**Team Message**

**April 2021**

Ni Hao (greetings) from the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Asian-Pacific Office in Taiwan. My name is Hank Ma, and I have served in this office since 1991. It is a great pleasure to work with my colleagues at MDA, and Missouri companies, to promote Missouri agriculture and food products to Southeast Asian countries.

It is also my pleasure to introduce my colleague, Ms. Phoebe Chen, Office Manager. Phoebe has managed this office since 2003. As a two-person team in Taiwan, we have assisted Missouri companies in locating business opportunities in various ways. Our efforts are primarily focused on trade shows, conducting market surveys, recruiting Asian buyers for agriculture trade missions to Missouri to visit companies or accompanying Missouri companies to meetings with buyers in Asia.

We encourage Missouri companies interested in exporting agriculture and food products to Asia to contact us. Our contact information is listed below and on page 4. We look forward to working with you.

**Hank Ma**  
Missouri Trade & Investment Office  
Taiwan  
Director  
(886) 2 2725-1622

**Phoebe Chen**  
Missouri Trade & Investment Office  
Taiwan  
International Trade Specialist  
(886) 2 2725-1622

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**Upcoming Events**

- **May 4-5**  
  Beer, Wine & Spirits Buyers’ Mission  
  Food Export-Midwest

- **May 5**  
  American Food Products Showcase  
  Importers & Exporters Assoc. of Taipei

- **June 23-26**  
  2021 Taipei International Food Show

- **September 13**  
  2021 Wines & Liquors Promotion  
  Importers & Exporters Assoc. of Taipei

**Show-Me Success**

In 1978, Bill Cook established NeCo Seed in Garden City, Missouri, but NeCo Seed’s international market endeavors did not begin until 1996, with their first sample sent to Taiwan. Read more on page 3.

**Taiwan, Gateway to the Asian Market**

Since 1988, the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) has maintained the MDA Asian-Pacific Office in Taiwan, which is pivotal to Missouri’s well-established relationship with the country of Taiwan.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**#1**  
THE UNITED STATES IS THE LEADING SUPPLIER OF BEEF TO TAIWAN.
Country Spotlight
A glance into one of Missouri’s top agriculture export markets

**GDP:**
$1.14$ million

Taiwan runs a trade surplus with many economies, including China and the U.S. It’s foreign reserves are the world’s fifth largest.

people live in Taiwan. Despite having a relatively small population, Taiwan is one of the state of Missouri’s top 10 customers for agriculture exports.

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**Top 5 Missouri agriculture exports to Taiwan in 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>$6,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pork &amp; Pork Products</td>
<td>$4,973,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Soybean Meal</td>
<td>$2,183,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coffee, Roasted &amp; Extracts</td>
<td>$1,597,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other Feeds &amp; Fodders</td>
<td>$1,486,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AGRICULTURE TRADE**

Taiwanese companies are major investors in agribusinesses and manufacturing operations in other countries, especially China (PRC) and Vietnam. Missouri exporters can benefit from these regional connections to make sales into other markets.

Soybean production in Taiwan is minimal given the land, resource and climate constraints. Demand is almost exclusively met by import supply. Taiwanese processors are increasingly recognizing the value of Identity Preserved (IP) soybeans. Taiwan relies on beef imports to meet demand. In 2019, U.S. beef exports to Taiwan reached 64,390 metric tons, accounting for $586 million in value.

By contrast, 93% of pork and 75-80% of poultry consumed in Taiwan is from domestic production. This means fewer opportunities for U.S. pork exports to Taiwan, but offers prospects for U.S. suppliers of inputs such as feed ingredients, animal health products, swine genetics and livestock production equipment.
In 1978, Bill Cook established NeCo Seed Farms, Inc. in Garden City, Missouri, but NeCo Seed’s international market endeavors did not begin until Bill’s son, Mike, graduated from college and returned to the family business. Mike brought knowledge and experience in international marketing, which he credits to his internship with the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s Domestic and International Marketing Program.

In 1996, the Missouri Department of Agriculture approached NeCo Seed and encouraged them to send a sample of food grade soybeans to Taiwan. Once the sample was sent, Mike followed up with a visit to Taiwan to meet with Hank Ma, MDA’s Asian-Pacific Office Director, who encouraged NeCo Seed to promote their soybean in Taiwan.

The first two years were challenging. Taiwan’s business culture incorporates elements of mainland Chinese and Japanese customs, which are highly influenced by Confucianism. Of particular importance are the concepts of a strong social network (guanxi), solidarity, loyalty and respect. Because guanxi is important to the Chinese, it often takes years to establish relationships. According to Mike, “too often we heard, “no, price too high,” but once they were able to convince the first customer to purchase a container, NeCo Seed began flourishing in the Taiwan market.

Today, NeCo Seed ships dozens of containers to rented warehouses in three Taiwan cities each month. MDA helped NeCo Seed get a foot in the door in Taiwan, but it’s the company’s commitment to providing high-quality product and building long-term relationships based on quality service that has propelled them to success in international markets.

In addition to business success, NeCo Seed’s export relationship with Taiwan provided an opportunity for Mike and his wife, Fran, to adopt two children from Taiwan and inspired the start of the foundation “Orphans Hope World Mission,” which has a presence in Taiwan.

Today, NeCo Seed provides added value and service through variety testing and selection, contract production, state of the art processing and a top-quality product. NeCo Seed recognizes research is key to their future and has invested in one of the largest specialty soybean breeding programs in Group III and IV maturities in the United States. For more information about NeCo Seed, visit necoseed.com.
Since 1988, the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) has maintained the MDA Asian-Pacific Office in Taiwan, which is pivotal to Missouri’s well-established relationship with the country of Taiwan. In addition to the office in Taiwan, which has proven to be a tremendous asset to Missouri agriculture, Missouri has participated in various tradeshows, events and market development opportunities throughout the years. Hank Ma, MDA’s Asian-Pacific Office Director, plans to attend, represent and showcase Missouri in several international events in 2021 including:

- **May 5:** Importers & Exporters Association of Taipei American Food Products Showcase
- **June 23-26:** 2021 Taipei International Food Show
- **September 13:** 2021 Importers and Exporters Association of Taipei Wines and Liquors Promotion

Missouri food and beverage products will be showcased at MDA’s booth at these events. MDA’s Taiwan team will offer on-site promotion, lead verification and follow-up assistance. There is no cost for Missouri companies to participate. Taiwan is a diverse market, importing a wide-range of products. For the shows listed above, buyers are looking for fresh and processed meat, oils, dairy, organic and vegetarian food, frozen and canned foods, wine and liquor, condiments, preserved fruits and vegetables and more.

Dave Shogren, owner of U.S. International Foods and experienced exporter, has established relationships with Taiwanese buyers. “Taiwan is a great market for Missouri products and companies,” Dave said. “Looking back, I wish I would have started my sales efforts to Asia in Taiwan, rather than mainland China, because it’s much more approachable, easier to get around, the business climate is more straightforward and the people are more laid back. As a Midwesterner, if Shanghai is like New York City, then Taipei is more like St. Louis or Kansas City.”

Our team, in Missouri and Taiwan, is committed to promoting Missouri agriculture companies and connecting Missouri agriculture to domestic and international opportunities. For more information about upcoming international marketing events and activities, contact Paola Coronel and Jennifer Kliethermes.

**Taiwan, Gateway to the Asian Market**

*Tradeshows, buyers’ missions and more*

Our team:

- **Davin Althoff**
  Ag Business Development Division Director
  (573) 522-1796

- **Paola Coronel**
  Food & Beverage Marketing Specialist
  (573) 526-4849

- **John Hensley**
  Forestry, Grains, Oilseeds & Fiber Marketing Specialist
  (573) 751-7213

- **Hank Ma**
  Missouri Trade & Investment Office Taiwan Director
  (886) 2 2725-1622

- **Kurt Olsen**
  Livestock & Genetics Marketing Specialist
  (573) 291-5704

- **Taylor Tuttle**
  Communications & Outreach Marketing Specialist
  (573) 751-5019

- **Jennifer Kliethermes**
  Food & Beverage Marketing Specialist
  573-751-5611

- **Phoebe Chen**
  Missouri Trade & Investment Office Taiwan International Trade Specialist
  (886) 2 2725-1622

**MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Domestic & International Marketing
P.O. Box 630
1616 Missouri Blvd.
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-4762
Agriculture.Mo.Gov