

## Kansas State University : Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership International Tours> Class II Tour to Belgium, France, and England (1995)

### Class II Tour to Belgium, France & England (1995)

#### *Scribes:*

*March 14-17 Mary Anne Stoskopf*

*March 18-19 Doug Strickler*

*March 20-22 David Wesseler*

*March 23-24 Jim Weaver*

*March 25-26 Ken Wood*

*March 27-28 Rick Wiedmann*

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#### **Tuesday, March 14**

Eight KARL Class II members caught the shuttle to Kansas City's International Airport - boy, was that van full! We were checked in, catching up with other KARL Class II members when...plans changed. The Kansas City flight to Chicago would be an hour late, necessitating an immediate shuttle to the American Airlines area, rushing onto the flight, and settling in for the flight to Chicago. Chicago to Dallas and Denver to Dulles were uneventful flights but...we hit a rough spot in the road at Dulles. The cockpit window was taken out, replaced, taken out again and replaced again - eventually, 3 1/2 hours late, we were on our way to Brussels, Belgium.

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#### **Wednesday, March 15**

10:30 Belgian time, KARL Class II landed at Brussels. We were met by Eula (oo-luh) Becker, our guide for 2 weeks. Waving her sign, Eula led us through the airport, security, baggage and out to our home on wheels, Art's bus! By the time we made it to the Hotel Palace, Eula gave us 30 minutes to freshen up and meet the bus for an afternoon of sightseeing in Brussels.

With a population of 1 million, Brussels is bustling. With Belgium, and Brussels, gearing up to be the capitol of the European Union, there is a lot of building going on. Our appreciation of Art's driving skills (and cool calm) deepened as Eula scurried us to our first

official KARL study session in Europe. Randy Miller, the Kansas representative from the Kansas Department of Commerce in Europe, met briefly with us over lunch. Mr. Miller, a native Kansan (who had also been on the problem flight 950 Dulles to Brussels) admitted that the Department of Commerce has been oriented to manufactured products, assisting those Kansas companies who want to export to Europe, rather than being ag-oriented.

Mr. Miller identified 3 major themes he felt were currently playing in Brussels:

- The definition of Europe has and is changing. As the European Union continues to grow there is a focus on expanding geographically rather than deepening common laws.
- The common laws adopted by the member countries - the single market directive - is a major happening.
- The next 2 or 3 years will include discussion of what the European Union structure is. In 1996, there are plans to redefine the way some decisions are made.

At Eula's urging, we headed toward our bus, which was parked so we could see and photograph the gigantic new building going up to house the Brussels Parliament. We learned that Brussels is an ancient city, celebrating its 1st Millennium in 1979. Our first photograph stop was the Arch de Triumph, built to celebrate 50 years of Belgium's independence from Holland. From then on the sights were everywhere, the Column of Congress built to celebrate the separation of Belgium and Netherlands in 1830; Saint Michael Cathedral, the main facade of which was started in 1226; the legendary Brussels' figure of Mannekin-Pis; the reclining statue of Eviad 't Serdals (which many of us rubbed for good luck); the beautiful buildings surrounding the cobble-stoned Grand Place dating from 1302, the Atonium weighing 2500 tons and is 335' tall (representing the 9 atoms making up an ion crystal, built for the 1958 World Expo) and the royal palace park, with villas for all the royal families.

Narrow streets, crazy car drivers, fabulous art nouveau architecture, and a touch of shopping made for a fun sight-seeing trip.

Those who hadn't dropped from exhaustion headed out for a supper and window shopping (You'd be amazed at the items displayed in the windows of Brussels!) 13 of us headed for "Chez Leon" near the Grand Place. Mussels were on the menu there, though not all of us were feeling adventurous. The streets were busy at night and the Grand Place was simply magnificent at night!



#### Thursday, March 16

On the bus again! Headed to the U.S. mission to European Union. Mr. Bryant Wadsworth, Minister Counselor for Agriculture Affairs, led a spirited introduction of issues surrounding agricultural trade and policies with the U.S. and European Union. Mr. James Johnson, Agricultural Attache, Ed Aires (in charge of plant pathology, quarantine, etc.) and their veterinary expert, joined in.

Among the comments made:

- U.S. citizens have never known hunger, which has driven European Union protection of sugar and grains.
- Europe has tied farm policy into the "landscape" necessary for an aesthetic view of Europe.
- While the U.S. views Europe as a major enemy, it's really a mixed-up operation (15 countries, 12 languages, and different approaches to following the rules).

Panel participants indicated that Germany is a real source for the green movement and animal rights movement. Comments were made that the French appear to be ready for being market-oriented, but Germany has not been and has been using the French to "front" for them but...Germany is now more willing to push its weight around.

Manure quotas being more valuable than dairy quotas in some countries gave us something to think about.

It was pointed out that the U.S. has had more land idled than France has available for cultivation. Some figures given were: average farm size in U.S. = 480 acres, European Union = 35 acres (varying from 10 acres in Greece, 14 in Italy, 44 in Germany, 70 in France, to 170 in the United Kingdom).

Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) was described as the cornerstone of the European Union. For years, the U.S. approached ag issues with Europe being overruled by the state department, who said that Europe would fall apart and the Soviets would take over if Europe didn't have CAP. The scenario of using GATT to enforce CAP reform was described. And the new administration in D.C. has not made any real changes in ag trade policy - even keeping the GATT negotiations as the negotiating team after the elections.

Mr. Wadsworth described the European Union as being a "living organism but, as far as we can tell, it has no central nervous system". Difficulty in finding the person in charge or getting a unanimous decision on major policy was compared to getting 98 senators to agree to a U.S. farm bill by James Johnson, agricultural attache.

Mr. Michael Gowen of Directorate General VI, Agriculture of the European Commission, went into the history and politics behind it all. In war-time (and additional years after the war) hunger in Europe led to policies enabling European countries to be self-sufficient in food. Basically, a guaranteed price for unlimited production, guaranteeing an income for the farmers and building surpluses in fat years (mountains of butter). The lean years, when the surpluses could have been used by the Europeans, never happened so export subsidies were used to sell the surpluses on world markets. Huge budget exposures are driving changes. There are now production limits and set-asides with support prices being cut (29% over 3 years for cereals). Farmers are being compensated with direct cash payments. The European Union may be looking to target the payments to smaller farmers, with movement away from encouraging production to encouraging people to stay on the farms and keep certain areas populated.

Mr. Gowen stated that this year or next, the French would be exporting wheat on the world market without using export subsidies.

He also encouraged us to think of the European Union and United States as partners, that with over 1/2 of the world trade, together we could really force other markets to open to our exports. He said the future is in exporting agriculture products, but that we can't solve our problems by only exporting to each other.

Mr. Gowen also indicated that one reason the European Union has been putting so much emphasis on the former Russian states is to keep Japan from forming alliances with them. There have been fundamental shifts in attitudes toward farming in the past 30 years and the farmers are shifting to the defensive today all over Europe (vs. the traditional "guardians of the countryside" view of farmers).

The green movement was discussed, describing northern Europe as more green than southern Europe - with Germany the greenest of them all. The statement was made that

"concern for the environment is a by-product of affluence".

Off to a quick lunch at a local pub or other nearby sandwich shop, then back on the bus for the scenic ride to Mr. Pussemiez's farm - but don't ask us how we got there!

First, Mr. Pussemiez talked about how he and two other Frenchmen became involved with embryo transplants, having bought interests in a dam in Canada. He had been farming for 10 years, having received the opportunity to take over his wife's parents' farm. He showed us the prize Holsteins - daughters and granddaughters of the Canadian cow. Very tall Holsteins! We quickly walked through the milk barn and he showed us the mound in the distance marking the Battle of Waterloo - barely visible across scenic fields and meadows behind the farmyard.

Then we continued past the house, picking up a priest from the abbey who had come to visit with the family. We headed through the wife's milking parlor (to get the additional milk quota, they had to add a "farm" in her name - with all feed, milk, cows, etc. kept separate), then through her cow barn, and around the hay sheds and back to the cobblestoned courtyard center of all the buildings, stopping in front of the house to sample cheese the wife had made. After Ray Purdy bought a round of cheese and the farmer found out he was a banker, he exclaimed that Ray was "milking the farmers".

On the road again to a wonderful 16th century home and 17th century outbuildings.

(Ferme de Mr. Etienne Mersch) This time we observed the Belgian Blue and Fresian milk cows. This farm family is part of a 107 member cooperative. The cooperative was well-represented by its president, advisor, and other members. This farmer also has about 100 hectares, producing milk and cheese. There we were told that almost all Belgian Blue calves are delivered by C-section, the first calf being born when the cow is 2 1/2 years old. A cow might have 2 or 3 calves before being sold around 5 years of age.

What a thrill to walk through an arched doorway, where the knights and horses had ridden without dismounting. The original 16th and 17th century buildings housing the calves - or baby calves and the son's pet rabbits - were very interesting. All adapted in ways over time to remain useful, with a new modern machine shed attached to the one barn.

Depending on seasonal demand, this farm makes cheese 2 or 3 times a week. We watched a video about this, then trekked down to the cellars to observe the cheese aging on the shelves. Very low ceilings down there - just a little over 5' in the center. Jacques, the young son, was thrilled with his Kansas "Beef - It's What's for Dinner" farm cap. We enjoyed cheese-tasting during the video, regrouped for a group photo in front of the 16th century house, then on the bus again.

This time, we drove around the front of a chateau to enter through the back gate. A huge courtyard where buildings, machine sheds, barns and a home form the square greeted us. We stepped through the 16th century barn to view the chateau, which in the 16th century was a lord's home with surrounding moat and all for the resident Baron.

The farmer, Henri Hellemans, and his wife rent the barns and home (not the chateau, but another home on the courtyard). The wife is a veterinarian and they have 5 very charming children. They are also members of the cooperative. He had a Belgian Blue feedlot - all covered in the constructed pens.

The Hellemans graciously opened their home to us, where the farmers cooperative members served us beer and cheese. Wonderful hospitality, but we couldn't stay long as we had a long drive to Namur, where supper was awaiting us at the Hotel Beauregard.

Belgium at night was very pretty - the freeways were all lit with amber street lamps.

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### Friday, March 17

5:15 a.m. wake-up call! We were doing OK until some as yet to be named KARL person stuck a blow dryer in the razor outlet and promptly blew out the fuse in the hotel! But, we made it to breakfast, to the bus, and to the Belgian Beef Market in Ciney.

The Belgian Beef Market in Ciney is the largest of its kind in Europe. It is called a "lean" market, with the animals from breeding farms in southern Belgium being sold to be fattened by farmers in northern Belgium. It is not limited to the Belgian Blue breed as this morning 4,296 beef, 283 veal calves, 12 horses and 6 sheep were sold. (Last Friday, they even sold 2 llamas!)

While cattle are delivered at night through the wee hours of the morning, the buyers (or merchants) are not allowed on the market floor until a bell rings at 7:00 a.m. They all rush in and scramble to find the animals they want to buy.

Imagine 5,000 animals tied up under one roof, with each animal being sold individually. No papers are exchanged, no contracts are signed - it's all on trust and word-of-mouth. It was indicated that the personal relationships are very, very important and very often, the buyers and sellers have a pretty good head start on transactions before meeting at the market.

There has been a market in Ciney since 1534. This facility is owned by the city of Ciney.

Mr. Larloux, vice-president of the National Organization of Beef Merchants and manager of the market, met with us and provided breakfast.

All animals in Belgium must have an ID card which follows the animal throughout its life. After testing at the farm, certificates for transport are issued (they're good for only 1 month). Before the animal can be transported away from the market, it must be tested again and another certificate for transport is issued.

Mr. Laloux brought in 2 gentlemen to demonstrate the traditional "slapping of hands", which is how the price is agreed upon and the animals bought or sold. Most transactions are cash only - from the pocket, not the bank, due to tax collection and tracing of the money transactions.

It is very rare to make a sale outside the market - it's a tradition and it works for them. The animals are all on halters, wooden canes help control or direct the animals, and it's a bustling place, even after the opening.

Monsieur Henri Hellemans was at the market buying cattle for fattening and joined us, particularly interested in the difference in prices between Belgium and Kansas.

We were also joined by two radio reporters who were very interested in issues surrounding the use of hormones. They ate breakfast with Barry and Eula, so we're not sure just what all they learned!

Mr. Laloux treated us to Ciney beer and we headed to the Belgian Blue Research Center,



also on the outskirts of Ciney. Mr. Patrick Soentjes, commercial director, and Mrs. Evelyne Andre, director of the technical department, greeted us and we settled back to watch 2 videos. The breeding center and performance testing center at Ciney were established in 1972. The Linalux insemination center is also here.

Belgian Blue is a national herd of 3 million head. The cattle can have 3 colors of coats - white, blue roan, or black and white. All females are destined for breeding, using mainly artificial insemination for genetic improvement. The breed has been genetically selected and improved and is highly specialized for its meat production.

We toured 2 performance testing barns (10 months and 14-16 months) with our plastic booties on, of course.

They were very concerned about us bringing something to the research center from the beef market, which is why we were not allowed on the market floor at the beef market.

On the bus again to Chimay, where we had an hour to eat or window shop. A few class members had the privilege of visiting with a real live princess at the castle there (Chimay Princess Castle). Others ventured into the magnificent Collegiate Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The church is on the public square, which had a 17th century town hall, old mansions and the main gateway leading to the castle grounds.

The oldest part of the church building dates from the 13th century! A great gothic cross, decorated with a 16th century Christ, hangs from the triumphant altar. The side galleries were a series of beautiful chapels. Very ornate wooden altar pieces dating from the 18th century, beautiful stained glass windows, and a bell tower dated 1732 were just a part of the splendor.

Back to the outskirts of Chimay to the Chimay bottling plant, where we were told the lines were down for repairs. We watched a movie - in French - about the Abbey of Scourmont in Bourlers. Trappist beer must be made by monks. The monks at "La Trappe" as it is known locally, brew the beer and have it delivered to the bottling plant. The monks take a vow of silence, but the business monks can still do business while talking, but the clerical monks remain silent. 30 monks and 20 workers make the beer, cheese, and cured meat marketed under the Chimay label.

We headed through the village and countryside to the abbey, where some class members ventured up a driveway for closer pictures. The rain drove them back in the bus and back to a pub for beer and cheese tasting - Chimay, of course.

Then back on the bus, back to Namur, and a little later, out to a local restaurant for an interesting meal. Our hotel is on the river, two of which converge in the shadow of an old, old citadel (fortress). Very beautiful to walk at night with an attached casino for those so inclined.



Saturday, March 18

Day 5 started with a 160 km drive north to Ghent in the flounders region of northern Belgium. Along the way the group stopped in Willebroek to visit Breendonk WWII concentration camp.

This may have been the quietest this group has been over the past two years. There was a very solemn mood as we went through the former fortress that was turned into a torture and execution camp. A chill seemed to go through many members as they viewed where people were punished, shot or hung.

After arriving in Ghent, members toured the Chateau des Comtes - a huge 11th century castle nestled on the river in downtown Ghent. We also learned that the castle was transformed into a justice center in the early 13th century. During that medieval time many imaginary methods were used to extract confessions.

Members commented continuously about how beautiful and historic Ghent appeared. Picturesque homes lined the narrow streets from every direction. The atmosphere was very European, with red tile roofs almost geometric in alignment.

The Reo vegetable market in Roeselare, about 55 km south of Ghent, was our next stop. Reo is a farmer owned cooperative organized to give local Belgium farmers an outlet for their produce. The coop has about 3,000 members, all farmers. They bring crops to this local market to be sold through a very modern electronic auction. Buyers from all over Europe come to bid on the vegetables. Some of the vegetables sold may not have even been harvested yet. But, through much trust and integrity, all produce is packaged and delivered to standards of the buyers within 24 hours.

In 1991, the Reo coop marketed 27,000,000 packages of 54 different products through their 500,000 sq. ft. climate controlled building. They are also electronically linked to 10 other similar markets scattered throughout Belgium.

Mark Vermander, a local pork producer from the area, joined us on our tour of Reo and helped translate. After finishing our tour, we proceeded to his family farm.

He, his wife and partner, and their 4 children graciously opened their home for all the KARL members and guests.

The Vermander family own and operate a 270 sow operation. It was a very modern and clean system. Waste was controlled exceptionally well as there was very little outside odor. Mark explained his problems with wanting to expand, but with government regulations on how much fertilizer may be spread on the land, he would have to acquire more land before he could expand his pig numbers.

This was also our last contact with Sylvie Eyben who set up most all of our farm and ag related visits while in Belgium. Sylvie was presented with a Kansas state flag that had flown over Topeka previously. After saying our good-byes we headed south.

Our over night stay was at Vakantiehoeve Briesland owned by the Roose-Trybou family in Alveringem. Staying on four area farms.

After helping with the home cooked meal, the members turned in for the evening preparing to head for France tomorrow.

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**Sunday, March 19**

Day 6

Passing the border from Belgium to France was a lackluster event. It being Sunday, no border checks were working, so it seemed like passing from Kansas to Missouri.

While driving south towards Reims, 240 km south into France, we noticed the farming practices had changed somewhat. The fields are considerably bigger with more recognizable crops. The exception is hops with its vines propped up about 25 ft. in the air with giant poles.

The Cathedral of Rheims was our next tour. A huge structure built over a 7 century period was started clear back in the late 700's and slowly built and expanded over the next 700 years. The stone carvings in the pillars and walls were detailed and expressive. The museum depicted how wars and revolutions had affected the construction and refurbishing.

The group had a very relaxing evening with a fine French dinner served at a local restaurant.



**Monday, March 20**

After a great night's sleep and breakfast at the Hotel les Templiers in Reims, we went to visit the Champagne Cereales Cooperative.

Mr. Pierre Springer, a retired miller and past director of the coop, gave our group an overview of the Champagne area's agriculture. He said the calcareous soil of the area had made for poor production before the late 1940's brought chemical fertilizers to the area.



The Champagne Cereales Coop covers 90% of the production in the area. (France's coops as a whole control 50-60% of the country's production.)

This coop is the result of a 1990 merge between 9 smaller coops. 11,250 farmers are members. They have 166 silos with 15,000-20,000 tons storage each. They move 35% of their grain by rail, 5% by boat, and 60% by truck.

The main company divisions include wheat, malt, corn, research and development, and diversification (which includes a trial ethanol plant that uses 200,000 tons of wheat per year).

Membership fees are 100 French francs per ton. Producers receive advice on fertility and variety selection as well as cooperative marketing of their grain.

We toured the corn meal mill. They claim to have 70% of the retail flour market. Mr. Springer says the U.S. dominates the world flour market, but that France had a good part of the world market in malt, as this was an area where there was little U.S. involvement.

The current French wheat price was 880 ff/ton (metric). We inspected a few local fields and found a lot of septoria leaf blotch already forming. Their fungicide treatments usually start in April. The wheat yields are 9-10 tons/hectare, barley 7 tons, corn 8-11 tons.

In the afternoon we visited the Wilmart and Co. champagne cellar and production. Wilmart was founded in 1818. Since 1880, the cellar has been in the same family. Our tour was led by the charismatic Mr. Champ, a fourth generation operator. The company has 11 hectares of vineyard and produces 100,000 bottles/year. They currently have no exports to the U.S. The area of wine production is one of the best value-added products of France.

18,000 people are wine-grape growers in the region. Most have a vineyard of about 2 hectares. 90% of the grapes are produced by private growers on land that can sell for up to 2,000,000 ff per hectare. Chalk (or calcareous soil) is important for growing good grapes. In France 30,000 hectares are used for the production of wine grapes. 300 different wines make up the total of 250 million bottles per year from the champagne area.

Mr. Champs gave us a history of champagne production. Apparently Don Perignone (a Benedictine monk) liked sweet wine and discovered the sparkling wine by accident. He simply added some sugar to a wine bottle in storage and it continued to ferment in the bottle making the natural carbonation.

Modern champagne production is quite complex. In the Wilmart and Co. factory 4,000 kg of grapes are repeatedly pressed with hydraulics to yield 2,500 liters of juice. (The first pressing yields the best juice). The pressed juice goes into ceramic tiled tanks to settle for 24 hours. It then goes to oak barrels to ferment for several months where the grape sugar is converted to alcohol and CO<sub>2</sub>. This is the primary fermentation.

Secondary fermentation takes place when 23-26 grams of sugar is added to each bottle. This added sugar is what produces the carbonation.

The champagne bottles are recapped and put into racks where they are held by the neck at an angle almost upside-down.

They are then given a 1/8 turn twice a day for several years. This concentrates the dead yeast sediment around the cork.

To remove this sediment the bottle neck is dipped into - 25°C brine creating an ice plug that contains the sediment. The bottle is then opened, the pressure ejects the ice plug, champagne is added to bring the bottle to the correct level, it is recorked, and then labeled and "clothed like a beautiful lady". The whole process takes 3 years and over 100 distinct operations.

The champagnes and wines are stored underground in a series of tunnels under the city of Reims. Some of these tunnels date back to Roman times when they were created by the excavation of stone. In the city it is estimated there are 250 km of storage cellars.

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### Tuesday, March 21

This was a day of travel to Paris and historical tours. The class went up the Eiffel Tower, had lunch by the Arch de Triomphe. We saw a beautiful sunset over the arch (while stranded in Paris traffic) and had a moonlit boat tour on the river Seine. We stayed overnight at the modern Hotel Mercure Montmartre.



### Wednesday, March 22

Wednesday morning we met with Mr. Andrew Pieltain, director of publicity for La France Agricole a weekly publication with a readership of 1,000,000. We toured their headquarters where agricultural journals on crops, machinery, dairy, wine, and food technology are produced.

When asked how GATT would influence European Union agriculture, the reporters said that the possibility of exports would be more limited and that future changes within the European Union could have as much influence. The inclusion of the Scandinavian countries will not have much effect, because their ag sectors are relatively small, but when Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia) are included it causes dramatic changes.

Trends in European Union agriculture were discussed. Like the U.S. their farmers are

getting older. Southern Europe tends to have older farmers. Spain and Portugal have an average age of 58 years, France is 48, but some areas are younger. They have some programs to get younger farmers low interest loans.

Like in the U.S. the reporters predicted increasing farm size, more emphasis on value added production or direct sales, and more farmers with off-farm jobs.

In the afternoon we met with Christian Liegare, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and advisor for the ministry of international affairs at the French ministry of agriculture. He had prepared answers to questions and gave a good overview on European Union policy and the changes that GATT has brought. Surprisingly he admitted that the European Union policy was likely to resemble U.S. deficiency payments at some point in the future.

Later in the afternoon we met with the president and staff of the French Farmers Union (the FNSEA). This is a very large organization with members who are producers of all commodities. 60% of French farmers are members for a total of 600,000 member families. The FNSEA is 80% funded by a contribution of 25ff for each hectare farmed, and 20% by government, banks, and other associations. Annually they spend 60 million ff. They go to great lengths to maintain independence from all political parties.

At dinner we were joined by Jeanne Bailey, agricultural attache at the Paris USDA. She helped put all our meetings in perspective for the day.



### Thursday, March 23

Our group had a very early departure from the Paris hotel to the Montparnasse rail station. The KARL group was scheduled to board the 7:15 a.m. TGV to LeMans, France. The TGV is the French high speed train. Everyone was impressed how quiet and smooth the train moved through the French countryside. The TGV train conductor told several KARL members the train was operating at 300 km (approximately 180 mph). The only sudden movement experienced on the train was when two trains passed, going opposite directions. This sudden movement was similar to the wind/vacuum change experienced when meeting a semi-truck on a windy day in Kansas. Our tour bus met us at LeMans, France for the continuation of the tour.

The countryside was green and hilly with Normande and Charolais cattle grazing throughout the countryside.

We visited a Calvados operation near St-Cyr-du-Ronceray, France.

This operation processes apples raised in a 12-15 mile radius of the headquarters. Calvados is a very strong apple liqueur. The family has owned this operation for four generations. The business was founded in 1893 and 900 tons of apples are processed on an annual basis. Fifty varieties of apples are blended to make the apple liqueur. Harvest normally occurs from October to December depending on the weather and apple varieties. The apples are

processed and distilled over a period of 8-100 years. This operation employs 8 people, year round. After the initial distilling, the Calvados is stored in large oak barrels. The liqueur acquires its aroma and color from the oak barrels. The KARL group tasted this apple liqueur, but most found it much too strong to enjoy (42% alcohol). The by-product of this apple distilling is fed to area hogs.

The French consider this type of operation as a "value added" agriculture concern (apples to Calvados liqueur).

After the Calvados tour, we ate lunch in Livarot, France. This was a quaint French village with several delis, pastry shops, and restaurants.



While on the way to the Normandy American cemetery, Omaha Beach and the Pointe du Hoc Ranger memorial, several group members shared family stories/experiences with the group as they related to WWII.

The Normandy Cemetery has over 9,000 American soldiers who are buried on the site. Every American should be extremely proud of this American memorial. The cemetery is spotless and well maintained. This site overlooks Omaha Beach, one of the famous sites of WWII. It was a sobering experience to witness this memorial and the tremendous deaths that occurred at this site. While in this area we also made a stop at Pointe du Hoc. This battle site remains as it was on June 4, 1944. The craters created in the WWII bombing were still present and most were surprised at how large these craters were. It is hard to believe how powerful these bombs had to be to create the damage that was left after WWII.

We then continued our journey to La Havre France for the boarding of the ferry to England. As time was short, a fast dinner was consumed at La Havre prior to a late evening departure. The night was spent in sleeping berths aboard the European ferry.



## Friday, March 24

The ferry arrived at Portsmouth, England early Friday morning. The ferry was large with numerous levels. It had several restaurants, a bar, a casino, a movie theatre and a gift shop. All seemed to survive the trip with no motion sickness reported.

Our bus met up in England and we were off for another day. The first thing that most people noticed was that all drivers were on the left side of the road. The group made a short stop at Stonehenge before continuing our journey to Salisbury, England. Many in the group took time to acquire some English currency as the banks will be closed on Saturday and Sunday. Salisbury was a beautiful English village with numerous shops and an impressive cathedral. The group then visited the Earl of Radnor fish farm. This fish farm is the oldest and largest fish farm in the United Kingdom. Annual production is 900 tons/year. Rainbow trout is the type of fish grown at this farm. The farm had 89 ponds and uses 70,000,000 gallons of water/day. All water is "flow through" water from the area rivers and streams. It takes 12 months to go from baby to finished trout (14-16 oz. trout). Most fish are sold as a "whole fish" to the restaurant trade. After the fish tour we drove by the owner's castle. No pictures were allowed but it was a large European castle. It was well maintained with an elaborate garden and golf course behind the castle.

We had an excellent roast beef dinner with yorkshire pudding at the Red Lion Inn, a quaint English pub and hotel. The group then went on a walking tour of Salisbury with a guide who provided a narrative of the city's history and heritage.

The group then traveled to Winchester, England where we spent the night.

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## Saturday, March 25

The KARL group enjoyed a continental breakfast at the Hotel Forte Crest at Winchester. After a brief walking tour of the local open market, the group departed at approximately 9:20 a.m. On the way to the visit to Bossington Farm, the bus unloaded for a photo opportunity at a quaint little inn where Welsh Shepherders had stopped for lodging and food on their way to market their sheep. The inn had a thatched roof, and was several hundred years old.





Upon arrival at the Bossington Farm, we were met by Mr. Geoff Butler, manager of the farm, and Mr. John Fairey, one of the owners of the farm. Geoff discussed some of the layout of the farm, and then the group loaded onto a hay trailer to tour the farm. The first stop allowed us to view the swine operation, which was supervised by David Ashcroft. David gave us specific information about the hogs, and Geoff gave us some opinions on what he saw facing the industry as a whole. Mr. Butler mentioned that the British equivalent of the extension service had been privatized, and that their particular farm paid about 400 pounds per year for their advice.

Mr. Butler reiterated what we had heard before about European Ag Policy, namely that the people of Europe thought that a surplus of ag products in storage somewhere was a reasonable investment of government funds, especially since most residents of Europe could remember some type of food shortages in their lifetimes. He did, however, mention that the policies are moving more toward free markets, and away from stockpiling commodities. He also mentioned that the swine industry in England is not subsidized, and is quite vulnerable to competition from the U.S.

Another enterprise on the Bossington Estate is the commercial hunting and fishing industry. Pheasants are released for hunting purposes, and the hunters are charged 16 pounds for each killed pheasant. The area is also blessed with the Test River, which is one of the best trout rivers in the world, and some fishermen are paying up to 10,000 pounds per year to fish on the river. After a short stop to see the River Test, we were transported to the dairy to see the operations there. The Bossington Farm has a milk quota of about 2,000,000 liters worth about 55 pence per liter, and their quotas can be freely traded in the U.K. Mr. Butler commented that the farm could sell their quotas and have a great deal of wealth, but that they felt an obligation to create employment and increase the well-being of the community. The group visited the modern 10 to a side milking parlor, where approximately 500 cows are milked.

The entire group then returned to the Headquarters for lunch, which was provided by Bossington Farms. After lunch, the hay wagon departed for the John Jenkins farm. John and his two sons have a 120 cow dairy, and raise barley, wheat, rapeseed, and linseed, in addition to perennial ryegrass to graze their cows on in the summer months. After touring several of their fields, the group returned to their machine shed for tea and scones. The individuals in the group then split up for their farm visits.

The KARL sponsors were treated to a traditional British evening at the home of Mr. John Fairey, Esquire. Mr. Fairey is one of the owners of the Bossington Farms Estate. Also present were Mr. Geoff Butler, Farm Manager, Mr. Hugh Oliver-Bellaies, President of a large private farm and environmental guru to Prince Charles, and also Mr. Sion Roberts, and Mr. Ray Andrews, both affiliated with the Farmers Union. The group spent the evening discussing topics such as international trade and other national issues.

Ken Wood and Curt Glaser visited with Mike and Trish Nokes in their home. Mike was



involved with a diversified dairy farm in the past, and had since retired to manage his investment property. He is still affiliated with the operations of a large farm exposition. The group discussed conditions and attitudes in the U.K., as well as Europe as a whole. They attended a U.K.-KARL get-together at a local country club that included a skittles tournament between some of the KARL members and their host families.

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### Sunday, March 26

On Sunday morning, the four had breakfast and a brief tour of the grounds, then Curt, Ken, and Mike departed for a long drive through the New Forest, which was an area designated by William the Conqueror in 1066 for ownership by the people of England. After the drive, Ken, Curt, Trish and Mike left for the barbecue.

The entire group reassembled for a barbecue on Sunday morning. The menu consisted of lamb, sausage, vegetables, rolls, and bitter beer. The group enjoyed visits with some of the other hosts, then grouped together for a group picture. After everyone said their good-bye's, the KARL members reloaded the bus for the trip to London. Upon arrival in London, we picked up Ron, our local tour guide, and proceeded to tour the city. We had brief stops for photos and shopping near the Parliament building, the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Buckingham Palace.

After the tour, the group checked into the Hotel Whitehouse, then were allowed to relax after having dinner together.

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**Monday, March 27**

London, England - 7:30 a.m. Wake-up Call

Continental breakfast at The Wine Press in the White House Hotel.

Boarded the bus and left for the U.S. Embassy at 9:00 a.m. Arrived at the U.S. Embassy at approximately 9:25 a.m. We were welcomed to the Embassy by Richard Barns, Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs for the Embassy of the United States of America.

He then introduced us to his staff that was present. His office consists of a staff of 8, 5 British and 3 Americans. They are employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture not the Department of State. Their job is to represent U.S. agricultural interest and support U.S. exports overseas.

The 3 main functions of their office are marketing, commodity analysis (predict production, demand and policy) and policy. They also do a lot of Public Speaking in the United Kingdom.

The European Union Agriculture has changed dramatically in the past few years. U.K. agriculture is one of the most advanced in the European Union. England is basically free trade oriented. The UK National Farmers Union is very forward and do a great job of representing UK agriculture. The average wheat yield per hectare is now 7.5 tonnes in the UK.

Mr. Barns then turned it over to Christine Chapman, Agricultural Marketing Specialist for the U.S. Embassy. She works with 42 commodity trade associations to help them with their exports. She does this with the help of a \$10.2 million budget. Her office provides trade services to U.S. companies wanting to export to the U.K. (i.e. tariffs, changes in labels, etc.). They also work with U.K. trade interested in U.S. products. U.S. ag exports to the U.K. are \$1.3 billion per year. Kansas has a very active program in the U.K. to provide services to Kansas companies wanting to export to the U.K.

Richard Ali, Agricultural Economist for the U.S. Embassy, was next on the agenda. His job consists of analyzing products for import as well as export in the U.K. The tariffs are being lowered and that will be helpful for U.S. ag imports.

GATT is about choices for consumers (i.e. give the consumer the choice on a fair basis not on the basis of tariffs, etc.).

The U.K. is very sensitive to animal welfare. The U.K. population feel they are very close

to agriculture, but psychologically they are a long way away. Welfare groups have mounted huge protests on the way animals are shipped. There are no easy answers to this problem. Next was Tony Donaldson, Economist for NFU of England and Wales. 3/4 of the farmers in England and Wales belong. Their duties include lobbying the U.K. government as well as the European Union. Perceptions on Animal Welfare are important. The lowering of the U.K. currency against the German Mark and the French Franc have made U.K. livestock more competitive. 70% of the consumers in U.K. are opposed to shipment of live animals. There are no easy answers to the problem.

Agricultural subsidies are not sustainable in the long run. The goal is to develop ways to maintain policy, but not hurt U.K. farmers.

Next was Michael Zerr, International Business Intern. Michael is a student from the University of Missouri majoring in Ag Economics. He is working with the NFU in England to determine how competitive U.S. ag products are in the U.K. For example, U.K. pigs vs. U.S. pigs - U.S. costs are much less, but U.K. is more efficient in feed efficiency and pigs per sow per year.

The European Union and the U.S. will be competitors in the future for the same market. The U.K. population is very aware of what is going on in U.K. agriculture. Just because things are different in U.K. and U.S. agriculture doesn't mean they are better or worse!

Then it was Pat Murphy's turn. Mr. Murphy is the Under Secretary in charge of land use, conservation and countryside group for the U.K. ministry of agriculture fisheries and food. One of the principle differences between the U.S. and U.K. is the size. U.K. has a large 55 million population of which 1.8% of the workforce is involved in ag production and this 1.8% generates 1.2% of the GNP. Unemployment is lower in the rural areas and the population in rural areas is rising.

In the U.S. distance is built into our lives. In the U.K. it would be exceptional to travel 1 hour to see a movie, etc.

In the U.K. agriculture is a small part of the economy, but it is very important how the country looks. There are 18.5 million hectares of farm ground in the U.K. U.K. agriculture is very diverse. Because of the way agriculture has changed in the last 50 years, it has changed the look of the countryside. It is known as extractive farming (i.e. removing hedges).

Before World War II the U.K. produced 30% of the food it consumed. After World War II food production rose gradually to 80% of consumption.

The agricultural domestic policy for the U.K. changed in the late 70's and early 80's from further intensification to protecting the countryside.

The U.K. spends 2.7 billion pounds for farm supports of which 4% or 60 million is spent on environmental schemes. There are a wide range of environmental schemes in which farmers are paid for environmental reasons.

This is the beginning of U.K. elimination of price supports. The remaining support should be for environmental issues.

There are 22 areas in the U.K. designated as environmentally sensitive areas. These areas are either for landscape or wildlife. Depending on the area there are 4 or 5 levels of payments.

U.K. ag policy has changed in the last 10 to 15 years from production to environment. Miss Sue Brown was up next. Miss Brown is the Head of Trade Policy and Tropical Food Division for the Ministry of Agriculture.

GATT is very easy to criticize, but it is very important to put tight limits on production subsidies. The budget will keep the pressure on to continue to decrease these subsidies. Also, the prospect of Eastern Europe joining the EC will also keep the pressure on. Because the more wealthy members of the EC are not going to be in favor of subsidizing the agriculture in the poorer Eastern Europe countries while decreasing their own.

The U.K. and the U.S. disagree fundamentally on bananas. The U.K. believe they should

protect the production in the former British Common Wealths and the U.S. believes it should be a free market.

#### Questions & Answers.

1) What products does the U.K. feel they have an advantage with?

This is very difficult to answer, but the European farmers are more afraid of the U.S. than they need to be.

The U.S. has higher quality wheats, but the U.K. hope they will be very competitive in the future. They aren't there yet, but they are closing the gap rapidly.

The farmers in the U.K. feel very strongly that if government implies regulations on farmers that the farmers should be compensated.

Ken Wood then presented Miss Brown and Mr. Murphy a Kansas flag and a certificate from the Kansas Secretary of State for the Minister of Agriculture of the United Kingdom.

The afternoon was free for sightseeing and shopping in London.

The bus arrived at 5:20 (20 minutes late) at the hotel to take us to a pub called "The Albert" where we enjoyed a traditional fish & chips supper.

We then reboarded the bus and traveled across London to the Palace Theatre. At the theatre we enjoyed the play "Les Miserables".

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#### Tuesday, March 28

5:00 a.m. Wake up call

5:15 breakfast at the hotel

6:15 load bus for airport

We took U.S. Air flight 901 from London Heathrow to JFK in New York. We left Heathrow at 9:15 a.m. London time and arrived at JFK at 10:30 a.m. New York time. We went through customs at JFK for Chicago at 1:50 p.m. after a 40 minute delay due to fog in Chicago. Arrived in Chicago at 2:35 p.m. My group left Chicago at 3:30 for Kansas City. The group going to Denver was scheduled to leave Chicago at 3:14.

We arrived in Kansas City at 4:40 p.m., collected our luggage, said our goodbyes and dispersed for home.

**"With Leadership Comes Responsibility"**