

Group Travel International Tours to New Zealand & Australia

When we think of travelling to places like New Zealand and Australia they sound so far away. In recent years, an Irish based tour company, Group Travel International (GTI) has made these destinations more accessible and affordable for members of the Irish farming community.

In November 2009 GTI ran their fifth successful agricultural tour to New Zealand and Australia and in April 2010 also ran an enjoyable tour to New Zealand to attend the World Ploughing Championships. These tours were accompanied by group leader, David Cussen, a former dairy adviser with Teagasc. Due to the outstanding success of these tours, GTI are running another agricultural tour to New Zealand and Australia from 20th November – 11th December 2010.

This once in a life time, 22 day agricultural tour discovers the very best of New Zealand and Australia, including a 2 night stopover in vibrant Singapore. Experience the natural beauty of New Zealand including spectacular scenery, famous sights and ancient traditions while being introduced to the agricultural resources of the area. Visit Auckland, Hamilton, Lake Taupo, Rotorua, Christchurch, Queenstown and Franz Joseph, with technical farm visits to beef, dairy and tillage farms, research stations and agribusinesses, before continuing on to the fabulous city of Sydney.

New Zealand in particular is famous for its Dairy Farming and has much to offer from a cultural and scenic point of view. The scenery in the South Island is breathtaking and must be one of the most beautiful places in the world, while an evening spent exploring the Maori culture and cuisine is an unforgettable experience.

On arrival in Auckland, the capital of the North Island, enjoy a guided sightseeing tour. From Auckland

travel south over the Bombay hills, an area renowned for fruit and vegetable crops. Next stop are dairy farms in Hamilton. Dairy farmers have many natural advantages over their Irish counterparts with milder, shorter winters allowing cows to be out wintered in all cases and a winter grass growth equivalent to our October.

Close to Hamilton are the Waitomo limestone caves and the renowned Matamata stud, the Coolmore of New Zealand. Lake Taupo is close by and the tour includes an evening cruise with a beautiful meal on board. This region also features the famous hot springs and geysers where boiling steam hurls 20 – 30 feet into the air.

The South Island used to be the main sheep production area of New Zealand, but is rapidly being converted

Bondi Beach before returning home from this trip of a lifetime.

GTI in association with the Farmer's Journal offer a number of escorted agricultural holidays to worldwide destinations, with tours designed to capture the culture of the country as well as gain a knowledge and understanding of farming techniques. Current tours include:

- **New Zealand and Australia** - experience beef, dairy and tillage farms (20th November – 11th December 2010)
- **Cuba** - learn about their impressive production of organic food (12th – 22nd November 2010)
- **Illinois, Missouri and Iowa** – visit USA's Grain Belt States (27 September – 07 October 2010)



to dairy. The average rainfall in the centre of the South Island is 660 mm with farms having to be irrigated during dry spells. There are plenty of opportunities for young people to get started in dairying provided they are willing to work hard at start up.

Travelling down to Queenstown pass through the Canterbury plains, an important dairying region and home to the 2010 World Ploughing Championships. Travel up the west coast to Franz Joseph and test your skills walking up the glaciers or take a helicopter ride over the snow covered mountains. Journey back to Christchurch by Trans Alpine Train, a great experience.

The tour winds down in Sydney where you spend a relaxing four days with a harbour cruise and visit to

- **Argentina** – including progressive beef farms (16th – 26th November 2010)
- **Germany, Austria and Italy** – visit dairy and beef farms (06th – 14th October 2010)
- **Slovenia** – tillage and dairy farm visits (07th – 14th September 2010)
- **Poland and Germany** – visit fertile and productive regions (23rd June - 01st July 2010 and 27th September – 05th October 2010)
- **EuroTier** - the world's top animal husbandry event (16 – 19th November 2010)

For further information on GTI agricultural tours please call 01 808 5209 or visit www.gti-ireland.com/farmer-journal.html.