August 2015

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Meet the Staff: Cheng Fang

“It is important for me to help U.S. policymakers and farmers understand what is happening in China and the implications for U.S. and world commodity markets,” Cheng Fang says.

Cheng, who was born in China, considers himself a bridge between cultures. He has been at Iowa State since June 1998 as an assistant scientist with the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI), part of CARD’s Trade and Agricultural Policy Division.

As an international market analyst for FAPRI, he assesses alternative policies and external factors in the oilseeds sector for implications on U.S. and world agriculture, and prepares baseline projections for the next 10 years. He is currently doing a scenario analysis on European Union (EU) enlargement and is ready to do research on Chinese accession to the World Trade Organization.

“China is a major player in the international commodity market,” he says. “It has experienced significant changes in its economy since 1978, but is still uncertain on many of its policies. I enjoy the challenge of working at CARD as a member of a group looking at world agricultural markets today and projecting their future.”

Cheng’s current research projects are cutting edge. At the annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association in Tampa (July 30-Aug. 2), he presented a paper, co-written with John Beghin, titled “Urban Household Oil and Fats Demand in China: Evidence from Urban Household Survey Data.” In August, he will present a paper, also co-written with John Beghin, titled “The Impact of Exchange Rates on Chinese Agricultural Comparative Advantage,” at the annual meeting of the International Agricultural Economics Association in Berlin, Germany. In the fall, he will meet with a colleague in Nanjing, China, to gather data for a research project: “Assessing the Impact of China’s WTO Accession on U.S. Cotton Exports in China.” He and Bruce Babcock are co-principal investigators on the project.

Just prior to coming to ISU, Cheng was a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He received a doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, and a master of science degree in agricultural economics from Nanjing Agricultural University.

His wife Pan, who was a pharmacist in China, works as a Certified Medication Aide (CMA) at a care center in Ames; she hopes to be a pharmacist in the United States in the near future. Their children are Penny, 12, and Tommy, 5. At home, Cheng spends many hours with Penny, already an accomplished piano and violin player; he helps her practice and attends recitals and concerts. With his family, he also enjoys working in the garden and riding bicycles.

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