

IFEAT INDIAN STUDY TOUR

9TH – 18TH JUNE 2013

On June 9th some 33 IFEAT members from 17 countries met up in Madurai, South India for the start of the 6th IFEAT Study Tour.

The group was a good mixture of first time and regular Study Tour attendees, from different sectors of the F&F industry. Everyone was there to learn and get a better understanding and a closer view of F&F ingredient supplies coming from South India. It proved to be another superb tour thanks to the support, excellent hospitality and commitment of the Indian companies that were visited - all of which were IFEAT members.

Early on Sunday morning some of the early arrivals visited two local flower markets followed by an afternoon visit to the Meenakshi Temple, Madurai, amongst the most revered temples of India with over a 1,000 year history. Then followed the Welcome Dinner where George Paul, the Chairman of the Local IFEAT Organising Committee, welcomed delegates.

For the next seven days, delegates travelled by luxury coach through southern India from Madurai to Coimbatore, Ooty, Mysore and Bangalore. Then followed a flight from Bangalore to Kochi (Cochin) for a further three days. During the Tour delegates visited flower markets at Madurai and Mysore and a number of floral extract, essential oil and oleoresin production and processing units. The floral extract units visited (namely Chennai Bioflora, Jasmine CE, Nesstate, Encee Aromatics, NESSO and Synthite), were both large and small, processing a range of naturals including jasmine (sambac and grandiflorum), tuberose, mimosa and champaca. Some extraction units also manufactured nutraceutical and bio-ingredients. A major disappointment of the Tour was that we were unable to see flower collection and extraction because of seasonal delays in flowering. Also, no sandalwood was available for distillation.

During the visit to Ooty, the highest hill station in South India, the previous excellent weather turned colder and wetter and sweaters and raincoats came out. Near Ooty we visited an NGO, HOPE, which was growing and distilling a wide range of essential oils. Women and some 300 families were the beneficiaries of these operations. At Mysore, the centre of Indian incense making, we visited incense manufacturing operations, as well as the old sandalwood oil factory, which was more a relic and a living museum of India's largest sandalwood facility.

Following the excellent weather in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, most of the group flew down to Kochi (Cochin), where we met up with the monsoons. Fortunately the gods had been appeased and we were able to tour the world-class spice extraction facilities of Kancor, Plant Lipids and Synthite in dry conditions, despite torrential downpours at other times. Each of the companies provided superb tours of their extensive facilities and show-cased a range of traditional and new products

Throughout the Tour, each company provided excellent introductions and videos to explain their operations. Each company had put in a lot of work to provide detailed analysis of their production and processing operations – leading to all the delegates becoming much wiser regarding the specific production and processing operations. Moreover the companies often provided gifts as mementoes of the visits, as well as sponsoring various meals and entertainment, which showcased India's rich mix of cuisines as well as its cultural heritage of music, dance, drama, and historical buildings. The days were long and full, starting with the wake up calls, followed by the company visits and then the meals, music, concerts and dancing in the evening. In addition, the drives through the reserve forests provided an opportunity to view various fauna and flora including wild elephants and oxen.

Following the Tour, a shorter trip was arranged to the sandalwood forest and distillation near Munnar. Delegates learnt first hand how difficult it has become to safeguard sandalwood trees from illegal felling since the whole area of over 1,000 hectares is enclosed in a 3 metre high wire fence in highly difficult terrain.

Another outstanding feature of the Tour was the level of intra group discussions amongst the participants and company representatives, each one willing to share information about what is perceived to be a very secretive industry. This is a very healthy sign for our industry.

Thanks to the local committee and IFEAT Study Tour Committee and particularly to the companies who hosted and sponsored the Tour as well as Govan Travels, the tour agency in India and to Jairaj, our very knowledgeable tour guide.

Make sure you book up early for the China Study Tour from 31st August to 8th September 2014.



SUNDAY 9 - TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2013

These are just some of the comments from the participants following another excellent IFEAT Study Tour to South India:

"Thank you for the inspiring Study Tour! Congratulations! You organized impressively well!!! For sure, I will never forget the smell of fresh jasmine sambac, jasmine grandiflorum, tuberose and sandalwood for the rest of my life and intend to use them more than ever in my creations!"

"I really enjoyed it and looking forward to China..."

"The Tour was once again, a great moment of discovery and enchantment"

"It was my first study tour and one of my first experiences within the IFEAT world and I have to say that I had a great time!"

"Congrats to those who put their souls and energy in this fantastic tour, this tour was great learning again and the extraction methods were also very interesting..."

"... a fantastic two weeks, with the most delightful bunch of people in the F&F industry"

