



## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL MISSION...

Tobacco Associates (TA) 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. Leaf Training and Study Mission concluded in Raleigh on Friday, September 29, 2023. This year's class consisted of 20 participants from 12 countries. To date, 180 tobacco officials from 29 countries have gone through this intense and unique educational program.

Upon leaving, here is what some of the participants had to say on WhatsApp:

*"I would like to say thanks for Hank and Veronica to organize this last 2 weeks, it was amazing!"*

**Matyas Boda, Continental Tobacco Group, Hungary**

*"Thanks to team TA... Hank, Veronica, Sharon, Bobby and Cathy. You made us feel at home and felt we did not want to leave Raleigh... We left with everlasting memories and great friendships were built."*

**Marta Damyanova, KT International, Bulgaria**

*"We're home now. I would thank you for Hank and Veronica that organized the amazing seminar. And thank you to all of you to make great memories together."*

**Pong Kulachet, Tobacco Authority of Thailand**

*"The training was amazingly organized and educational. The food was delicious and the activities were very very fun. Thank you all once again for being so willing to share your experience and knowledge."*

**Bao Lee, Richloom Tobacco Company, USA**

*"Thanks Hank and Veronica for the past two weeks and the beautiful time we had as a group."*

**Ron Kwok, Lubritrade, Singapore**

*"I also thank one more time to Hank and Veronica, Bobby, Cathy, Sharon for all this wonderful training and organization"*

**Recep Eti, Sangroup International, Singapore**

*"Thank you so much Hank and Veronica for everything you have done these two weeks, it was a great experience."*

**German Rodriguez, MontePaz, Uruguay**

*"Thank you again for 10 amazing days with you and the team. Great memories have been made for life."*

**Baldev Mistry, Star Agritech International, South Africa**



The seminar began on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. The first three days were spent learning U.S. flue-cured grade Standards with AMS instructor Mr. Bobby Wellons.



Day four included a stop at the NC Plant Sciences Building on NC State's Centennial Campus, where Dr. Bill Collins – NCSU/ NCDA&CS, Dr. Matthew Vann - NCSU, Norman Harrell – Wilson County Extension and Beth Farrell – NCDA&CS gave presentations and shared information on their respective organizations and roles.

Later that afternoon, we visited the Oxford Tobacco Research Station, where Thomas Cobb, Superintendent, and his staff gave an excellent overview of the type of research conducted at the station and how they operate. Beth Farrell also accompanied the group to the station for the visit. TA entertained the group over the weekend by planning shopping, sightseeing and other unique and fun excursions.



Week two started on Monday in the classroom with Bobby Wellons, where we completed the U.S. flue-cured grade standards training. Bill Luffman, TA Consultant, gave an excellent presentation on Cigarette Blends. Rick Smith, Independent Leaf, explained Leaf Dealer grade blends in anticipation of what they would learn about later in the week.



On Tuesday, the group traveled to Briar View Farms in Callands, VA, to tour TA Board Member Robert Mills and Logan Mills farming operations. Jennifer Atkins, Virginia Department of Agriculture, helped arrange the day's itinerary in Virginia, which concluded with a tour of JTI's Receiving and Leaf Processing facilities in Danville, VA.

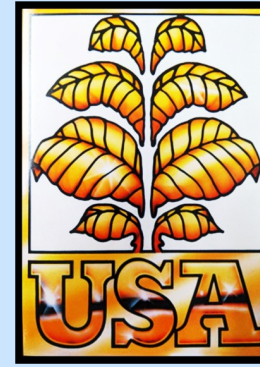


On Wednesday, the group headed to Wilson, NC, to view Alliance One's receiving station, RC Commodities, visit American Tobacco Exchange to see the live auction and tour Alliance One's processing facility to end the day. That evening, TA hosted a Leaf Supplier dinner where supplier personnel could meet and spend social time with the group. We thank the suppliers that attended.



On the last training day, we traveled to Louisburg, NC, to visit the farming operations of Steve and Travis Nelms, N&N Farms. Derek Day, TA Board Chairman, Jackie Thompson, TA Board Member, and local NC Farm Bureau officials joined the group.

Later that evening, TA held its customary Awards Banquet for the group in Raleigh. Officials from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia farm organizations were invited, as well as media personnel. Many who directly participated in the program attended along with other industry leaders and TA's Board Members. In his opening remarks, Mr. Shawn Harding, NC Farm Bureau President, welcomed the group to North Carolina and expressed his gratitude for their visit. Mr. Hank Mozingo, President, presided over the banquet, where the participants received a Certificate of Appreciation for completing the training mission and other meaningful gifts.



Thank you for supporting and participating in our organization's programs benefiting U.S. flue-cured tobacco farmers.

*Hank, Veronica & Board*

Thank you to all who participated in this year's program. We are fortunate to have such great people and organizations working together to promote U.S. flue-cured on behalf of our growers. Contacts and relationships are still vital to promoting U.S. flue-cured worldwide and TA's extensive international contact base continues to grow annually with this and other promotion programs.



Oscar Giodarno , Leaf and Technical Department Manager at C.I.T. Montepaz SA, Uruguay, had this to say about his colleague's participation in the seminar...

*"I am contacting you to thank you on behalf of Montepaz and my colleagues who went to the Tobacco Associates course. Congratulations on the program, it has been a success from every point of view. It allowed us to have a great and very complete idea from the cultivation, harvesting, curing and classification of U.S. Flue-cured tobacco. Marketing and the subsequent blending process were also included, visiting processing plants.*

*Congratulations also and our gratitude for the excellent organization of the stay, visits, lunches, reception and farewell of our colleagues. They were impressed by your kindness and concern that everything is good and in order. Thank you again and count on the interest on our part for a new course in the future."*