

Texas: Big Hit with Tour Group October 30—Nov. 8, 2011

*San Antonio, Dallas
Corpus Christi and
Houston*



San Antonio River Boat Cruise

“It was a wonderful tour of (a small part of) a multi-faceted state.” “thoroughly enjoyable and very educational.” These are some of the rave review received by tour organizer and leader Janet Spear following her recent agricultural tour of Texas.

Twenty-two people joined her on this ten-day trip that began in San Antonio with a riverboat cruise. Other activities in the San Antonio area included exploration of San Antonio’s famed Riverwalk, visits to the Alamo and the Culinary Institute of America, and finally, a visit to Texas A&M University where they received an overview of agricultural production in the San Antonio region



From there, the group headed to New Brunfels for a visit to Markley Family Farms, an outdoor hydroponic U-pick farm that grows strawberries and a variety of seasonal vegetables.

Next was a stop at the LBJ Ranch, the former Texas “White House,” LBJ birthplace, and Johnson family cemetery.

Then it was on to the nearby historic and picturesque town of Fredericksburg. Many of its buildings were constructed in the 1800s by the original German settlers and are still in use today. Wildseed Farms, in nearby Stonewall, was of particular interest to one member of the tour group, who had been a customer of the farm for many years. With over 200 acres under cultivation, it’s the largest working wildflower farm in the U.S. Next was a stop at Becker Vineyards, where eight varieties of grapes are raised on 46 acres. The vineyards boast the largest underground wine cellar in Texas.



From the Texas Hill Country, the group traveled south toward Corpus Christi, with several stops enroute. First was Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, which grows nine varieties of olive trees—7000 trees total—and sells the oil it produces throughout Texas. Next was W.W. Wood, Inc., largest U.S. producer of mesquite wood specifically for cooking. Mesquite is considered superior to charcoal as a cooking fuel because of the color and flavor it imparts to the food.



The final stop before Corpus Christi, was the famed King Ranch. Based on comments Janet received, this was clearly a highlight among highlights. The group spent a full day here, seeing various aspects of its huge operation, which encompasses not only cattle breeding and production but also horses raised for use in herding the cattle, a feed yard and mill, and sorghum and cotton operations. The King Ranch is one of the largest U.S. producers of cotton and has its own modern cotton gin. The ranch is still owned and operated by descendants of Captain Richard King, who started the ranch in the mid 1800s.

Texas Ag Tour—Page 2

*In Dickenson, on the Gulf coast near Corpus Christi, the group toured **Prestige Oysters**, the nation's largest oyster distributor in America specializing in fresh, shucked, high pressure processed and frozen oysters. With over 20,000 acres of private leases in Texas, Louisiana and Florida the company is able to provide customers with oysters year-round.*

Then it was time to head north, to Houston for a visit to the NASA Space Center and a city tour. From there the group traveled to Dallas/Ft. Worth to visit the Kennedy Memorial in Dallas and the historic Ft. Worth Stockyards.



It was a tired but happy group that returned to Maine. As one tour member wrote to Janet, "You do a great job every time for us! Many thanks!"

I'm interested! Please send me more information.

Please print:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____ **Phone (____)** _____

E-mail: _____

_____ **N. E. Tour: Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York Oct. 2012**

_____ **Germany, Switzerland & Austria March 2013**

_____ **Alberta, Canada: Calgary, Banff, Edmonton October 2013**

Please return to Janet Spear, 14 Eugley Hill Road, Nobleboro, ME 04555