

Gabriel Walch

Freestyle Blog

This first week in Poland has been amazing.

It all started off a little slow when we were stuck on the airplane in Houston for about two hours waiting for the weather to clear up. We went to Paris, France, and had to go through a security check point again, though we had already gone through one in Houston. As we flew into Poland I could see the patterns of the fields and how green they were. We landed, and there was a big van waiting for us to take us to our hotel. We dropped our bags there and headed straight to the shopping center where we got to try Polish homemade ice cream.



We exchanged currency there as well and headed back to the hotel, where there was a huge dinner waiting for us. We got to meet the President of the Polish Association of Cereal Producers, and he welcomed all the Young Famers who had attended this five week course.

For the first couple of days all we did was eat. I mean every meeting we went to had abundance of food.



I have never met a nicer group of people than the Polish so far. They greeted us with open arms everywhere we went. I have never been so far from home and welcomed into someone's life as much as these people have done. I have learned so much in the past couple of days about how their agriculture differs from ours here in Texas. One of the biggest things I learned about agriculture in Poland is that everyone prefers quality over quantity. Sure, in Texas we prefer quality over quantity but do we really do it; with some stuff, yes, but not always. In Polish agriculture, it is all about the quality of the product. An example of this would be how they make their apple juice. We learned how the apples are picked, cleaned, cut up into smaller pieces and the juice is squeezed from them. They are vacuum packed but the air is never actually placed into the bag, but is actually completely sucked out of the bag so the 100 percent apple juice will have a longer shelf life. That was just one thing we learned in our first three days of being there.

I am staying with the Szumulewicz family, who are very big into agriculture. They have 100 hectares which is over 200 acres if we want to get technical. They raise wheat, sugar beets, corn and canola. The farm is run by Peter who knows English quite well and has shown me a day in the life of a

farmer here in Poland. The first day I got there, he showed me my bedroom and I got to meet his mother, Margaret. After introductions we loaded up on the tractor and went and sprayed a little over 20 hecters of wheat.



His father Victor is the president of the Chamber of Commerce in all of Poland, which was a pretty big deal to me because he is such an important man.

Peter is getting a new John Deere tractor to replace an older one they have. They took me to a business meeting at the John Deere dealership, where they made a deal on a new tractor. The cool part about the business meeting is that after they came to some agreement we drank a few glasses of scotch in celebration of the deal being made. That has got to be one of the most relaxing business meetings I have ever been a part of!



Peter is engaged to Monica and she speaks English also, but is not fluent.



She made a deal with me that if I help her with English, she will help me learn Polish. She is quite good at English but just enunciates wrong sometimes so I help with that. She gives me two words to learn a day, and by the time I leave I should be able to say a full sentence to her.