

Day Four – Journey to Tucumán and visit to Citromax Group

With an early wake-up call, the group departed from the hotel in El Cafayate and headed towards the Tucumán region for the first processing unit visit of the tour.

Along the way, the journey itself became part of the experience; the road climbed to the highest elevations of the week, winding through dense forests and offering glimpses of local life, including a stop at a charming farm where cows grazed peacefully against a backdrop of rolling hills.

Lunch was served in Tafí del Valle, where a square table arrangement facing a projector screen awaited the group. This has been the perfect occasion for the citrus association of NorthWest Argentina, ACNOA, to deliver a concise briefing on Argentina's lemon industry.

Delegates learned key figures regarding total lemon production, the division between fresh-market and processing volumes, and current trends in oil and juice pricing – an ideal primer for the factory tours ahead. This session served to equip participants with critical insights that would greatly enrich their understanding during the upcoming factory visits.

Citromax Group

The first factory visit in Tucumán was to Citromax Group, a company with over 60 years of expertise and a global reputation for excellence in lemon and blueberry production and processing.

Deeply committed to sustainability, innovation, and food safety, Citromax operates from the heart of Argentina's lemon belt, where its 12,000 acres of lemon groves benefit from a unique microclimate that fosters exceptional fruit quality.

Their vertically integrated production model ensures full control over the entire supply chain – from nursery cultivation through to industrial processing. Citromax specialises in a wide variety of lemon derivatives, including essential oils, juice, pulp, and dried peel, produced across both conventional and organic lines. Processing more than 225,000 tonnes of lemons annually, the company ranks as the third-largest lemon producer in Argentina.

During the visit to their processing facilities, delegates were able to witness first-hand the step-by-step transformation



of fresh lemons. The scale of operations was astonishing: watching the lemons move from sorting stations to the essential oil extraction units was a truly unforgettable experience.

The highly automated nature of the facility, with the strategic positioning of machinery designed to minimise handling and maximise product recovery efficiency, was particularly remarkable.

As one delegate put it: "Entering the facility and watching the lemons move through the machines to the essential oil extractors was a moment I will never forget – it made my heart beat a thousand times."

Citromax places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability across all operations. The company operates a sophisticated water treatment plant that recycles and purifies wastewater, ensuring that no contaminants are released into the local environment.

The visit not only demonstrated the technical excellence of Citromax but also reinforced key themes that would resonate throughout the tour: innovation, sustainability, vertical integration, and the human passion behind every drop of oil and every kilo of lemon juice produced.

The company also sponsored the dinner in Tucumán, at the Hilton Garden Hotel where the delegates stayed for the next three days.

