

Pulaski News

PULASKI, WISCONSIN

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2007

VOLUME LXVII, NO. 6

Szymanski lends helping hand

by Kyle Ripley

Local farmer and dairy specialist Damon Szymanski sold his farm to his son in 1995 and journeyed into a whole new lifestyle.

He volunteers with ACDI/VOCA (Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance), Land O'Lakes, Winrock and Citizens for Foreign Affairs. These organizations are Non-Government-Agencies (NGOs) that are funded by USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Szymanski works with farmers, agricultural academies and cooperatives in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America visiting farmers, agricultural fairs and expositions.

His task is to share his experience as a dairyman, grain and seed producer with farmers, students and organizations how American farmers are involved to some aspect in the production, processing and marketing and how farmers are involved in cooperatives.

He also brings them information about soils, conservation, farm management, manure handling and much other information that made American farm-

ers the most productive and efficient in the world.

Szymanski has volunteered his efforts with over 60 trips to 17 different countries since he began in 1990. His first assignment took him to Poland, 1990; Latvia and Estonia 1992; Russia, Armenia, Moldova, Czech

menistan 2004; Kenya 2005; Paraguay 2006; and Uganda, 2007. The assignments are from two to six weeks in duration.

Szymanski recently returned from a trip to Brazil on a follow-up project in the Amazon region. He noted this is the most interesting region he has worked in. The water of the Amazon River fluctuates over 60 feet a year, so houses are built on floats that rise and fall with the water levels.

His next trip will bring him to Uganda, a country in Africa, New Lake Victoria. He will work with many small farms and implement ways to feed animals and track farm records. He left Pulaski on March 2 and will return on March 24.

"These trips are tremendous opportunities," Szymanski said, "and it's a privilege to travel and visit all the different countries."

ACDI/VOCA is always looking for volunteers and can be found at www.acdi/voca.org or landolakes.com. If you have any questions for Szymanski, you can call him at 822-5279, e-mail him at daszman@netnet.net or can e-mail ACDI/VOCA at webmaster@acdivoca.org.



Szymanski inspects a field of crops with researchers at the Research and Development Institute in Russia.



Colorful fruits and vegetables are for sale at a market in Brazil.



During free time in Russia, Szymanski ventured onto the Volga River to try his luck ice fishing.

Republic and Kazakhstan, 1993; Macedonia and Ukraine, 1994; Azerbaijan and Hungary, 1996; Croatia, 1998; Brazil, 2003; Turk-



Szymanski enjoys a typical, but uncomfortable meal in Turkmenistan.



In Ukraine it is common for guests to bring a gift of bread for the hostess.