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## Ukrainians visit Iowa as agricultural interns

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by Barb McBreen

AMES, Iowa - Visiting the Chicago Board of Trade changed Mykola Horbachov's life.

"The Chicago Board of Trade opened a new world for me," Mr. Horbachov said. "I had heard about it but never understood it before."

Mr. Horbachov, who has worked as a professional grain trader for 12 years in Ukraine, visited the Chicago Board of Trade during a three-month internship at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. During their visit the six Ukrainian professionals attended a class on grain marketing and handling.

The Ukrainian group visited a family-owned farm, an ethanol plant, university laboratories, regulatory agencies and farm cooperatives. Mr. Horbachov said he was impressed with the buying and selling power cooperatives had but didn't think a similar business structure would work in Ukraine.

"Cooperatives are very interesting. In our country it's impossible because we just separated from the USSR and everyone wants to work separate and have their own money. It's very different," Mr. Horbachov said.

Mykola Sarazhynskyy, a graduate student in business administration, helped to facilitate the visit. He said the purpose of the program was to provide an industry perspective, facilitate discussions within the group and visit with professionals and professors.

"Our objective was to help Ukraine professionals gain familiarity with U.S. agricultural markets, government policies, farm operations, product processing, transportation and logistics," Mr. Sarazhynskyy said.

David Acker, associate dean of the College of Agriculture, said the Iowa State University college is dedicated to creating opportunities for professionals from Ukraine to study in the United States.

"Programs like this help both our students and professors learn about Ukraine, while giving professionals from Ukraine a chance to understand our agricultural economy. It also helps our college and Ukrainian professionals develop long-lasting relationships," Mr. Acker said.

Lilya Zavhorodnia, who works as a grain trader in Ukraine, said she enjoyed the visit to the Chicago Board of Trade and the opportunity to learn about corn quality testing at the various research laboratories the group visited. "It was interesting for us because they first measure the ear and then select the corn by color. It's a device that is quite simple and could be used in Ukraine," Ms. Zavhorodnia said.

The group also attended a biotechnology symposium sponsored by Iowa State's Biosafety Institute for Genetically Modified Agricultural Products. Ms. Zavhorodnia said the experience gave her a better understanding about biotechnology. "We thought it was bad. Then we were shown laboratories and we found out we have been eating biotech crops for several years," Ms. Zavhorodnia said.

The students developed presentations on what they learned about specific crops in July before returning to Ukraine. Alla Petrenko, who has worked as a grain trader for the past year, said she enjoyed the experience. "I learned about American agriculture, farmers and elevators and how things differ from our country," Ms. Petrenko said.

The program was sponsored by the Iowa State University College of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) program in Washington.

The internships were sponsored in part by the Ukraine-Iowa State University Student Exchange fund. The fund was initiated by Stefan and Kateryna Dwojak, who donated \$350,000 last November.

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