

Trip Report for Travel April 6 to April 27 to support “Developing Institutions and Capacity for Sheep and Fiber Marketing in Central Asia”

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Traveled April 6 and 7th, passing through Frankfurt, Germany, and arriving in Almaty, Kazakhstan on April 7th, at 11:30 pm. I was met by four gentlemen, including Sayat, Serik, and two interpreters, Azyz and Aidos.

On April 8th, I exchanged money, obtained an OVIR registration, which allowed me to travel throughout Kazakhstan, adjusted to the time change, and awaited the arrival of Bob Stobart. In the evening project personnel gathered to become acquainted and work on the logistics for transportation to Zhanekurgan.

April 9th was a team building day. In the morning, I exchanged money and did some shopping. At 11 am, we (Azyz, Hillary, Allen, Sayat, Bob, Me) met at the flat, then went to the Green Market. Visiting the meat market portion of the market was very interesting. We visited a church, then a world-famous ice rink. Logistics were organized for Saturday's travel, including with a phone call from Carol.

April 10, another busy day. I did chores in the morning, including completing a paper review, mailing the review and other emails. Later, we checked-out of the hotel and went to the flat, then to "Ramstore" Mall for groceries. The team then visited a farm, which included essentially a larger feeding lot for horses and some goats and cattle - mostly horses. The farmer fed the animals wastage from bread making, the bran I believe. The farm included fruit bearing trees, which recently replaced strawberries. A diversified production system. The meat is sold to Almaty. After the farm we went to a very large mosque, and got to look inside, under the large dome. It contained what must be a 25 ft chandelier. After, we went to a coffee shop, then on to the railway station to begin the oversight ride. Sleeping compartments were available.

April 11. After a 14 hour ride, we arrived in Chemkent at about 8 am, met by a taxi driver that Serik knew. There we loaded into two taxis, and drove to a cafe for breakfast of lugnom (sp?, noodles and meat). We then drove to Turkestan, and toured a massive mausoleum. We ate at another cafe, more lugnom, and then continued our journey on to Zhanekurgan in a rented Soviet era van. We arrived at the Zhanekurgan sanitarium at about 4:30 pm, and rested until dinner. After dinner, I met with Carol and Aidos to discuss the presentation.

April 12. After breakfast and a type of bath, I met with Hillary, Carol, Aidos, and Aidar to review her presentation to the farmers. She refined and simplified her message considerably. We then traveled to "The Old Man's" house, and started the workshop. It went well, with perhaps 40 participants. There was a great deal of ceremony, and even more food, but Hillary managed to make it through the information she wished to present. First, Carol and Aidos showed their 18 min. video (a bit distracted by people coming and going all the time), then there was a lunch break, and finally Hillary gave her presentation. People asked many questions, and (as is part of the culture, while she was presenting) spoke very much between themselves. Aidar collected about 40 people's names, and their associations (almost all farmers). Hillary passed-out samples of cashmere,

including perhaps six different colors and grades, including diameters. There was brown, light brown, tan, and white varieties, and cashmere from Mongolia, China, Chili, and Scotland (and likely others). I collected samples as well, although they are weakly labeled. After more food, Hillary demonstrated combing using both her comb and Berik's hand made combs, on a dark-haired sheep, and used two other sheep to point to. People asked about price expectations a great deal. Some said they would attend the second session tomorrow. This is by far the most photographed workshop I have been to. The Kazakhs love to have their picture taken. There were two video cameras going, plus four or five cameras. I have several pictures. Near the end of the meeting, more food, and Bob had part of the head of a cow placed in front of him, and he cut-off parts of it and passed it to all of us. Then we ate five-fingers. We were presented with gifts. I received a blue-velvet robe with yellow trim. I was told the Russian or Kazakh name, but cannot recall. All in all, not a bad first day, and the message was delivered I think, that people could make more money if they combed their animals rather than shearing them and selling at a very low price.

April 13. After breakfast, we paid for our rooms, and then departed for the workshop. When we arrived, there were some attendees there, but most were still being picked-up by the buses. At perhaps 11:15, Hillary began her brief presentation, which was to discuss how clipping the guard hairs off goats early-on in the process helped, and then how to group them. She demonstrated with a single goat, then others began clipping and combing from 9 to 10 goats (they added one as they went). The cashmere from each goat was kept distinct from the others, then at the end, after perhaps 40 minutes of people taking turns and clipping animals, Hillary graded each yield. She scored each goat on fiber color, length, diameter, crimpiness, and crimp to the end of the fiber, dryness, and overall yield. Some of the goats scores quite well (e.g., < 15 microns, white cashmere, good yield). The winning animals received a ribbon. Carol answered a few questions (validating the project to local officials), then we went inside for lunch. A more reasonable affair than the previous day, with the normal bites and five fingers, as I recall. After long goodbyes and some payments, we went to the sanitarium for a rest. Soon thereafter, we departed for a visit to Serik's home village, and a visit to a fellow who herds animals for many people in the region. We stopped by his home, then visited two of his flocks, one of goats and one of caracal sheep. Lastly, we visited a spring that is very important to the local herders, as a permanent water source. The spring had fishes, as well as amphibians ... so far from other sources, it would seem, but still vertebrates present! We returned to the herder's home and had a bountiful dinner. Later we sauna-ed.

April 14. In the morning, following breakfast, I paid out perhaps \$5000 in expenses associated with the project. At 10 am, we left the sanitarium, and drove almost straight-through to Monkent, which is near Chemkent. We joined the other taxi members at the home of Serik's sister-in-law, and met a series of his relatives or friends, including an 87 year-old war veteran. Many toasts were made. At 5:15 pm, we departed for the train, and traveled to Almaty, arriving at about 8:30 am Thursday morning.

April 15. A somewhat busy day; although generally quiet, it was broken-up with bouts of chaos. We arrived in the early morning at the hotel, well, at about 8:30 am. We got checked-in (a process), then I cleaned up. At 11 am I met Mourat, then went out at noon and got lunch, and did a great deal of internet work. After 2:30, I came back and slept for a bit, then joined Bob on more internet work. Oh, I went shopping as well. At what was perhaps 6, we met Aidos at the front desk, and

when Prof. Karakulov arrived, checked him in. At 7 pm, the group went for drinks, and were joined by the Prof. for dinner. A late dinner wrapping up after 9:30, I would guess.

April 16. We held a project meeting at the Sheep Breeding Institute, meeting initially in the Director's Office. I took quasi-verbatim notes of the meeting. See those notes for details. In the evening, we paid for the translators services, then I paid for my room for more time, and met with Prof. Karakulov, and had a flurry of telephone calls.

April 17. A day of catching up, including reading. I received many project visitors, and paid hundreds of dollars in bills. I also used the internet. Seven project members or relations had dinner.

April 18. An afternoon of more bill paying, and picnic. Discussions were had regarding CRSP personnel, and plans for SCALE/CRSP work.

Notes for the following days were parsed to include only those relevant, in any way, to the CA-CRSP project

April 19. A very busy day, meeting Azyz at 8:30. He reviewed the notes from the CA-CRSP meeting, then we went to an Internet cafe to answer emails. We then went to the library, and spent a long time filling-out forms requesting books, gathering climatic data for Zhanekurgan and western Almaty Oblast. Azyz and I were assigned library cards ... I now have a Kazakhstan National Academy of Science Library Card. It took more than an hour to simply fill-in requests for 22 volumes. We then went to the Cartography store, and shopped for about 45 minutes. Four topography maps at 1:200,000 for Zhanekurgan were purchased. Those maps will be digitized, and will provide roads, hydrology, shopping centers, etc.

April 20. Another busy day, meeting Azyz at 9:00. We traveled directly to the Hydrometeorological Institute, but arrived one-half hour early, so we found a copy shop, and had copies made of state farm legends. We then met with the Hydrometeorological Institute people, and found that climate data is quite expensive. For 360 numbers (i.e., on 30 year monthly total or average parameter) it costs more than 15,000 KZT, or about \$110. For 14 weather stations, it will cost about \$1700, including more information for the focal weather station, whatever that may be. (In sum, climate data will not be purchased for Zhanekurgan, unless we find a stronger need.) We then traveled to Sayat's, placing phone calls and transferring some files. A trip to the library followed, with more success than I had anticipated. It appears climate data from 1930 to 1965 will be available, at least for some parameters. Lastly, I went computer shopping, to assist Carol in purchasing CA-CRSP computers for Serik and Aidos. We visited seven stores, collecting price lists.

April 21. A long, busy day. We spent the early part of the morning at the Internet Cafe, to send important messages. Then we spent a fair amount of time at the Statistics Bureau. There are many statistics available, they are just in Russian!

April 26. Azyz and I then made copies at the library, including climatic data for Zhanekurgan. Azyz bought maps, completing our collection for Zhanekurgan.

April 27. Early in the morning (4:20 am), I departed for Frankfurt, Germany, and Denver.