

## Family Life and Farming (Directed Response)

I had no idea what to expect when visiting Poland for this exchange program. I knew that the food would be a little different than I was accustomed to, and the weather wouldn't be near as hot as Texas. Other than that, I had no clue what I was getting myself into, and I really didn't know that much. But once I got into the car with Adam, the 24 year old son of Wojciech and Celina, I knew that I was about to learn a lot more.

Upon arriving at the farm of the Krasnodebski family, I soon learned that their farm was extremely large in comparison to the other farms in the area. They have close to 84 hectars of wheat, 75 hectars of canola, and 165 hectars of corn. Unlike some families in the United States, everyone in the family plays an essential role in the proper maintenance and productivity of their operation, and they all work extremely hard. The majority of their farm is corn, which is expected due to the fact that Poland's highest yielding crop is corn. However according to Ewa (the oldest daughter at 25), the price of corn is very low, yet they still farm a great deal of it, hoping that the prices will rise and they will be able to sell for a high profit.

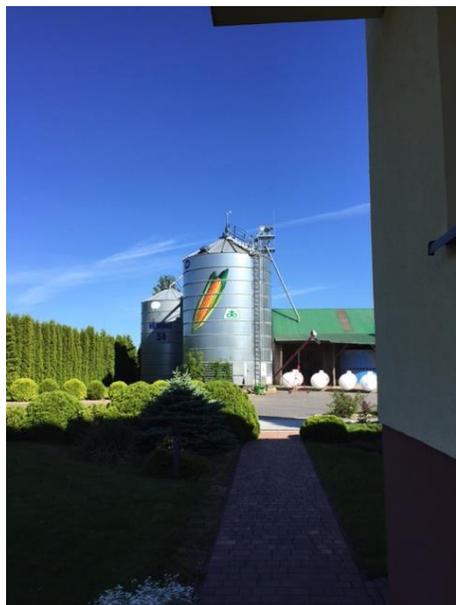


The first evening I was on the farm was spent examining all of their farmland. Although drought is a big concern for farmers countrywide, their crops are growing fairly well despite the circumstances. If there is sufficient rain in the next few months, and they can rid their corn of insects using effective spraying, their final production will be very good, and for that fact, the family is happy.

As stated previously, everyone has a role in the family. Wojciech oversees all of the farming operations, and makes sure everything is going smoothly. Celina helps her

husband in this area, and also helps cook, clean, and assist in the day to day chores that everyone is a part of. Adam, their only son, is crucial in executing tasks on the tractor such as sowing, harvesting, and spraying fertilizer. Ewa helps cook, and is conducting research on select crops to determine which techniques are the best in terms of fertilizing and crop placement. Lastly, Dorota, who is 22, helps out in all of these areas when she is not at school learning to be a pilot.

While they have different jobs, the family has one thing in common: hospitality. From the moment I arrived at their farm I have been treated as an honored guest, and they have gone above and beyond to make my stay in Poland as good as possible. They provided me with my own room, and more food than I could possibly



consume. Although they treat me as a guest in some aspects, they see me as part of the family, and that is exceptional, considering the closeness of their family. I have noticed that being a close family is something they put high emphasis on. The kids are older, but they still stay in their hometown to help on the farm. In America, many kids leave as soon as they are old enough, but that is not the case here. They eat together very frequently, and make an effort to visit other members of their extended family regularly. For example, Adam, Ewa, and Dorota go and see their grandmother at least 3 times a week, which is not always common in America.

I have not been here very long, but for the time that I have spent, I have worked quite hard. Many jobs have come up, such as mowing and weed eating a large portion of their land, spraying the crops to defend against pests, and setting up for numerous gatherings of people. When there is a job to do, every member of the family pitches in

and works their absolute hardest. On one occasion, a very large portion of their land needed to be cleared of weeds, so I was placed on one of the weed eaters. After a few minutes, I heard someone start the other weed eater, and out came Celina, ready to



help. Many women her age would not engage in strenuous work like that, but it did not bother her in the least.

Working hard is a universal theme across most people in the agriculture industry, and the Krasnodebski family exemplifies that model. It is encouraging to know that people across the globe try their hardest in whatever they do, and will not stop until the job is done. Coming from a family that does exactly that, it has been comforting to live with these people who are the same way. At their farm, they always try to find ways to make the best even better, and improve on their weaknesses in order to be as productive and efficient as possible.

In the world, people in the agriculture industry have the opportunity to have an influence on those who may not work as hard, and I am learning that it is up to us to help the world see the importance of giving something your very best. It is also of the utmost importance to help these same people realize that without the hard work of farmers like the Krasnodebski family, they would have nothing. It can be easy for some people to take it for granted that they have access to high quality foods, clothes, and products of that nature due to the labor of others, and we need to change that.

I have learned a great deal from living with this family, and hope that I will learn even more about their family life and farming as this month progresses.