

Contact: Mandy Gross | FAPC Communications | 405-744-0442 | mandy.gross@okstate.edu
Kylee Willard | FAPC Communications | 405-744-3217 | kyleew@okstate.edu

FAPC-OSU faculty returns from Central Asia agricultural volunteer program

(Stillwater, Okla. – August 9, 2011) A faculty member of Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center returns to Oklahoma from an agricultural volunteer assignment in Central Asia.

Dr. Tim Bowser, FAPC food process engineer and OSU biosystems and agricultural engineering associate professor, traveled with CFNA's Farmer-to-Farmer program to the village of Dendiston in the Khatlon region of Tajikistan to provide assistance to residents.

"I truly enjoyed helping to improve lives of farmers and agribusinesses in Tajikistan," Bowser said. "An opportunity such as this is second-to-none."

Bowser provided support to the only small food processor in the region, Oila Company. The father and five-son operation processes fruit and vegetable products including jams, pickles and juices for sale locally.

"The father-sons team were well-educated and great to work with," Bowser said. "These men were willing to learn and interested in the information and suggestions I provided."

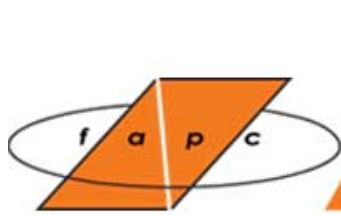
Bowser helped the Tajiki company identify issues in production practices.

"Oila's products are packaged in one- and two-liter glass jars," he said. "Because of the rocky terrain, one of the biggest issues for the company is broken glass during vehicle transportation."

Knowledge gained through Bowser's profession and industry experience in the United States allowed him to provide suggestions and introduce successful practices to Oila.

"Plastic was the answer to Oila's broken glass issue," Bowser said. "I took dozens of flexible pouch samples for the company to experiment with. We spent several days identifying packaging and processes while making product."

Other topics discussed during Bowser's experience included product development, labeling, and personal and plant sanitation.



Robert M. Kerr
Food & Agricultural Products Center

NEWS RELEASE

Adding Value to Oklahoma

Bowser's travel was made possible with funding from the United States Agency for International Development and collaborative efforts of the CNFA's Farmer-to-Farmer program, a private, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C.

"CFNA's long-term projects seek to develop private farmer associations, cooperatives, private agribusiness, women's groups and other organizations that help farmer and agribusinesses increase their incomes and well-being," Bowser said. "CNFA employs a value chain approach to agricultural development, seeking to strengthen all links in the market chain, from input supply and production to post-harvest handling and value addition to marketing and sales."

Bowser joined the ranks of more than 1,300 volunteers in the CNFA's Farmer-to-Farmer program since 1993 and was the 16th individual to travel to Tajikistan this year.

"This international travel opportunity provided a venue for me to meet and reach out to individuals I may not have encountered otherwise," Bowser said. "This program offered two cultures the chance to learn about each other, create working relationships and foster lasting connections."

- ### -

Oklahoma State University is a modern land-grant system of interdisciplinary programs that prepares students for success. As Oklahoma's only university with a statewide presence, OSU improves the lives of people in Oklahoma, the nation, and the world through integrated, high-quality teaching, research, and outreach. OSU has more than 35,000 students across its five-campus system and more than 23,000 on its Stillwater campus, with students from all 50 states and 118 nations. Established in 1890, OSU has graduated more than 235,000 students to serve the state of Oklahoma, the nation and the world.

To view and/or download pictures of Dr. Bowser's trip to Tajikistan, please visit www.flickr.com/photos/fapcosu/.