

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

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Bangladeshi visitor learns about Oklahoma agriculture

The first thing Rash noticed about Oklahoma is that there is so much open land compared to his crowded country of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a little smaller in land area than Oklahoma but is home to over 162 million people compared to 3.7 million in Oklahoma.

Spending two weeks as an intern with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) is giving this young businessman more than just an appreciation for wide open spaces. He is also learning about the inspections and rigorous food safety practices that are enforced by ODAFF to ensure safe and healthy agricultural products for everything from seeds, feeds and fertilizers to the food we eat.

Rash, who is formally known as MD Rasheduzzaman, was selected by the U.S. Department of State to participate in a six week Professional Fellows Program for economic empowerment. He and his colleagues from India and Myanmar are hosted by the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication/Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth in collaboration with universities in India and Myanmar.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience provides cultural exposure along with knowledge of business and technology. The internship designed for Rash provides experiences that will help him with the feed mill and chicken hatchery operated by his family. His Oklahoma tour includes meetings with regulatory officials and policy makers as well as tours of a fish hatchery, feed mill, aquaculture facility and goat research farm. In addition to becoming familiar with the University of Oklahoma campus, the tour includes visits to Oklahoma State University and Langston University.

"As I get the opportunity to meet other entrepreneurs from the U.S. and other countries, I will try to develop a business relationship with them," Rash said, adding that he wants to "find and explore some new and innovative ideas for future industrialism or business."

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Photo caption: MD Rasheduzzaman from Bangladesh learns about the state's agricultural crops from wheat farmer and Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese during a two-week internship to promote economic empowerment.