

ICoMST 53rd Beijing, China

Once again the International Congress of Meat Science and Technology annual conference was held in a location reflecting its global perspective of the meat industry, this time Beijing, China. The theme of the 2007 meeting was Chance, Innovation and Challenge. These words describe not only the current meat industry but China as well. The meeting had an attendance of approximately 400 delegates who presented 311 reports on current research activities from around the world. Canada was represented by 7 delegates: 3 government employees, 2 students, 1 professor (retired) and 1 industry rep. The subjects discussed were safety, production, biochemistry, nutrition, quality, packaging, consumer issues, welfare and by-products. In addition, 15 Congress seminars were presented over the 4 day meeting at the Beijing Continental Grand Hotel located close to the 2008 Olympic park.



Beijing Olympic Park Birds Nest Stadium

The congress seminars highlighted some of the more recent technical and scientific breakthroughs in meat industry and can be found in *Meat Science: an international journal*, volume 77, September 2007, issue 1. These advances included improved safety by chemical dehairing of cattle hides (Koohmaraie et al.) and temperature data loggers during transport (McMeekin) to gas chromatography assessment of fresh meat flavours (Calkins & Hodgen) and quick-dry-slice machines for Serrano hams and fermented sausages (Arnau et al).

Post slaughter automation appears to be a major focus of the Chinese government and start up industries were represented outside the congress venue. Dry-cured products were very popular as the rapidly developing country is still expanding its refrigeration capabilities to individual households. Specialty products and flavours, well known in China such as Jinhua ham and Wuhan chicken were discussed. Flavours and processing styles that North American manufacturers should pay attention too, since China with over 1.3 billion consumers is reducing import tariffs.

Overall, the congress was a very enriching experience. Beijing (pop. 15 million) and China has over 400 years of history to impart to visitors. The city and its inhabitants are very considerate and proud to display their new technology as the old Mao based socialist system gives way to modern capitalism. Tours to landmarks such as the Forbidden City and the great Wall are easily obtained, as are longer trips to the Terra Cotta Warriors and modern cityscapes of Shanghai. China is however, a place in great transition –no-longer are Mao army jackets and black bicycles seen in great numbers; instead they are

replaced by crowds of tourists, and traffic and the smog can be overwhelming. To end the congress, a nice dinner was given and our sole Canadian academic representative Dr Swatland was given a life-time achievement award.



The Great Wall.... of tourists!



My son gets a warm hospitable welcome!

As unique, as this experience was, the next 54th ICOMST congress should be just as intriguing as it is being hosted by the country of South Africa, September 7 to 11, 2008. It will be run in concordance with the 17th World Meat Congress <http://www.worldmeatcongress2008.co.za/> The theme 'Meeting the global demand for meat'. Click on the web link and turn your sound way up.

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