# Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Welcome to the Global Minnesota podcast connecting, informing and engaging Minnesota with the world.

00:00:07 Speaker 1

Our mission is to advance international understanding and engagement in every corner of the state.

00:00:13 Speaker 1

We do this. The variety of programs, including our public events, K12 education programs, great decisions, discussion groups and professional exchange.

00:00:24 Speaker 1

To learn more, visit our website at globalminnesota.org. I'm Nicholas Hayen marketing and communications manager for Global Minnesota and today we are kicking off a new direction for our podcast series by interviewing some of the amazing people that bring Minnesota to the world and the world to Minnesota.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

So we're starting off this new podcast direction with a look into the international exchanges program here at Global Minnesota.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

Global Minnesota hosts exchange programs with professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds to bring together international visitors with their counterparts.

00:00:57 Speaker 1

Here in Minnesota, most but not all of these groups are organized as part of the US State Department International Visitor Leadership Program, which finds candidates from all over the world and brings them to.

00:01:10 Speaker 1

The United States for professional exchange.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

So for example, we recently hosted a group of agriculture and trade specialists from nearly a dozen countries and created a custom itinerary for them to meet with local agriculture and food safety companies like Ecolab and General Mills.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

So on these visits they swapped industry best practices and learned about groundbreaking new initiatives in food safety and regenerative agriculture.

00:01:36 Speaker 1

As it happens, I'm joined today by one such visitor, heat atesh, director of commodity exchanges at the Union of Chambers and Commodity exchanges for Turkey.

00:01:47 Speaker 1

Heat recently visited Minnesota from his home country of Turkey A and has joined podcast to talk about his background.

00:01:54 Speaker 1

But what he learned from his time in Minnesota.

00:01:56 Speaker 1

So welcome, it's great to have you here tell us a little bit more.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

About yourself.

00:02:00 Speaker 2

Yeah, thank you very much Nick.

00:02:02 Speaker 2

It is really great for me as well to be here and thank you very much for your kind invitation.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

And really, I'm very happy to be here with you in global Minnesota.

00:02:14 Speaker 2

My name is Hitesh.

00:02:16 Speaker 2

I am living in Capital city of Turkey, Ankara.

00:02:21 Speaker 2

I I am graduated from international relations and my post graduation is about finance and economy.

00:02:30 Speaker 2

Uhm, I have been working approximately 20 years for the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Turkey.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

I I am ex professional basketball player.

00:02:43 Speaker 2

I'm married.

00:02:45 Speaker 2

I have a 13 years old.

00:02:47 Speaker 2

Love, listen and also he is high talent basketball player as well.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

He was selected to national team is.

00:02:54 Speaker 2

Really very successful.

00:02:56 Speaker 1

Oh my God.

00:02:58 Speaker 2

That's all.

00:03:00 Speaker 2

This is ether page.

00:03:03 Speaker 1

Great, uh, yeah I I couldn't play basketball.

00:03:05 Speaker 1

I'm much too short for that, but it's great to hear that you're doing so.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah yeah yeah I I had very good experience while I was in Minnesota.

00:03:09 Speaker 1

Well in that.

00:03:14 Speaker 2

I watched made the match between the Minnesota Timberwolves and Los Angeles Lakers.

00:03:19 Speaker 2

It was a really dream, like a dream for me because all the basketball players who are living in abroad of United States watching.

00:03:27 Speaker 2

This kind of made some live NBA matches really like a dream.

00:03:32 Speaker 1

That's fantastic, we're we're very happy.

00:03:34 Speaker 1

To have you here.

00:03:35 Speaker 1

So first step, why don't you tell us just a bit more about your work?

00:03:38 Speaker 1

In particular, you know, what do you do as director of commodity exchanges in Turkey?

00:03:43 Speaker 2

Yeah, I I as I mentioned.

00:03:45 Speaker 2

You weren't working.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

In the Union of Chambers Commodity Exchange of Turkey, my institution is the highest level of non governmental organization.

00:03:55 Speaker 2

Represent the whole private sector with the 1.5 million members.

00:04:01 Speaker 2

We are also international.

00:04:05 Speaker 2

Institution because we have a branch in Washington, DC and also we have a Trade Center in Chicago to facilitate Turkish exporters export process to United States.

00:04:18 Speaker 2

As you understand from the name of my institution, comma data exchange is the part of this institution.

00:04:25 Speaker 2

We have 113 comma data exchange in Turkey. They are public legal institutions and we are dealing with agricultural trades and also we are creating high tech tail cultural trade systems in Turkey and also I am working closely.

00:04:45 Speaker 2

With the Turkish cover.

00:04:48 Speaker 2

To promote trade and agricultural interests on behalf of the industry with the goal of increasing agricultural trade and solving market access and policy issues.

00:05:03 Speaker 2

These are crucial information about my job.

00:05:07 Speaker 1

It's excellent.

00:05:08 Speaker 1

I bet that you get to meet a lot of interesting people in that line of work, and especially around the world with, you know just how interconnected we are in agriculture and international trade and agriculture in particular.

00:05:20 Speaker 2

Yeah, yes.

00:05:23 Speaker 1

So what was the?

00:05:23 Speaker 1

Process then of joining this program and which cities did you end up visiting besides just Minneapolis?

00:05:31 Speaker 2

Yeah, I I have been.

00:05:32 Speaker 2

Working also very closely with the US Embassy.

00:05:36 Speaker 2

In in Ankara.

00:05:37 Speaker 2

Before I got selected to Ivy LP program.

00:05:40 Speaker 2

We tried to carry out some projects together with the US embassy, so the embassy nominated me as a candidate participants and.

00:05:50 Speaker 2

The US department.

00:05:51 Speaker 2

Of state approved and thank you very much for this reason to United States Department and also the Embassy of United States in Ankara for this opportunity.

00:06:02 Speaker 2

Uh, I have visited Washington, DC.

00:06:06 Speaker 2

Jackson in Wyoming state Minnesota.

00:06:11 Speaker 2

Minneapolis, Tallahassee in Florida State and also Jackson Mile in Florida State.

00:06:19 Speaker 1

That's great, they really sent you all over the country then.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

Yeah yeah, yes.

00:06:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, and who in in Minnesota then did you visit?

00:06:29 Speaker 1

You know which organizations, corporations, entities and I guess what were some of the really important or surprising things you learned?

00:06:37 Speaker 1

From these visits.

00:06:38 Speaker 2

Yeah I I have.

00:06:40 Speaker 2

Really gained several.

00:06:41 Speaker 2

Experiences I showed some best practices about agricultural trade when I was in Minnesota and.

00:06:49 Speaker 2

Firstly, I visited.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

University of Minnesota extension.

00:06:54 Speaker 1

Right?

00:06:54 Speaker 2

I had very fruitful roundtable discussion there and.

00:06:58 Speaker 2

And the second visit was to Minnesota Farm Bureau.

00:07:03 Speaker 2

They are advocate for agricultural needs on behalf of 78 farm bureaus and also 30,000 member families. And it provides up-to-date information on legislative and regulation issues which impact agricultural workers.

00:07:23 Speaker 2

And also they.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

Now a young farmers committee.

00:07:28 Speaker 2

And also Rangers committee.

00:07:30 Speaker 2

I think this structure is really very important for these kind of institutions.

00:07:36 Speaker 2

And also the.

00:07:39 Speaker 2

For my experience, this is really prominent that this Farm Bureau provide 8,000,000 support.

00:07:46 Speaker 2

U.S. dollar

00:07:47 Speaker 2

Support from government to its members who were affected negatively from drought and climate change.

00:07:56 Speaker 2

It's really very good example.

00:07:59 Speaker 2

For me, and also for the other participants countries, I think.

00:08:04 Speaker 2

The third one is.

00:08:05 Speaker 2

We visited Institute of Agricultural and Trade Policy.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

We learn.

00:08:11 Speaker 2

Trade legislation in United.

00:08:14 Speaker 2

States for the 4th we visited the partners in.

00:08:19 Speaker 2

Food solutions organization.

00:08:22 Speaker 2

They are working to strengthen food security, improving nutrition and increase economic development.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

It's very strange and very interesting and appreciate it.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

Very much appreciated.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

I think the fifth one is Hamel among village shopping center.

00:08:44 Speaker 1

Oh yeah, that's a great place.

00:08:47 Speaker 2

Strange place, I don't like Asian foods but yeah.

00:08:54

This is also.

00:08:55 Speaker 2

This place features 17 restaurants, 10 farmer markets and also mung card ethnic group from Southeast Asia.

00:09:10 Speaker 2

Saying yeah, I like this place.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

Although I don't like Asian food.

00:09:15 Speaker 2

But I try to do my best, yeah?

00:09:19 Speaker 1

And that one was that was mostly performable is that?

00:09:23 Speaker 1

Were there professional exchanges happening there, or did you just go and you know get to sample that?

00:09:27 Speaker 2

Yep, yeah, of course I discover some sample of foods because there is nothing to.

00:09:27 Speaker 1

You would expect.

00:09:31 Speaker 2

Eat for me, yeah.

00:09:33 Speaker 2

I had to try something there.

00:09:37 Speaker 2

This sixth one is a second harvest heartland.

00:09:41 Speaker 2

I think this place is source of pride.

00:09:45 Speaker 2

For really it is one of the best food bank.

00:09:46 Speaker 1

Oh, definitely.

00:09:50 Speaker 2

System in the world I think.

00:09:53 Speaker 2

Receives extremely large quantities of donated.

00:09:57 Speaker 2

Food and purchases food.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

Directly there they are serving 59 counties in Minnesota and Western being consumed and last year 107 million meals were delivered by the.

00:10:17 Speaker 2

Way of this.

00:10:19 Speaker 2

Second harvest heartland.

00:10:21 Speaker 2

And in Turkey.

00:10:23 Speaker 2

We are also trying to improve this kind of food, bank systems and Many thanks to our Ministry of Agriculture.

00:10:29 Speaker 2

They are really working very hard about it with the collaboration of my institution.

00:10:34 Speaker 2

I hope in a recent time we will achieve a big success in food Bank system in my country.

00:10:44 Speaker 2

The other place we visited.

00:10:46 Speaker 2

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

00:10:49

Right?

00:10:51 Speaker 2

It's really very interesting for me.

00:10:54 Speaker 2

It was very interesting because Minnesota is really have strong agricultural production capacity.

00:11:02 Speaker 2

Uh, you have 16 billion U.S. dollar agricultural production volume and you are the sixth biggest state in the United States. It's really very important, I think.

00:11:14 Speaker 2

Uh, if you come to agricultural export, you are the fourth biggest state in the United States with 7 billion U.S. dollar export problem. It's really very important in international I I am involved in agricultural trade and international agricultural trade as well in eight agriculturally.

00:11:35 Speaker 2

International agricultural trade market.

00:11:38 Speaker 2

The trade war is talking between China.

00:11:42 Speaker 2

And United States.

00:11:44 Speaker 2

But I saw exact opposite of this in Minnesota.

00:11:49 Speaker 2

Uh, because China is the first biggest export partner of Minnesota State.

00:11:58 Speaker 2

It's really very strange.

00:12:00

Right?

00:12:03 Speaker 2

And and also after that I visited general meats.

00:12:10 Speaker 2

They have the regenerative agricultural.

00:12:12 Speaker 2

These two in general means they are implementing now and this system is a holistic principle based approach to farming and ranching that seeks strengthen ecosystem and community residences.

00:12:31 Speaker 2

There they want to understand the context.

00:12:34 Speaker 2

Of your farm operation.

00:12:37 Speaker 2

Minimize soil disturbance and maximize crop diversity.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

Keep the soil covered.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

Maintain living roads, rear year round and also integrate livestock.

00:12:51 Speaker 2

What are the outcomes of this regenerative agricultural system?

00:12:57 Speaker 2

Economic resilience.

00:12:58 Speaker 2

In farming communities and soil health, water, biodiversity and coal, and hurt well-being, these are nothing very important. Outcomes this.

00:13:11 Speaker 2

Is nick? It looks like.

00:13:15 Speaker 2

Green Deal system in European Union.

00:13:18 Speaker 2

But the main difference between regenerative agricultural system and Green Deal in European Union.

00:13:28 Speaker 2

With the Green Deal process European.

00:13:30 Speaker 2

Union focused on the organic farming.

00:13:34 Speaker 2

But in my present point of view, and in my experience, a General Mills system is more effective and more fruitful for agricultural production, and also any cuts to trade as well.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

Yeah, and I'm from Memphis.

00:13:49

These are the places.

00:13:50 Speaker 2

We have I visited when I wasn't.

00:13:53 Speaker 2

Minnesota I want to.

00:13:55 Speaker 2

Give you the brief information, but I gain and.

00:13:58 Speaker 2

What I saw there, yeah?

00:14:01 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's that's really great and great to hear from so many partners of global Minnesota and corporate supporters and just organizations that you know we we really kind of work together to help, you know.

00:14:13 Speaker 1

Get the word out about what, what we're all doing here.

00:14:17 Speaker 1

I think it's really interesting what you said about regenerative agriculture as.

00:14:20 Speaker 1

Well, you know there's so.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

Many so many positive steps that that is leading towards where corporations and especially like General Mills now are looking at it less of just you know how do we make a quick buck in these areas around the world?

00:14:34 Speaker 1

It's very much these long term investments that are designed with the people who are actually doing the work in.

00:14:42 Speaker 2

You're right, I agree with you absolutely.

00:14:46 Speaker 1

So then what were you able to share about your work in agricultural practices from tracheo that your Minnesota colleagues found helpful or surprising?

00:14:56 Speaker 2

Yeah, I mentioned you in the first question in two here, by the way of omelette exchange, we are creating high tech agricultural sales systems and also we have online markets.

00:15:11 Speaker 2

Still, the seals we are calling it license warehouses in Turkey is our infrastructure of online market system.

00:15:22 Speaker 2

A system, also a colleague, and my colleges found this system very helpful.

00:15:28 Speaker 2

For that I made I think.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

Tree presentation about how we how we have created this system, how what's going on, I would structure and as such well.

00:15:40 Speaker 2

I think this is helpful for.

00:15:42 Speaker 2

With them

00:15:43 Speaker 1

One of the questions I had just based on kind of what you were saying is about about food banks and one question I had just about from Turquia is are those predominantly run through the government or through nonprofit entities or what does that landscape look like in your?

00:16:01 Speaker 1

Home country in.

00:16:02 Speaker 2

Food banks is.

00:16:03 Speaker 2

It's working with by by the private sector.

00:16:06 Speaker 2

In Turkey and of course.

00:16:10 Speaker 2

In Cultural Ministry are supporting this kind of system?

00:16:13 Speaker 2

We are the we are the high high leg length institution of private sector.

00:16:20 Speaker 2

That's why we are in collaboration with the private sector and the with the ministerial as well about improving these systems in my country.

00:16:31 Speaker 1

So overall, then, how was your Minnesota experience you know?

00:16:34 Speaker 1

What were the experiment, the experiences that you're going to take forward through your work and your life?

00:16:40 Speaker 2

Yes, yes of course of course.

00:16:43 Speaker 2

It was great experience for me first of all.

00:16:47 Speaker 2

Of course I.

00:16:48 Speaker 2

I learned something about regenerative agricultural system in General Mills and we have been talking with the guys there.

00:16:56 Speaker 2

If we if we will be in cooperation and we will be with collaboration, doing something in Turkey, it's really very important system.

00:17:06 Speaker 2

For agriculture, production and making calls for trade as well.

00:17:10 Speaker 2

And then I had a chance to be in one of the best example of food bank.

00:17:16 Speaker 2

The second harvest.

00:17:17 Speaker 2

As I mentioned you where we are trying to improve something in Turkey.

00:17:21 Speaker 2

Uh, about food bank system and I absolutely aware that we have several coworking topics between United States.

00:17:30 Speaker 2

And Turkey and.

00:17:32 Speaker 2

I think I can be very good bridge.

00:17:34 Speaker 2

Between these countries, because I I I trust myself, I I have this kind of experience.

00:17:41 Speaker 2

About agricultural trade, we can do several things between together.

00:17:45 Speaker 2

And and also as I mentioned, you have mixed professional basketball player.

00:17:54 Speaker 2

LA Match is unbelievable for me, really.

00:17:58 Speaker 2

These are the best experiences.

00:18:01 Speaker 1

That's awesome, yeah, I know that you know Turkey, Turkey.

00:18:05 Speaker 1

Yeah, excuse me, I'm the United States.

00:18:07 Speaker 1

Still gotta so gotta get.

00:18:08

No problem.

00:18:08 Speaker 1

Used to.

00:18:10 Speaker 1

New pronunciation which is accurate in, you know, at least in the Arabic language, it's much more accurate than that.

00:18:17 Speaker 1

You call it Turkey.

00:18:18 Speaker 1

I assume it's the same in Turkish, though I did not study that language.

00:18:23 Speaker 1

But no, I think that you know there's a lot of room for that partnership to grow and develop develop.

00:18:28 Speaker 1

You know the United States and Turkey have had quite a long relationship of working together, and especially on the areas of international trade and agriculture, and one of the one of the things I wanted to mention to ask.

00:18:43 Speaker 1

For you is you know, of course, given Russia's war in Ukraine, there's created a lot of major issues with global food supply and price increases around the world.

00:18:53 Speaker 1

But of course, Turkey has played a very big role in helping to negotiate this deal to get grain out of Ukraine and into the global market to help stabilize.

00:19:03 Speaker 1

So I was just wondering what you could tell us about either Turkey's role in this conflict, mediating that or Turkey's role, just in global food production more generally.

00:19:14 Speaker 2

Yeah, I.

00:19:16 Speaker 2

I agree with you.

00:19:18 Speaker 2

This war has created the major issues with global food supply and price increases.

00:19:26 Speaker 2

Turkey has a quite critical role in helping to negotiate a deal to get grain out of Ukraine.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

It was called.

00:19:35 Speaker 2

The Kuwait.

00:19:38 Speaker 2

It was called like this.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

Turkey implemented very good balanced policy between Russia and Ukraine.

00:19:50 Speaker 2

As you remember in last July.

00:19:53 Speaker 2

Russia and Ukraine signed the deal in Stone.

00:19:57 Speaker 2

Yeah, after that Turkey has coordinated with Moscow and Kiev open a corridor from Ukrainian port City of Odessa and after that 9.2 million tons cereal.

00:20:14 Speaker 2

Carriers via this clear way, the 47% of these cereals carried to Europe to any percent carried to Asia. 16% carried Turkey 13% carrying to Africa and the 4% carried to.

00:20:35 Speaker 2

Middle East

00:20:38 Speaker 2

As you remember also then we were in Minnesota to Russia announced that before we try this steal from this deal.

00:20:47 Speaker 2

And also with the initiative of.

00:20:51 Speaker 2

To Turkish government with with my President, Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan there grain export Russia resumed to making trade to all over the world.

00:21:02 Speaker 1

Yeah, and and we're it's great that Turkey has been able to play that role, sort of moderating in the middle, because of course the United States has firmly been back in Ukraine throughout every aspect of this and use your role not just in the region, but geographically is obviously very critical.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

That's right.

00:21:21 Speaker 1

To that you know you know.

00:21:23 Speaker 1

Those those yllanes you know in the area so.

00:21:24 Speaker 2

Of course, of course.

00:21:27 Speaker 2

Each reasonable as you.

00:21:29 Speaker 2

Know Turkish geographical position.

00:21:31 Speaker 2

We are between very good bridge of Europe and Asia.

00:21:37 Speaker 2

That's why we are.

00:21:37 Speaker 2

Using the geographical advantages, sometimes we are using.

00:21:41 Speaker 2

These advantages, and as I mentioned.

00:21:44 Speaker 2

You to Turkey really implemented very good balance.

00:21:46 Speaker 2

Balanced policy between Russia and Ukraine yeah.

00:21:50 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah, and I think that's definitely to Turkey's credit and just the awareness that that you have this role to play and that you can actually help to stabilize that global food market and to bring so much of this crane to places that really need it. Like you know, places in Middle East and Africa which were already.

00:22:10 Speaker 1

In some places, on the brink of famine, even before this all began.

00:22:14 Speaker 2

Right?

00:22:16 Speaker 1

Right so lastly, I guess what's one thing you wish everyone knew about your home country of Turkey?

00:22:22 Speaker 1

Just anything at all.

00:22:24

Yeah, OK, uh, I.

00:22:27 Speaker 2

Am working in economical based institution.

00:22:32 Speaker 2

With the vision of our institutions president instead of a surgical, we are trying to promote trade and economical position of private sector in Turkey and in the world as well.

00:22:46 Speaker 2

The United States is a light country often.

00:22:51 Speaker 2

And with the leadership of my institution's President, Mr Rufus. Charge global, we are trying to increase trade volume.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

A 200 billion W dollar between United States and Turkey.

00:23:08 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, I hope we achieve this success and with the collaboration of private sector and governments aside, uh?

00:23:20

I want to say.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

This I hope we can achieve this success and we have reached you reached 100 a billion U.S. dollar trade volume between two countries.

00:23:32 Speaker 1

Yeah, I think that would be excellent. Like you said US and Turkey have been long allies. You know one of the original or one of the early founding members of the NATO alliance.

00:23:43 Speaker 1

Of course, so very important in that regard as well, so I I hope as well that we can continue that collaboration.

00:23:50 Speaker 1

So anything else you wanted to to say mention funny story.

00:23:55 Speaker 2

No, thank you very much.

00:23:56 Speaker 2

Uh, for you thank you very much again for your kind invitation.

00:24:00 Speaker 2

I am very happy.

00:24:01 Speaker 2

To be with you.

00:24:03 Speaker 2

And the people from Minnesota you give me this chance.

00:24:06 Speaker 2

Thank you very much again.

00:24:08 Speaker 2

Hope to meet as soon as possible.

00:24:12 Speaker 1

Of course, well, thanks for joining the podcast and for visiting Minnesota.

00:24:15 Speaker 1

We're really happy to have you here.

00:24:17 Speaker 2

Thank you very much.

00:24:18 Speaker 2

I am very happy too.

00:24:21 Speaker 1

That's all the time we have today thanks to the US State Department International Visitor Leadership Program for facilitating this program and to corporate members Ecolab and General Mills and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Partners and Fluid Solutions. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota Extension for meeting.

00:24:41 Speaker 1

With all of these, visit.

00:24:43 Speaker 1

Thanks as well to all the members and supporters of global Minnesota who make these programs possible, so be sure again to check out our website at globalminnesota.org where you can find information about upcoming events.

00:24:55 Speaker 1

Learn more about our international programs and sign up for our weekly newsletter.

00:24:59 Speaker 1

Thanks for listening and we'll talk to you soon.