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China, Peoples Republic of

Market Development Reports

Business Travel in China

2004

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Report Highlights:

China, as the world's most populous country, has quickly become an important market for many U.S. businesses. USDA/FAS offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou warmly welcome U.S. business travelers to China. This introduction to travel in China serves to give you the confidence to explore China as a market for U.S. products.

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I. INTRODUCTION

China is the world's most populous country, with approximately 1.3 billion people living in a land area slightly larger than the United States. China has rapidly become an important market for many U.S. businesses, with its vast manufacturing infrastructure and huge number of emerging city markets. Each day, the nation that is home for almost one-quarter of the world's population greets business travelers seeking new export markets. In an effort to promote U.S. agricultural products in China, FAS established an Agricultural Affairs Office in Beijing and three Agricultural Trade Offices (ATO), one each in Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Beijing. The four FAS offices warmly welcome U.S. agricultural product exporters to China. This introduction serves to give business travelers the confidence to explore China as a market for U.S. products.

Many business travelers are hosted by the Chinese government or by companies. Increasingly, however, business travelers are coming to China independently. Planning is key, whether you are on your own or not. This introduction offers basic information about travel in China that will help you plan your trip.

II. BEFORE YOU GO

- Searching information on Internet

Before your visit, it will be a good idea to prepare yourself by briefly studying aspects of Chinese culture, history, daily business and political news. Surf the Internet before you go; there are many excellent websites from which to choose. For Chinese Characters and Chinese culture, try the "Chinese page" (<http://www.chinapage.com>, or <http://www.chineseculture.about.com>). For daily business and political news, check out the China section of the Hong Kong-based "South China Morning Post" (<http://www.scmp.com>). Dow-Jones and other news services publish websites devoted to China. There are also some well-known travel guides that publish pages on the web, such as the Lonely Planet series. While their series is aimed more at the backpacker-style of travel, there is a wealth of pertinent information on local customs, regional weather patterns, and useful phrases: (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>). We also suggest you to visit ChinaSite.com, which is one of the most popular website directories, and also an index for China/Chinese related resources on the Internet.

Here is a list of some other useful sites:

Shanghai Municipal Govt.:	http://www.shanghai.gov.cn
American Chamber of: Commerce	http://www.amcham-shanghai.org
That's Shanghai:	http://www.thatsShanghai.org
American Embassy:	http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn
Events, Entertainment & Culture:	http://www.xianzai.com.cn

- How to obtain a Chinese visa

Traveling in China requires a valid U.S. passport and a tourist or business visa.

There are several possibilities for a China visa, as follows:

- If traveling to China for only a period of days or weeks, we suggest you apply for an "L" type ("Tourist") visa at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., or at one of the Chinese consulates in Washington, New York, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles or San Francisco. A valid passport and two 2x2 pictures and appropriate fee should accompany the application, available from the embassy, consulate or travel service. To avoid disappointment be sure to confirm this information with the respective office prior to applying.

Jurisdiction Areas of the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in the United States:

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Los Angeles:

Jurisdiction Area: Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, US territories in the Pacific Islands

443 Shatto Place, Suite 300, Los Angeles, California 90020

Tel: (213) 380-2506 (recorded messages), (213) 807-8018 (live person available from 2-4 PM),

Fax: (213) 380-1961

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco:

Jurisdiction Area: Northern California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Alaska

1450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, California 94115

Tel: (415) 563-4857, Fax: (415) 563-0494

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Houston:

Jurisdiction Area: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, and Oklahoma

3417 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77006

Tel: (713) 524-4311, Fax: (713) 524-7656

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in New York:

Jurisdiction Area: New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, New Jersey

520 12th Avenue, New York, New York 10036

Tel: (212) 330-7409, Fax: (212) 502-0245

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Chicago:

Jurisdiction Area: Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and Michigan

100 W. Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610

Tel: (312) 803-0095, Fax: (312) 803-0122

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington:

Jurisdiction Area: All other states and areas in the United States

2300 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington DC 20008

Tel: (202) 328-2517, Fax: (202) 328-2564

- You need to apply for a China visa at one the locations mentioned above, if you plan to come directly from the United States to China. Alternatively, if you plan to enter China after a business stopover in Hong Kong, the U.S. Embassy/Beijing advises applying for a Chinese visa in Hong Kong. Most of the travel agencies in Hong Kong provide this service for a fee (1 or 2 days, depending on visa). Many travelers report that this is a hassle free experience. Or, you may apply for the visa yourself at the China Consulate in Hong Kong; it is cheaper

(prices start at HK\$100), but it usually takes longer than the service offered by travel agencies.

Consular Department, Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region
5/F Lower Block, China Resources Building
26 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
Hong Kong
Opening hours:
Mon-Fri: 9:00 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sat: 9:00 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Sun & Public Holiday: Closed

Enquiries: Tel: (852) 2585-1794
Tel: (852) 2827-1881 (Recorded message)
Fax: (852) 2585-1717

- If you need to stay in China for more than a month and are clearly working in an office as an employee and not a tourist, then it is best to apply for an "F" type ("business") visa. Business visa applications require a letter of invitation, which can be faxed from a China-based company or Chinese government office. It may also help to bring along evidence of your Chinese business connection. If you request a multiple entry visa that is valid for six months, it allows you to stay in China between 30 and 60 days each entry.

For more detailed information regarding how to obtain a Chinese visa, please visit U.S. Embassy website " www.usembassy-china.org.cn/irc/conference ", and then click on the "China visa".

- Climate

China's latitude and broad range of climates is similar to the United States. The north tends to be dry and cold, while the south is characterized by high humidity and lush greenery. The Shanghai area is caught in the middle, and has moderately cold, wet winters with hot, damp summers roughly comparable to central or southern Virginia. Further inland from Shanghai, summer weather remains extremely hot and humid. The Yangtze Basin is home to China's famously hot 'Four Furnaces': Nanjing (Jiangsu Province), Nanchang (Jiangxi Province), Wuhan (Hubei Province) and Chongqing (Chongqing District). Winters inland from Shanghai tend to be chilly and damp in most places, and in smaller cities and some offices winter heating may seem inadequate. Dress warmly, even if you will be in meetings all day. The best times to visit tend to be spring and fall, with fall weather being the most pleasant and reliable. Book air travel well in advance, as spring, end of summer, and fall tend to be the busiest travel seasons in China.

If you want to know more about the climate of China, we suggest you to visit Travel China Guide "www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/climate.htm," it has most updated information regarding China's weather.

- Medical/Health

Good health is more important point than anything else. While many business travelers have successfully ventured in and out of China without apparent regard for medical considerations, U.S. health officials recommend - but do not require - the following vaccinations: hepatitis A (recommended for all travelers), hepatitis B (for travelers who may have intimate contact

with local residents, especially if visiting for more than 6 months), Japanese encephalitis (for long-term (>1 month) travelers to rural areas or travelers who may engage in extensive unprotected outdoor activities in rural areas, especially after dusk) and typhoid (for travelers who may eat or drink outside major restaurants and hotels). Travelers should check with their physicians about rabies, if they plan to have direct contact with animals and may not have access to medical care. Also, all travelers should be up-to-date on routine immunizations, e.g., tetanus-diphtheria, measles-mumps-rubella, polio, and varicella immunizations. The availability of quality health care for international travelers has improved remarkably in recent years with the opening of many clinics staffed by foreign doctors catering to foreigners. The below listed centers can provide a first point of contact for travelers in the Shanghai area with illness:

Worldlink Clinic
Tel: (86-21) 6279-7688

Shanghai United Family Hospital and Clinics
Tel: (86-21) 5133-1900

Recent outbreaks

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was reported in China in April 2004, resulting in nine new cases (seven in Beijing and two in Anhui Province) before the outbreak was declared over in May 2004. Two of those affected were laboratory workers who had been performing research on the SARS virus at the National Institute of Virology. All the others either had close contact with one of the laboratory workers or with a nurse who became ill after caring for one of the researchers. The National Institute of Virology has been closed. No travel restrictions are recommended for China at this time. For further information, go to the World Health Organization.

Outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza ("bird flu") were reported in January-February 2004 from poultry farms in many parts of the country. Suspected or confirmed cases were described in the provinces of Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei, Gansu, Shaanxi, Anhui, Shanghai, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Yunnan, Henan, Jiangxi, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. New poultry outbreaks were reported in July 2004, as well as cases of avian influenza occurring in pigs in August 2004. No human cases have been reported in China.

Food and water precautions

Do not drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered, or chemically disinfected. Do not drink unbottled beverages or drinks with ice. Do not eat fruits or vegetables unless they have been peeled or cooked. This advice offers the maximum level of assurance. However, conditions are generally better in major cities and in 5-star hotels and upscale restaurants, which adhere to high standards of hygiene. Fortunately, safe bottled water is readily available throughout the country. Just be certain the seal has not been broken.

General advice

Bring adequate supplies of all medications, clearly labeled. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair.

On long flights, be sure to walk around the cabin, flex your leg muscles periodically, and drink plenty of fluids, preferably water.

- What to Bring

Clothing

Depending on where and when in China you plan to travel, you will find a wide variance in climate and temperature. Latitudes are comparable to North America, so seasons will be similar. Expect hot rainy conditions in extreme south China beginning in March, while typhoon season generally runs from July through September.

While business dress is generally less formal than in major U.S. cities, most Westerners wear standard business attire for business meetings and dinners. Also bring comfortable shoes since you may do a fair amount of walking.

Electrical Adapter Kit

Not only is the standard electric current different in China (220 volts, versus 110 volts in the U.S.), so are the outlets. In fact, you may find more than one type in the same hotel room. Unfortunately none will accept the standard U.S. two- or three-pronged plugs. Bathrooms in larger hotels in major cities have built-in converters for shavers. Beyond that, if you consider your hair dryer, laptop computer or other travel appliances necessities, arrive in China equipped with appropriate converters and adapters. Fortunately, most international airports now sell adapter plug kits. If you arrive unprepared but are in a 5-star hotel, the concierge will probably be able to assist.

Metric Conversion Calculator or Chart

China uses the metric system for all weights and measures, including temperature. If you are not familiar with metric measures, a pocket conversion calculator or chart will come in handy, or $9/5$ Centigrade + 32 = Fahrenheit; 1 inch = 2.54 CM.

Cash or Travelers Checks and a Money Belt

Bring cash or travelers checks. Credit card acceptance is growing, especially in cities and major tourist destinations. The most common "international" credit cards are accepted at major hotels, hotel restaurants, branches of Friendship Stores, government-run antique and handicraft stores, and in factory sales rooms that deal with foreign tourists. One traveler from ATO discovered that not all restaurants in Shanghai accept "international" credit cards; rather, they accept "local bank" credit cards. Always ask before you order. Generally, if you plan to travel outside the major cities, or dine and shop outside the larger hotels, you will need plenty of cash, which will be safest if carried in a money belt. Traveler's checks can be converted to local currency at most hotels and at branches of the Bank of China. (See "MONEY" and "SAFETY" for more information.)

Business cards and mementos

It would be most helpful to bring Chinese-English bilingual business cards. And, after your meetings, it's a nice gesture to offer a small company-related or USA memento (e.g. pens, caps, mugs). For more information, please read report CH4835 "Chinese Business Etiquette".

Product Samples

Bring product samples, especially for new to market items. Product pictures are a good alternative if you can't bring samples. It is extremely rare for a foreigner's checked baggage

to be searched upon arrival at airports in China. Therefore, business travelers should bring small quantities of product samples packed inside their regular tourist luggage (not packed in cardboard boxes). Additionally, many U.S. companies have successfully shipped a box or two of samples and brochures via DHL, FedEx or other carrier to a Chinese address. We don't recommend shipping samples by airfreight on commercial carriers. If there is no alternative, then make sure to write the following on the invoice: "No Commercial value; Not dangerous; Sample only," and make sure that the price of the sample is marked zero, no commercial value. Otherwise a lot of problems will likely result, such as delays, tax assessments, or other bureaucratic hassles.

- Safety

China is a relatively safe country. However there are still several points we would like to remind you of:

- Please take care when you cross the roads, streets and highways. This is due to the general chaos on the streets. Currently Shanghai has just updated facilities for city traffic. Adequate traffic signals and improved street lighting make the roads more organized than before. However, you still need to pay attention to the vehicle that is turning a corner when you cross a street. This is because the turning vehicle will not stop or reduce the speed: in practice there is no stopping before turning right on red.

- Violent crime is a rarity, but theft, especially pickpocketing is still a social problem, especially in the three major cities (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou). The problem is particularly pronounced in areas where foreigners congregate. Don't assume a thief is a poor person or looks poor; more and more thieves appear to be distinguished figures. So be careful, and don't leave your belongs unattended, especially when you are in a trade show or reception.

- Valuables should be locked in a hotel safe.

Americans living in or visiting China are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in China or the appropriate Consulate, and obtain updated information on travel and security within China.

Beijing:

The U.S. Embassy in China is located at 2 Xiu Shui Dong Jie, Beijing 100600, telephone: (86-10) 6532-3431, 6532-3831, and after-hours: (86-10) 6532-1910; fax (86-10) 6532-4153. The U.S. Embassy web site address is <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn> and the e-mail address is AmCitBeijing@state.gov.

The Embassy consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi.

Shanghai:

The Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai is located in the Westgate Mall, 8 th fl, 1038 Nanjing Xi Lu, Shanghai 200031 telephone: (86-21) 3217-4650, ext. 2102, 2013, or 2134; after-hours: (86-21) 6433-3936; fax: (86-21) 6217-2071; e-mail address: shanghai_acs@yahoo.com.

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang.

Chengdu:

The U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu is located at Number 4, Lingshiguan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nanlu, Chengdu 610041, telephone: (86-28) 558-3992, 555-3119; fax (86-28) 8558-3520 and the e-mail address is ACSchengdu@state.gov; after-hours (86-0) 13708001422.

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guizhou, Sichuan Xizang (Tibet), and Yunnan, as well as the municipality of Chongqing.

Guangzhou:

The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou is located at Number 1 South Shamian Street, Shamian Island 200S1, Guangzhou 510133; telephone: (86-20) 8121-8418; after-hours: (86-) 139-0229-3169; fax: (86-20) 8121-8428 and the e-mail address is GuangzhouACS@state.gov.

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian.

Shenyang:

The U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang is located at No. 52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110003, telephone: (86-24) 2322-1198, 2322-0368; after-hours: (86-0) 13704019790; fax (86-24) 2322-2374 and the e-mail address is ShenyangACS@state.gov.

This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin.

III. GETTING THERE

Currently only two U.S. passenger airlines (United and Northwest) are authorized to fly to Mainland China. Flights are available to Beijing and Shanghai. Recently UA has opened direct service between Chicago and Shanghai. If UA and Northwest are fully booked, consider taking Air China, China Eastern or China Southern from the West Coast of the United States. All three fly to the States and many leading Asian destinations such as Tokyo, Seoul, and Singapore. China Southern offers direct flight service between Guangzhou and Los Angeles, while Air China and China Eastern fly from Shanghai to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Check with your travel agent to make sure that they can issue a boarding pass for Chinese airlines or domestic connection flights within China. On code share flights, such as Northwest/Air China, this should not be a problem, as long as your domestic connections are on Air China's scheduled flights. Travel through Hong Kong offers a wider variety of transport options.

Domestic travel within China is possible only on Chinese-owned carriers or via special charter. Booking tickets in the USA for domestic flights in China has become much easier than in the past, Check with your travel agent in the USA; many can purchase these tickets for you, **but do remember to reconfirm your flights and tickets once you arrive China**. Your hotel or a travel agent in China should also be able to do this. If you purchase tickets, the Foreign Agricultural Service has also identified several local travel agents. These travel agents are business-oriented with experience assisting business travelers with logistical arrangements all over China, such as hotel accommodations, air and rail ticketing,

transfers, English speaking translators, tour guides and pre/post business meeting sightseeing tours. As a U.S. Government agency, we cannot guarantee the reliability of each of these companies in every situation, but many business travelers have used these companies successfully in the recent past.

Great West Corp. Ltd.
Contact: Ms. Rachel Wang
Tel: (86-21) 6279-8489; Fax: (86-21) 6279-8488
Email: grtwest@public.sta.net.cn

Shanghai China International Travel Service Co., Ltd.
Contact: Ms. Jin Lan
Tel: (86-21) 6289-8279; Fax: (86-21) 6289-7838
Email: jinl@scits.com

Shanghai CYTS Corporation, Euro-American Department
Contact: Ms. Lu Yang
Tel: (86-21) 6433-1322; Fax: (86-21) 6437-0041
Email: Lawrence@scyts.com

IV. HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

In larger cities like Shanghai you may find a large choice of accommodations from truly full service five-star hotels down to much more modest and economical options. Hotels that have less than a three-star rating are not recommended for business travelers. Most non-Chinese-speaking Americans prefer four or five-star hotels, not only because of the amenities, but also because of their English-speaking staff and good facilities.

Travelers to other cities in China may wish to explore booking accommodations with one of the well-known international chain properties (Hilton, Holiday Inn, Inter-Continental, Shangri-La, Sheraton, Marriott, etc.)

V. ARRIVING IN CHINA

Chinese authorities require all foreign visitors to undergo passport, health, and customs formalities prior to entering the country. The process is simple and involves completing brief forms provided by most international airlines prior to landing. If you do not receive these forms, they will be available near the arrival gates at the airport.

Health Declaration Form - must be filled out by all foreign visitors and handed to officials at special counters in each airport.

Entry-Exit Form - required of visitors not traveling with a group. Handed to immigration officials along with the passport at border control counters in each airport.

Customs procedures have been simplified. Only visitors with large amounts of cash, commercial samples, office equipment (not just a single laptop computer) have to complete the Customs Declaration Form at the airport. If you must fill out the form, retain the stamped copy until you leave China, for inspection by Customs officials.

All baggage must be x-rayed at some ports of entry before you will be allowed to carry it through Customs. Beyond this, only periodic spot-checking of luggage occurs.

VI. MONEY

Unless your host in China arranges your transportation from the airport, you will need to change some money at the airport in order to get a taxi to your destination.

The official Chinese currency is the Renminbi (RMB). The basic unit of currency is the yuan (or, kuai). Each yuan is divided into 10 jiao. Yuan notes are issued in denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1. There is also a 1-Yuan coin. Jiao is issued in both paper currency and coins in denominations of 5 and 1 each.

The RMB is not traded on international markets. It can be bought or exchanged within China and Hong Kong and along some northwestern borders. It is also possible to purchase some RMB from currency exchange windows in American airports, but the rate is particularly unfavorable and shouldn't be considered under normal circumstances. Any RMB you have left should be converted before leaving the country. Make sure you keep enough to pay for transportation to the airport. (See "LEAVING CHINA".)

Current exchange rates are published in the China Daily. This rate applies in all banks, hotels, airport and retail (Friendship Store) exchange counters. Travelers checks bring a slightly better rate, however some banks and hotels add a small fee, which may offset the advantage. The currency is pegged against the US dollar, U.S. \$1 = RMB8.265.

You may be approached on the street by people offering to "change your money" at a better rate. FAS does not recommend that you try this due to "sleight of hand" tactics and counterfeiting. There is also the occasional crackdown on black market money changers often found loitering within a few feet of bank entrances, so it is prudent to avoid the practice altogether.

Banking hours are generally 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays, and 8 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturdays. Hotel exchange counters are open longer, seven days a week.

VII. GETTING AROUND - TRANSPORTATION WITHIN MAJOR CITIES

The easiest way to get around major cities such as Shanghai and other major business centers is by taxi or hired car. You can arrange taxi or car service through the concierge at most major hotels. In most cities, you can also hail a cab on the street. If you're traveling on your own, consider picking up a recent English/Chinese bilingual map, available in most hotels.

Taxis in most cities are metered, but the quality of service varies depending on the size of the city. Furthermore, drivers do not generally speak English. Unless you speak fluent Mandarin, ask the hotel concierge to provide a card that shows the name of your destination and your hotel in Chinese characters. Keep the card and use it when you want to return. Taxis usually charge by distance and time taken, so check that the driver has turned on the meter at the beginning of each trip. Traveling between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. will result in a 25% surcharge. On arrival, ask for a receipt. You are less likely to be cheated if you get in a taxi at the taxi stand in front of a major hotel, particularly if the doorman gives you a card with the taxi's license plate number. Be advised: Due to the terrible traffic situation during rush hours (8:00-9:00 a.m. and 5:00 -7:00 p.m.), leave early for your destination; getting there will no doubt take longer than you think.

VIII. LANGUAGE

Mandarin Chinese is the official language of China. However, in some areas, people speak a local dialect or a regional language (Cantonese, Shanghainese, Sichuanese) that will be unrecognizable to other regional groups, although nearly all speak Mandarin fluently as a second language. The Agricultural Trade Office maintains a partial list of available translation services.

Consider carrying a small traveler's guide to Chinese words and phrases -- a good primer for learning to speak a few civilities like "thank you" (*xie xie* in pinyin, pronounced like "shay-shay"), "hello" (*nin hao* in pinyin, pronounced like "neen how"). For more information, please see report CH4835 "Chinese Business Etiquette" - Learning some greetings in Mandarin

IX. TIPPING

With the great influx of foreign travelers to China, the practice of tipping is on the increase. Many hotel restaurants add a 15% service charge to the bill. In most other instances, tipping is not expected and may cause embarrassment for the staff. However, in the most developed coastal cities if you tip a bartender or waiter, they are unlikely to refuse. Bear in mind that most bars and restaurants have already included the service charges in the bill. Giving or not giving a tip depends on you.

X. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HOME

- Phone

Domestic and international long distance calls can often be made through direct dialing or booked through your hotel. Most major hotels in larger cities will add the charges to your hotel bill, however, some business travelers report having to pay for the calls immediately after they are completed. If you are unable to place a long distance call from your room, even when such services are noted in hotel literature, contact the front desk or operator and tell them you wish to have your room phone reconnected to long distance service. Some hotels turn off long distance service to unoccupied rooms and forget to reconnect promptly once a guest has checked in.

Collect calls are much cheaper than direct calls from China. Because of the changing rates, the least expensive method for placing phone calls varies. Currently, the AT&T, MCI and Sprint cost-per-minute for calls to the United States that are longer than a few minutes is substantially less than the Chinese rate.

IDD (International direct dial) and DDD (domestic direct dial) phones, fax, international/domestic post, telex and telegraph are available at the better hotels or the local Post & Telecommunications offices. Check costs, minimum connection time, fax paper charge and service charges when calling or faxing from a hotel.

If you have an international calling card with one of the major long distance carriers, check with your representative before you go about the most economical rates and method of calling. Calls to China from the United States are usually less expensive than calls from China to the United States.

Another option is the IP Telephony card, which must be purchased from a domestic telecom provider for use within China. The card functions for all intents and purposes like a calling card; however, it routes calls through the Internet, thus allowing significant savings for a minor reduction in sound quality. International calls cost approximately \$0.60/minute and the cards are available in denominations up to RMB500 (approx. \$60). Ask the hotel

concierge or have a Chinese-speaking member of your company inquire at the local phone company office.

- News Media

English-language media published in Shanghai includes China Daily, Shanghai Daily, Shanghai Star and China Today. There are also some locally published monthly entertainment magazines geared at expatriates, and you should look for them at the concierge desk of your hotel. They include the Shanghai Scene, Shanghai Talk and City Weekend. Many foreign newspapers (The Asian Wall Street Journal, the International Herald Tribune, USA Today) and some U.S. news magazines may be available at hotel kiosks at prices higher than in the U.S. Most major hotels in the large business centers offer at least one or two satellite television channels, such as CNN, BBC and Star TV; however, reception varies.

- Mail

Airmail/domestic stamps are available at the front desk or kiosk in most major hotels. Some hotel business centers provide comprehensive letter and parcel services. Major international courier services operate in many cities; however, service takes three or four days instead of overnight. Rule of thumb: If you need it and it cannot be sent by fax, bring it with you.

XI. TIME

All of China is in the same time zone, and referred to as "Beijing" time. Beijing time is 13 hours ahead of the east coast of the United States (EST), except during daylight savings time when the difference is 12 hours. For example, 9 a.m. in Shanghai is 8 p.m. the previous evening in New York (EST).

Chinese time is 16 hours ahead of Pacific Time.

XII. BUSINESS HOURS

Business hours vary with season and location but are normally 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon; 1:00 p.m. - 5 p.m. Use your weekends for sightseeing or report preparation. The commercial centers in most hotels can provide you the one-day travel agents' information.

Banking hours usually run from 9 a.m. to noon, and then from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., while on Saturday's hours are from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Some banks close on Mondays. Department stores usually open at 9:00 a.m., and close around 9:00 p.m.

Also, do not plan a business trip for the key Chinese holidays. Days to avoid include October 1 (Chinese National Day, similar to the U.S. Fourth of July), May 1 (International Labor Day) and the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year, which is based on a lunar calendar and falls in mid-January to mid-February, depending on the year). National Day and Labor Day are both week-long holidays, and Spring Festival lasts at least two weeks, when much of the country shuts down and the transportation networks are overloaded with people heading for home or back to work.

U.S. exporters are also discouraged from visiting Guangzhou during the twice per year (April 15-30, October 15-30) Canton Trade (Export) Fair which features mostly light industrial export items. Hotel and restaurant prices double or triple during the fairs while traffic jams worsen, meetings are difficult to arrange, and transportation in and out of the city is booked well in advance.

XIII. LEAVING CHINA

Make sure to confirm departure arrangements at least 72 hours before flight time. If you don't, you will risk losing your seat. The concierge at your hotel, or someone with your host group, can handle this detail.

The RMB 90 airport departure fee is now included in the cost of your air ticket fee. Your passport, boarding pass and exit form must be presented to the border control officials before you will be allowed to proceed to the gate. Expect crowds and delays each step along the way; so allow about two hours prior to your departure time for international flights. Don't be late.

Welcome to China! We encourage you to come over and explore this dynamic country.

(ATO Shanghai Office - December 2004)

Appendix A. Post Contact Information

Shanghai	Agricultural Trade Office, Shanghai (ATO/Shanghai) Tel: (86-21) 6279-8622 Fax: (86-21) 6279-8336 Email: atoshanghai@usda.gov
Beijing	Office of Agricultural Affairs (FAS) Tel: (86-10) 65321953 ext. 300 Fax: (86-21)65322962 Email: agbeijing@usda.gov Agricultural Trade Office, Beijing (ATO/Beijing) Tel: (86-10) 8529-6418 Fax: (86-10) 8529-9962 Email: atobeijing@usda.gov
Guangzhou	Agricultural Trade Office, Guangzhou (ATO/Guangzhou) Tel: (86-20) 8667-7553 Fax: (86-20) 8666-0703 Email: atoguangzhou@usda.gov