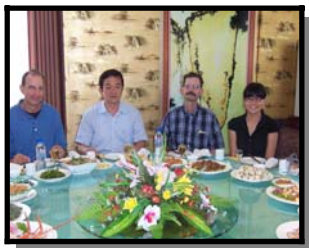




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The Grapevine



Four Seasons Buyer Travels to China

Bob Becker, Buying, had the opportunity to visit China for a few days in order to see firsthand the facilities which package “I Love Produce” garlic.

His trip began on Friday, September 5th. His flight left Newark on the 5th and arrived in Beijing, China on Saturday, September 6th. Without calculating the 12-hour time difference, the flight to China was 13.5 hours and the flight home was a mere 15.5 hours.

Following are details of Bob’s trip in his own words.

Recently, I traveled with Jim Provost, owner of “I Love Produce,” to China. Both Jim and I visited the garlic growing area in the Shandong Province and toured the facilities that package the garlic we purchase under the “I Love Produce” label.

The Jinxiang County of Jining City is considered the “Garlic Capital” of China. Although China grows 80% of the world’s garlic, only 20% is grown for export. Select farms, who use rigid standards, may grow garlic for export. Jim Provost, owner of “I Love Produce” has a facility in West Grove, PA as well as in Jining, China. By using their own growers and processing facilities, “I Love Produce” can guarantee the quality control and food safety that we at Four Seasons Produce require.

To gain entrance at the facilities, I was required to suit up with white boots, hairnet, white hood, and long white coat. After walking through a sanitizing room, my hands were

disinfected and I was “combed” with a lint roller from head to foot.

Every employee displayed a good understanding about the importance of food safety and product traceability. Each employee completes intense training in order to be able to work at the facility.

The garlic is cleaned and trimmed in a well-kept building located next to the processing plant. The 5-bulb packs and bulk garlic are also packaged there. The organic produce is all grown at Feicheng, Shandong Province.

During our trip, we had a dinner with Wang Jianping, Director General of the Agricultural Bureau of Feicheng, who is considered a pioneer to organic farming in China. Mr. Wang works closely with the farmers in his area educating them on organic growing practices as well as growing for export.

I was able to visit one organic processing facility and found their procedures were just as strict if not more strict than here in the USA. All the various Directors of Agriculture, which I met with from the Shandong Province, showed the same passion to educate the farmers under their jurisdiction to use only safe farming practices and to be accountable for the items they grow.

I left China with a better understanding, increased trust, and a deeper appreciation for our friends on the other side of the globe.

—Bob Becker

ONE TEAM ~ ONE GOAL!

Be sure to check out Page 2 for more information regarding Four Seasons’ celebration of Customer Service Week during October 6th—10th!