Introduction

This internship builds on an ongoing collaboration between Cornell and Hebei Qimei Agricultural Science and Technology Ltd, an organic vegetable company located in Handan City, Hebei Province, China. The company – ‘Qimei’ – is expanding; questions regarding soil management to maintain and improve crop yield and quality are critically important. Jane Mt. Pleasant, Associate Professor in the School of Integrative Plant Science, Horticulture Section, will supervise this internship.

Purpose of the internship

1) To provide Cornell university students an international experience in organic vegetable production in northeast China for 8 weeks;

2) To provide Qimei Agricultural Science and Technology Ltd., with expertise in organic production methods that will enable them to improve the soil health of their farms.

3) Increase collaboration between Cornell University, Qimei, and organic growers in China.

Background

Hebei Qimei Agriculture Science and Technology Co., Ltd is the entrepreneurial effort of CEO and co-founder Mrs. Yuqi Zhao. Confident in the potential of organic agriculture,
vegetable production in China, Mrs. Zhao established the company in 1999 and purchased 200 acres for the first Qimei production site. A five-acre processing facility was built in 2006 and an additional production facility has since been constructed. Qimei now contracts with 3,900 farmers on 1700 acres. The company guarantees a target price for farmers with whom it contracts, regardless of market fluctuations. To meet market demand, Qimei recognizes farmers will need to maintain productive and healthy land; they are interested in promoting soil health so as to ensure the continued success of the company.

Beginning in summer 2012, three groups of Cornell undergraduates have completed an eight-week internship at Qimei each year. Their projects included: 1) sampling for soil health assessment and farmer surveys at five farm sites; 2) establishment of a compost experiment on two farm sites; and 3) establishment of green manure experiments at two sites. Student interns in 2015 will continue the focus on soil health with projects that address agronomic practices on Qimei farms.

**Skill Requirements**

We are looking for students in Soil and Crop Sciences, International Agriculture and Rural Development, Plant Sciences, Plant Pathology, Integrated Pest Management, Natural Resources, or students with backgrounds in production agriculture or those with experience with Chinese agriculture.

**Timeline and Logistics**

**Friday, February 20, 2015:** Applications due. Send to jm21@cornell.edu (see attached application)

**Friday, March 6, 2015:** Selection announced; visas and air tickets should be obtained as soon as possible.

**Thursday, May 21, 2015:** Depart for Beijing

**Friday, July 17:** Return to US

**Fall semester 2015:** Complete reports. (Students must register for 2 credits of Independent Study in Fall 2015.)

**Financial Support:** Qimei will cover accommodations and food costs. Interns will be housed at the Qimei facility in Handan City. Qimei also provides a stipend of $1000 for each student intern. Students are responsible for travel costs to and from China.