



International Informant

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Informing you about Oklahoma State's international trade and development efforts

Calendar of Events

- Dec. 27 - Jan. 9: Sierra Leone
- Jan. 12 - 16: Guatemala
- Spring Break '12: South Africa, Ghana, Togo
- May '12: Moldova, Tajikistan

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Contact Us:

206 Wes Watkins Center
 Stillwater, Ok 74078
 405-744-7127



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Oklahoma State University: Center for International Trade and Development

A Message from Dr. Mike Dicks

There is nothing more exciting than an open market in action. The cattle markets in Kenya are no exception and the excitement is heightened because the items being sold are not stationary. Cattle, sheep, goats and sometimes camels are herded around an area encircled with buildings, vehicles or makeshift walls to assist in containment but the animals are everywhere and stationary only as long as the herder(s) can contain them. From my eyes the opportunities overwhelm me.

There are no herding dogs and as I watch frustrated herdsmen chase after fleeing sheep and goats; I wonder at how much they would pay to have a good working dog.

Traders are everywhere. Some never take possession of the animals but instead seek a seller for a willing buyer or buyer for a willing seller. Producers come to buy and sell and processors come to purchase to fill meat orders. Once purchased the animals are marked with paint, chalk or any visible coloring tool to seal the deal. There are no individual animal identifications.

All of the animals will end up at one of the country's processing plants where the seller will be paid based on the "quality" of the carcass. The quality measure used is what is known as "finish", the level of muscling and fat covering the outside of the carcass. The premium for higher levels of finish reaffirms the crite-

ria used by the buyer that purchased from the producer. But, not all animals that look fat are necessarily the same quality. Consumers here claim that they are tired of buying the same cuts of meat only to find vast differences in quality. They are indicating that meat that looks good isn't always high quality. High quality to the Kenyan consumer means (and people around the globe) that the meat is tender, good flavored and contains more meat than bone or other tissue.

Genetic improvement in the herds of pastoralist such as the Masai, Samburu, Boran and Somali has been based upon survivability and appearance. But, consumers really care little about these two characteristics. Thus, the absence of consumer wants being transmitted to producers is a problem of market coordination. The development op-



A Message from Dr. Dicks Con't.

portunity presents itself as how can the demands of the consumer be transmitted to the producer. Prices are the simplest of market signals. Information on each producer's animals will have to be collected based on its ability to meet the requirements of the consumer. The information can be used to provide a premium for the animals endowed with these characteristics and a penalty (lower price) for animals short of these characteristics.

The concept is simple until you consider that the US cattle industry has still not fully implemented this process even though the technology exists to do so and the industry has been working towards this goal for more than four decades.

At the Souswa livestock market, in the heart of the Masai lands, I brain-stormed with members of CNFA (a US based nonprofit), Kenya Meat Commission (KMC), Kenya Livestock Development Program (KLDP), the managers of the Ramat Livestock Ltd (RLL) feeding station, and producers. We talked of setting up a competition for producers where they compare the performance of their animals under similar conditions and determine weight gain and carcass quality. This program would help the RLL fill their station to capacity, increase procurement for KMC, increase knowledge and profit for producers and provide more consistent, higher quality meat to Kenyan consumers.

Providing knowledge on how to better coordinate consumers, processors, buyer and sellers and producers is an important first step in achieving increases in output and quality. But this first step may never evolve into actual activity without the assistance of someone that has gained confidence in the process through actual experience.

Providing the people with experience from outside can provide immediate benefits, but without local initiative offers only a short term solution. Providing local people with the experience in an active industry may take years but will provide longer term impacts. Doing both will have the best chance of success.

Our New Trade Specialists

The Wes Watkins Center for International Trade and Development has recently hired two international trade specialists. Their efforts will help promote and continue to develop international efforts at Oklahoma State University and within the state of Oklahoma. Each brings with them valuable experiences, making them a dynamic team, said Mike Dicks, Wes and Lou Watkins Chair for International Trade and Development.

Anthony Cambas, from Carbondale, Ill., obtained his bachelor's degree from Florida International University in International Relations. From there, he obtained two master's degrees in international customs



Anthony Cambas

law and administration as well as liberal studies, from the University of Canberra and Bradley University, respectively. Cambas brings with him over 10 years of experience, especially in dealing with international customs law. "I am honored to be part of the team at Oklahoma State University which was recently established to help Oklahoma based companies increase their exports of goods and services which will ultimately result in a positive economic and employment impact on the state," Cambas said.

The other trade specialist to join the team is native Oklahoman, Justin Hazzard. Coming from Edmond, Okla., Hazzard obtained his bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Central Oklahoma and is currently finishing his master's degree in international business at Grenoble Graduate School of Business. Hazzard has over nine years of work experience, especially in the area

of business planning and development. "I feel honored to be a part of OSU's international trade and development programs that support Oklahoma businesses and prepare students for the global economy," Hazzard said.



Justin Hazzard

The trade specialists will work to establish and oversee a NAS-BITE Certified Global Business Professional training program, provide export assistance to small and medium size Oklahoma businesses, identify international trade related internship opportunities, and secure ongoing funding for the International Trade Center.

What's in it for me? Benefits of long-term study abroad

When students are first asked if they are interested in studying abroad, their responses aren't surprising: Where? How long? Do I need another language? When I was approached to study abroad in Mexico for 6 weeks in the Summer of 2010, the first question I asked was, "What's in it for me?" It may sound selfish, but I wanted to know the program benefits, before jumping into what seemed like a 6-week vacation. Upon further investigation, this program was not only a chance to travel Mexico and be immersed in its culture; it was also an intense Spanish language program. Having never been outside the United States before, I was hesitant to sign on, but convinced myself that having a Spanish major and never having been to a Spanish-speaking country didn't add up.

Before I left for Puebla, Mexico to study at UPAEP University with two other OSU students and one professor, the UPAEP liaison at Oklahoma State, Lupita Fabregas, mentioned a dual degree program I might be interested in, but it would require me to stay an entire year in Mexico. My immediate response was, "thanks, but no thanks!" There was no way I could live a year abroad in Mexico, was there? I had to ask the selfish question, yet again, "What's in it for me?" And this time the answer was surprising! Besides the same speech about immersing yourself in the culture, traveling, and mastering another language, I found that I could receive 2 master's degrees in 2 years by doing one year at UPAEP in Mexico and one year at OSU. It sounded too good to be true, they were telling me not only would I get the benefits of any study abroad experience, but I would also leave with a diploma from a foreign university, and earn a second master's in the time that it would normally take me to complete one. I

was convinced. I spent my originally planned 6-week trip in Puebla preparing to spend the next year there, and from May 2010 to June 2011 that's just what I did. I could rave about the gorgeous city, friendly people, international education, and becoming fluent in Spanish for much longer than you care to read, so instead I'm going to identify some of the benefits to long-term study abroad that aren't always discussed at your run-of-the-mill information session.

- **Cultural Immersion:** As much as I hate to admit it, 2 weeks in any country is just a vacation; a chance to skim the surface of another culture different than your own. But with long-term study abroad, you become a part of that culture, their holidays, their traditions, their language, and you return to your home country with a sense of pride and nationalism for a country you previously knew nothing about. On September 15th (Mexico's Independence Day) I am yelling "Viva México!" just as loud as anyone!

- **Language Dominance:** Again, so many students tell me that they thought they would become fluent in their 6-week stay abroad, but come back knowing how to say a few key phrases and to order food. Long-term study abroad is the necessary platform for dominance of a language. Heck, I was a Spanish major and found myself struggling with the constant language barrier, but as the year marched on I found myself talking like a local, and now can put "Fluent in Spanish" on any job application or résumé without hesitation.

- **Education:** The learning environment that surrounds you while



studying at a university abroad is unlike any other. The classroom energy is different, student interaction is different, and the university system is completely unlike anything I was expecting. Aside from this traditional learning, the education you'll receive outside of the classroom is reason enough to study abroad. Your world grows, you learn about people and how you appear to others, you learn to problem solve and realize that there is nothing, and I mean nothing that you can't do if you work hard enough.

- **Network:** This aspect of study abroad is often overlooked, but living abroad for a significant period of time, you meet people. Not just friends you can crash with the next time you're in Finland, but people who can connect you with jobs, write recommendation letters, can help you get your foot in the door. If you've ever wanted to work abroad, a network of contacts is invaluable.

My long-term study abroad journey from being the crying girl at the airport, to the confident, bilingual, cultured woman I am today is a greater success than I ever dreamed of, and my proudest achievement to date. I urge you to take advantage of the one-of-a-kind dual degree program, and all of the study abroad opportunities offered to you through OSU.

Stacey Brandhorst