

**George Bush China-U.S. Relations Conference:
Development, Energy, and Security
October 22-25, 2007
Washington, D.C**

FORUM FINAL REPORT

Forum Title: *China-U.S. Agricultural Sustainability Forum – Agricultural Sustainability with Strategic Partnerships: Platform for Collaboration and Progress*

Session Summary: The forum was conducted in two sessions. The morning session focused on “Strategic Thinking, Policy Considerations, and Framework for Collaboration.” It consisted of four keynote speeches and a roundtable. The afternoon session focused on “Mechanisms and Initiatives for China – U.S. Collaboration in Agriculture.” It consisted of four lead presentations with open discussions.

The morning session was co-moderated by Dr. Jia Jingdun, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), People’s Republic of China, and Dr. H. Russell Cross, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Texas A&M Agriculture. Dr. Michael D. McKinney, Chancellor, The Texas A&M University System, began the session with opening remarks. Dr. McKinney praised the timeliness of the forum and its implication for realizing the continuing interests of Texas A&M in China. Following the opening remarks, (the representative of)? Acting Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner, USDA, gave a speech on the U.S. perspective on China – U.S. collaborations in agriculture. In response, Vice Minister Liu Yanhua of MOST gave a complementary talk on China’s perspective. Mr. Liu listed the progress made by both sides in advancing collaboration in such areas as food safety, agro-product processing, grassland management, agro-biotechnology and water-saving technologies. He also stressed the importance of a multifaceted approach that his Ministry has been taking by citing the successful implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Texas A&M University System since 2002. Vice Minister Liu discussed his Ministry’s endorsement of developing a joint center for agricultural technology transfer and the organizing of a farmers’ science and technology association to promote modern agriculture in Rural China. The keynote speech series concluded with Dr. Elsa A. Murano, Vice Chancellor for Agriculture, The Texas A&M University System, presenting an overview of the U.S. land grant institution system. Dr. Murano used Texas A&M Agriculture as an example to illustrate the role of land grant institution in helping solve problems on food, water, and environment issues, both domestically and globally.

The morning session was highlighted with a roundtable co-moderated by Mr. Ma Linying, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation, MOST, and Dr. Douglas Loh, China Program Coordinator, Texas A&M Agriculture. The roundtable was seated by the following panel of experts: Dr. Kerri Harris, Director, Center for Food Safety, Texas A&M Agriculture; Dr. Wang Weizhong, Director General, Department of Facilities and Finance, MOST; Dr. Jia Jingdun, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Science and Technology, MOST; and Dr. Renjie Dong, Director, Department of International Cooperation, China Agricultural University. During the roundtable, each expert briefly described his or her view on how to bring about specific and tangible collaboration. It was followed by a question and answer session between the panel and the audience. A key consensus derived from the open discussion is the importance of both sides committing to education and training, to ensure that human resources and skills are adequate to expedite collaboration.

The afternoon session focused on “Mechanisms and Initiatives for China – U.S. Collaboration in Agriculture.” It was co-moderated by Mr. Chen Liangyu, Deputy Director General, China Rural Technology Development Center, MOST, and Dr. Douglas Loh, China Program Coordinator, Texas A&M Agriculture. Mr. Chen Liangyu gave the first presentation on the progress of organizing of the joint center for agricultural technology transfer. He anticipated that the organizational tasks to be completed by December, so that the center could start functioning by the year’s end. Dr. Alexander Kemos, Partner, Nordic-American Corporate Development and Finance Company, gave the second lead presentation titled “The Political Economy of Food Safety Infrastructure and Economics in China.” He advised the U.S. stakeholders to avoid project mirror images onto the receiving end in China. Dr. Kemos emphasized the importance of acculturation and mutual understanding as the key to successful collaboration. The third lead presentation was given by Dr. Kerri Harris on “Elevating Food Safety and Quality Systems in China.” Her presentation delineated a comprehensive framework on food safety and the importance of preventive measures such as Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP). In addition, Dr. Harris stressed the necessity of bundling production systems with food safety programs from farm to fork to ensure wholesomeness of food and agro-products for consumers. The fourth and final presentation was provided by Dr. Bill McCutchen, Associate Director, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas A&M University System. Dr. McCutchen provided the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station’s perspective on the commercialization of renewable energy with a focus on bioenergy in China.

At the conclusion of the afternoon session, Dr. Elsa Murano provided concluding remarks. She commended the success of the Forum and was delighted that this event drew high level attendance and representations from academic, industry and government sectors from both countries.

Findings/Recommendations:

1. Government-to-government, government-to-academic institution and other collaborative platforms have proven to be productive and are complementary to one another. Stakeholders from both countries are committed to continue developing and enhancing these mechanisms.
2. Acculturation and mutual understanding are keys to successful collaborations.
3. Education is critical to ensure adequate human resources and skills in starting up and continuing fruitful collaborations.

Future Collaboration:

1. On collaborating platforms:
 - a. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): MOST and the Texas A&M University System plan to renew the 2002 MOU to enable further collaboration in the area of agricultural science and technology.
 - b. The joint center for agricultural technology transfer
 - c. Farmers’ association for science and technology for rural China: MOST is interested in working with stakeholders from both countries in developing a business-led entity of this sort to expedite rural development and modern agriculture.
2. On collaborating projects:
 - a. Food Safety: Stakeholders and participants in the Forum are interested in initiating a collaborative pilot project in demonstrating the usefulness of third-party-facilitated food safety systems. The central thinking is to reference the prevailing U.S. paradigm. The project will target one commodity from on-farm production to supermarket-retailing. It will enable GAP, HACCP and other practices; third-party

- testing and auditing; an information and communication technology (ICT) platform that allows quality, safety and market information circulation and sharing, and traceability. Education and training will be integral components of the project.
- b. Bioenergy: Stakeholders and participants of the Forum are interested in initiating a collaborative pilot project in demonstrating cyclic economy and full utilization of biomass in bioenergy programs. The central thinking is the total plant use with an emphasis on sorghum as feedstock. Where the stalks are to be used for bio-ethanol, the residues could be utilized for pulp and other bio-product; and the ears would be used to supplement animal feed for beef cattle. The project will highlight the no-waste nature of such a bioenergy-biomass undertaking.
 - c. Cattle-beef: In conjunction with the above projects, a cattle-beef project may be launched. This project is envisioned as a vertically integrated chain that links genetic improvement programs, calf ranches, feedlots, packing plants, marketing channels, retail outlets to consumers. The infrastructure derived from the food safety and bioenergy projects could be adopted to bring to light the efficacy of modern beef cattle production systems, and to ensure the wholesomeness of the beef products.

Other Information: MOST plans to explore possibilities of connecting the above initiatives with its on-going collaborations with USDA for broader-based participations of interested stakeholders from both countries.

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