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### **MARATHON GINSENG INTERNATIONAL: RACING TOWARDS CHINA**

Dr. Ming Tao Jiang had a goal to begin selling his company's Wisconsin ginseng directly overseas. The Founder of Marathon Ginseng International saw a USDA trade mission to Dalian, Shenyang and Changchun, China as an opportunity to learn about the local ginseng business and identify potential distributors. In May 2014, the company used Branded Program funds, supplied by Food Export-Midwest, to assist with travel expenses for the trip. "Wisconsin ginseng is valued in China for its unique qualities. There are very few direct distributors, so we hope we can expand into the market," he commented.

Dr. Jiang said the mission helped them to gain valuable insight about the Chinese market, "We have learned what products are better suited for China and have adjusted our strategic planning which saves us time and money." Mixed with financial assistance through the Branded Program, the company is poised for success. "Because we were featured with USDA and have governments behind us, we gained recognition with potential clients. The Branded Program gave us a much higher profile with potential clients and distributors," Dr. Jiang remarked.

The mission allowed Dr. Jiang to forge relationships with local distributors and they are currently negotiating with several interested parties for the distributorship. As a result of the mission, the company has hired several additional staff members to accommodate for their expanding business.

Marathon Ginseng Garden, of Weston, WI, specializes in the production, distribution and research of Wisconsin ginseng. Currently, the company produces and markets about 5,000 pounds of ginseng, much of which is sold domestically and then sent abroad to China through third parties.

Food Export uses funding from the Market Access Program (MAP) to help America's small businesses increase their exports of food and agricultural products. As these exports increase, these small businesses are creating jobs and improving the strength and stability of our agricultural economy. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are non-profit organizations that work in collaboration with their member state departments of agriculture and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. They offer a wide range of programs and services that help boost America's agricultural exports.