economics from the University of California, Davis. I will be pursuing a Masters in Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis starting fall 2014 and conducting economic research in California and U.S. agricultural policy issues, which are largely centered on trade and the global marketplace.

What was a benefit of participating in the I-CAL program?

I loved conducting S.W.O.T. analyses of international markets and identifying how U.S. trade policy affects foreign markets. It was particularly inspiring to learn about areas of potential growth in foreign markets, like the marketing of organic coffee produced in rural Panama or how defined property rights can revolutionize agricultural production in developing parts of Panama and Colombia.

How do you plan to further your involvement with international agriculture in the future?

I-CAL served as my initial experience with how U.S. agricultural policy can significantly influence the global marketplace, both positively and negatively. We saw firsthand how domestic agricultural policy is often based on emotion and politics rather than science and economics. Therefore, I am pursuing higher education in agricultural economics in order to develop a technical knowledge-base that will allow me to bring economics and science to the table in agricultural policy-making. I plan to focus my career in trade policy.



Edward Silva
I-CAL Alumni, 2012
Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore

What is your current job/title? Do you have any ties with international agriculture?

My current job is as a program manager with the University of California, Davis Sustainable AgTech Innovation Center. I facilitate and implement our efforts to move more sustainable agriculture and food technology out of the lab and into the world. I am also now the co-founder of Henlight, LLC, a company myself and some colleagues started that is aimed to helping small scale poultry farmers have a more consistent supply of eggs year round, thus increasing their operations viability and food security. We won an international business competition last year, and are headed to market by this upcoming fall. Both roles have a strong tie to international agriculture in that they are looking for global issues which require appropriate, technological solutions to help make food and agriculture better.

What was a benefit of participating in the I-CAL program?

The main, overarching benefit was the early access to this global agricultural perspective. Many people do not get to see agriculture on a global scale until they are well into their career, and it is at that point that they begin to better understand the challenges with logistics, storage, etc. (as well as the innovations that different cultures and people bring). Having access to this on the end of my collegiate career has given me a huge leap forward in terms of having a global perspective on agriculture, trade, and how they related to the global scheme of things. This has allowed me to propel myself into opportunities that I may not otherwise qualify for, such as most recently when I was selected to be one of four U.S. Delegates to represent American youth at the Y20 Summit in Sydney, Australia, which is part of the global G20 summit. Using my perspective on global agriculture really allowed me the bring value to this team, and it is something I will carry with me to Australia this July.

How do you plan to further your involvement with international agriculture in the future?

My career goal is to be able to help develop entrepreneurial efforts that develop appropriate technology and solutions for small scale farmers around the world. When farmers succeed, the communities around them succeed, and this is especially true with small, often family run farms. I will be applying for graduate school this fall to study international agricultural development and agricultural economics, with an emphasis on learning about the best pathways to get good ideas to market. I would like to then work for an organization or foundation that empowers others to develop, implement, and/or use innovation to solve food and agriculture's biggest issues.



Tina Holst
I-CAL Alumni, 2013
Brazil

What is your current job/title? Do you have any ties with international agriculture?

I'm a Retail Account Manager with DuPont Crop Protection in Southern WI. At this point in time, I work to protect grower's crops with needed pesticides. The stewardship principles I pass on to my retailers are key attributes of international travel and seeing how our processes not only impact us, but our world. Right now, I do not have direct ties with international agriculture outside of working for a global company. DuPont carefully and diligently works to preserve and support international agriculture, I am happy to be a part of it! I look forward to taking a larger role in international agriculture as soon as I have enough career experience to move forward!

What was a benefit of participating in the I-CAL program?

The main benefit I gained from the I-CAL program is the international resources. These resources range in demographic from the students I met travelling to intercropping resources I learned in Brazil (and everything in between!). I am very excited to see agriculture in more parts of the world to better interpret needs and help to further promote agriculture for everyone. The benefit I gained from having access to knowledge on several continents is irreplaceable. I continue to interact with the people I met, our group leaders, students on the trip. Some of the brightest and most promising young agriculturalists took part in this trip; I was very blessed to have met them! I often make reference to Brazil's agriculture. In my career, the ability to talk about world agriculture is key. This trip provided me with endless talking points and a lot of curiosity to continually explore and advance my knowledge!

How do you plan to further your involvement with international agriculture in the future?

I have been very fortunate to land such an extremely prestigious job upon the first year outside of college. Looking forward to the future, my short term goal is to begin working toward my dual master's degree in Ag Economics and Business. During this time, I will continue to travel internationally to visit the various farming communities I have not yet visited. Once I have completed my degree (Summer 2017) I will begin working with an international program in my spare time. This may be through 4-H, FFA, existing organizations, or new organizations! The job that I am targeting to have, at that point too, may not yet exist. Ideally, I would gain a job in marketing, sales, or international relations in agronomy and spend about 25% of my time travelling abroad. I would like to be based in the states. I love knowing what different places look like, how the people interact, how businesses work, why they do what they do, and most importantly, how they grow crops to feed our world! There is a bigger picture than what I know in my hometown, home state, or even home nation. If I can positively influence an industry I love so much, make it a better place for our future, I will do whatever it takes. And to me, that includes working on a bigger playing field than where I grew up! I greatly look forward to the various opportunities God will continue to provide for me here, now, and long into the future!



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About National FFA Organization

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization of 579,678 student members as part of 7,570 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The National FFA Organization operates under a federal charter granted by the 81st United States Congress and it is an integral part of public instruction in agriculture. The U.S. Department of Education provides leadership and helps set direction for FFA as a service to state and local agricultural education programs. For more, visit the National FFA Organization online at FFA.org, on Facebook, Twitter and the official National FFA Organization blog.

About National FFA Foundation

The National FFA Foundation builds partnerships with industry, education, government, other foundations and individuals to secure financial resources that recognize FFA member achievements, develop student leaders and support the future of agricultural education. Governed by a 19-member board of trustees comprised of educators, business leaders, individual donors and FFA alumni, the foundation is a separately-registered nonprofit organization. About 82 percent of every dollar received by the foundation supports FFA members and agricultural education opportunities. For more, visit FFA.org/Give.

About the Grains Foundation

The Grains Foundation was established by members of the U.S. Grains Council in 1983. It was formed in an effort to improve world food availability and quality; to strengthen the role of the marketplace in resolving global supply and demand issues; and to build partnerships with agricultural producers, agribusiness and governments in developing countries through market education programs.



I-CAL 2014 Team