

# 2024 Chicago Farmers Study Tour- Brazil



The Chicago Farmers Study Tour group departed from Chicago Saturday March 2 including 23 members and 4 guests from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Texas plus our tour manager, Tiffany Humbert. We arrived in Rio de Janeiro and enjoyed 8 days on the ground in southern Brazil plus a group of 5 hearty travelers extended the trip for an additional 6 days in the Amazon Rain Forest region around Manaus.



Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Our tour group arrived early in the morning and gathered at the airport in Rio de Janeiro for the short drive to our hotel located on the north end of the Copacabana Beach in the ‘Leme’ neighborhood. Along the way, we viewed the Tijuca Massif mountains which are the bulk of the ancient volcanic landforms along the coast including the beautiful sharp outcroppings of granite. From a socio-economic perspective, the drive into the city revealed the great disparity of wealth in Brazil as Rio de Janeiro’s high-rise buildings contrasted significantly with the backdrop of makeshift ‘favelas’ shanties stacked on top of one another on all the hillsides surrounding the beaches of Rio.

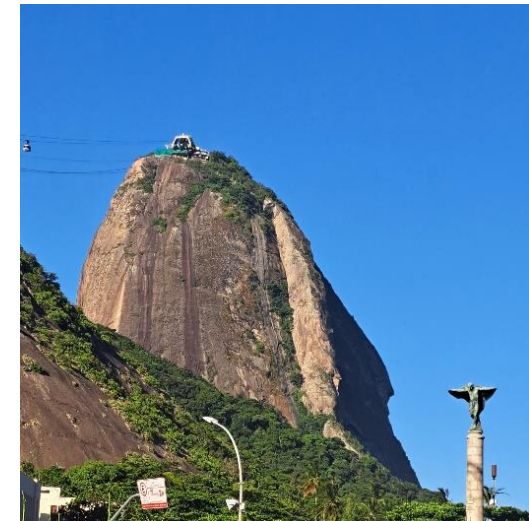
Before proceeding, we stopped at our hotel for an early lunch and a relaxing swim in our rooftop pool. The pool and bar overlooked the south Atlantic Ocean and the famous Copacabana beach. After lunch we relaxed and strolled the beach and local neighborhood markets.



Later in the afternoon, we boarded our tour bus to enjoy sightseeing in Rio and a gondola ride up the famous

2,299-foot-high Sugarloaf Mountain overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and with a beautiful view of Guanabara Bay. The amazing sheer granite walls of the mountain were even more interesting because there were three evening rock-climbing groups ascending the escarpment.

That evening our group was treated to a classic Brazilian Steak house dinner several blocks from the hotel.



Monday March 4<sup>th</sup> – After breakfast, we departed for a cog-railway ride up the 2,329-foot-high Corcovado Mountain topped by the world-renowned Christ the Redeemer Statue overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, port facilities and military base in Guanabara Bay.

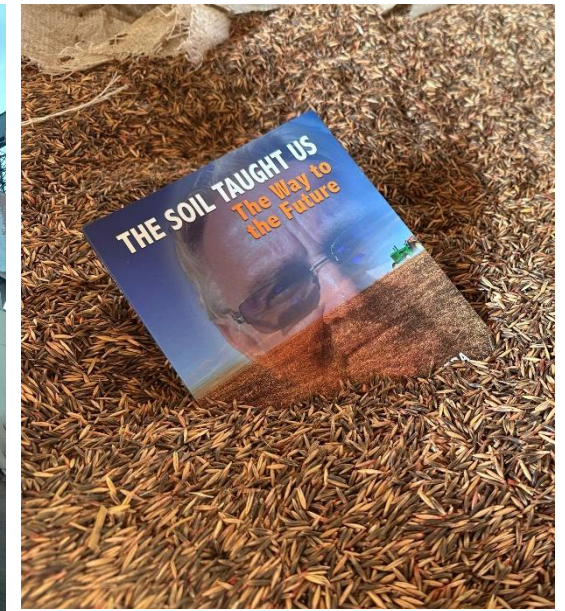
Later, that afternoon we departed Rio de Janeiro, flying to Curitiba in the Brazilian state of Parana.



Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> – After departing early in the morning for Ponta Grossa, Parana, our guide Daniel took us to visit the [Franke Dijkstra Fazenda](#). Franke was a no-till pioneer farmer from Holland experienced in growing Corn Soybeans and raising swine. The farm also produces biogas for fuel and solar energy to meet their needs. Edward Franke, son of the founder, showed us around this 6,200-hectare (~15,500-acre) farm and described in detail their efforts to be ‘sustainable’ and comply with the Parana state requirement of a 30% land set aside for preservation.

They farm incredibly hilly ground using a ‘no-till system’ incorporating a 45-day cycle of cover-crops. Together with the use of biological soil amendments, this provides for healthier soil and the need for minimal terraces to prevent erosion. Due to the climate, they grow an average of 2.7 crops per year achieving yields in the 200 Bu/Acre range for Corn and 70 Bu/Acres for Soybeans.

Later, In Castro, Parana, that afternoon, we visited the [Cooperative Castrolanda](#) (started in 1951)) where we learned about their financial system and how they support 2,000 farms consisting of over 430,000 acres and producing revenues of over \$1 Billion USD. They operate in 2-States, Parana and state of Sao Paulo. The cooperative employs agronomists to advise their farmers regarding the latest fertilizer, seed, pesticide, fungicide and application methods. They have had tremendous success helping small and large farmers handling all aspects of sustainable grain and livestock farming. The cooperative has a long history of supporting family farming and encouraging the next generation to stay on the farm.



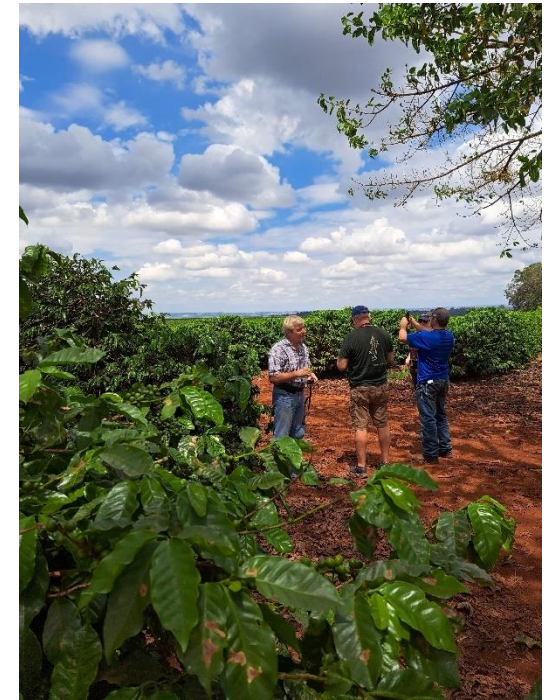
Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> – After an early departure and 2-hour drive, we visited the Fazenda Mutuca in Ventania. This farm operates 4,000 Hectare (~10,000 Acres) of Corn, Wheat, Soybeans, barley and edible beans as a seed and feed grains producer. They use the ‘No-till’ system of farming in compliance with the strict 20% farmland reserve set aside regulations required by the State of Parana. The Parana requirements include leaving no bare soil exposed to the elements to prevent erosion of the hilly ground. They utilize cover crops in addition to ‘biologic’ amendments to provide soil nourishment thus encouraging heathy soils.



After Lunch in Tibagi, we visited the Fazenda Santa Branca grain farming and Elevator operation. The farm operates a small river ferry to transport grain trucks and supplies to and from the main road. Management relies heavily on their agronomist advisor who prescribes their crop fertilization and application methods. Their agronomist helps them comply with the strict environmental regulations of the state of Parana.



Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> – After departing early for a stop in Santa Mariana, PR, we changed to a high clearance farm bus and met Sandy, our guide for the day. She took us to visit Norbert and Cornelia Gamerschlag who operate [Fazenda Palmeira in Santa Mariana](#), one of the largest remaining coffee plantations in the state of Parana. This 1,200 Hectare (~3,000 Acre) plantation was started in the late 1940s by a German farmer whose son runs the operation today. Cornelia led us on a tour of their coffee fields and Norbert showed us around their processing operations.



Fazenda Palmiera also grows corn and Soybeans. They provide housing and meals for their working families due to the high manual labor requirements of gathering coffee beans. After our tour, Cornelia and Norbert hosted us to a wonderful traditional farm lunch.



Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – We departed early to visit a large Sugar Cane plantation. Brazil is the largest producer of Sugar Cane in the world. It provides a renewable source of ethanol fuel as well as a supply of sugar for human consumption.



After a busy day touring the Coffee and Sugar Cane Plantations, we arrived at our final hotel, the [Wish Golf Resort](#), for a dip in the pool and a terrific buffet dinner.

Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup> – We departed early to visit Fazenda Colambari-Suino farm to observe their Swine, Cattle and grain farm operations. The farm utilizes a biodigester to provide 75% of the fuel required for their on-site generator.



Our group then drove to Iguazu Falls where we visited the [Itaipu Bi-National Hydro Electric Dam](#) on the Parana River it produces 130,000 Mega Watts of electricity, supporting 1/3 of Brazil and most of Paraguay electricity requirements the Dam was completed in the early 1980s and was a shared engineering project by both Brazil and Paraguay.



Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> –We visited Iguacu Falls bird Park and hiked the National Park offering magnificent views of the Iguassu Falls. The Iguacu waterfalls are the largest in the world.



Who can forget the boat ride under the waterfalls not to mention the helicopter flight over the falls?



[Wish Golf Resort](#) pool where we relaxed and enjoyed the evening air before our farewell dinner.



The Chicago Farmers Study Tour group is grateful for the assistance of Tiffany Humbert of Trump Tours for her advice, counsel, and professionalism, which include coordinating our travel, arranging our terrific farm visits and guides, finding very comfortable and accommodating hotels as well as for finding great local meals for us to savor.

Additionally, the Chicago Farmers Scholarship Fund expresses their appreciation for Trump Tours generous support.

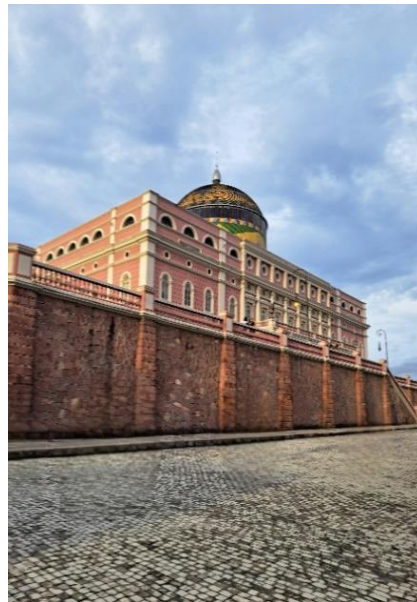
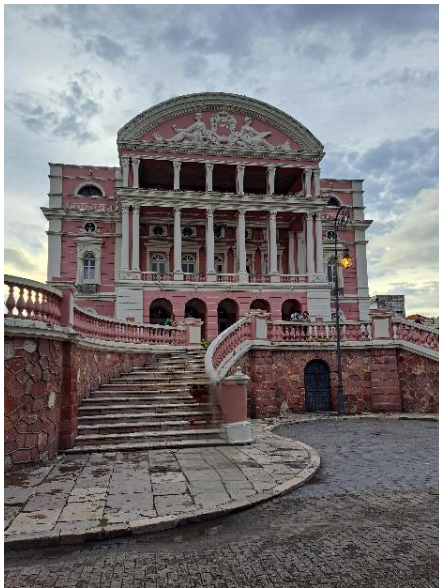
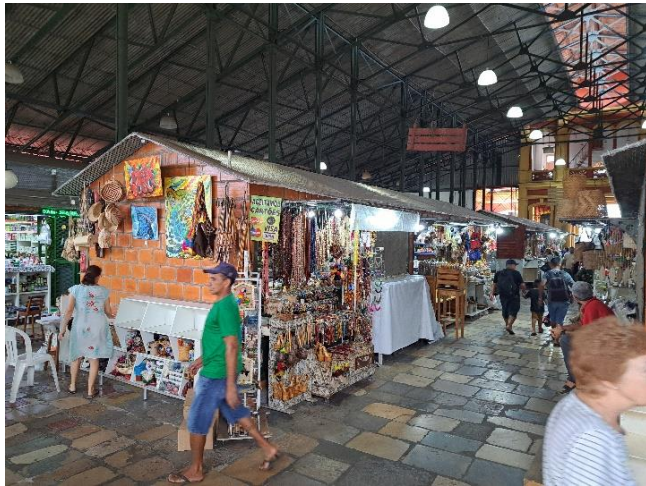


# Amazon Adventure



Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Following a quick flight from Iguacu Falls to Sao Paulo and a 4-hour flight to Manaus, we embarked on a quick city tour.

This included a stop at the Manaus public market to purchase supplies for our boat trip the next day. We also visited the ‘Opera House of the Jungle’ and a enjoyed a short walking tour of Historic Manaus’ including the former German Lord of the mercantile exchange.



Tuesday, March 12th – After breakfast, our small group departed for our exciting River Boat trip down the Rio Negro and Amazon River eastward to the city of Itacoatiara. Along the way, we traveled through the ‘Meeting of the Waters, where the ‘black water of the Rio Negro and Pale sandy water of the Solimoes Rivers join to form the lower part of the Amazon River.

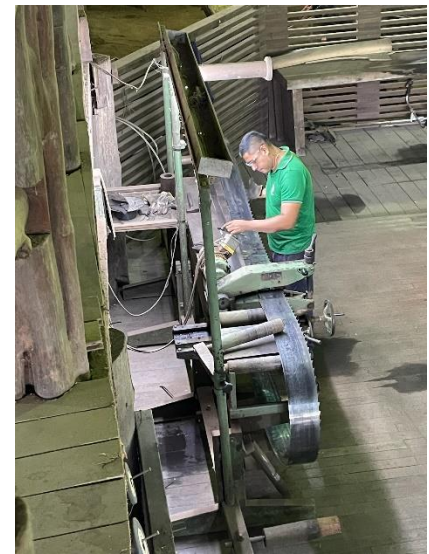
Our trip included a well air condition state room on board the boat. We also brought along hammocks (purchased the previous day at the local market) to hang from the rafters of the passenger deck so we could rest with the local travelers.



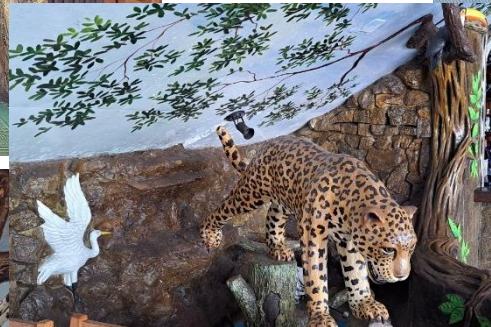
During our boat ride, we enjoyed heavy rains on the river which led to a wonderful rainbow. As evening set in, the sunset was fantastic!



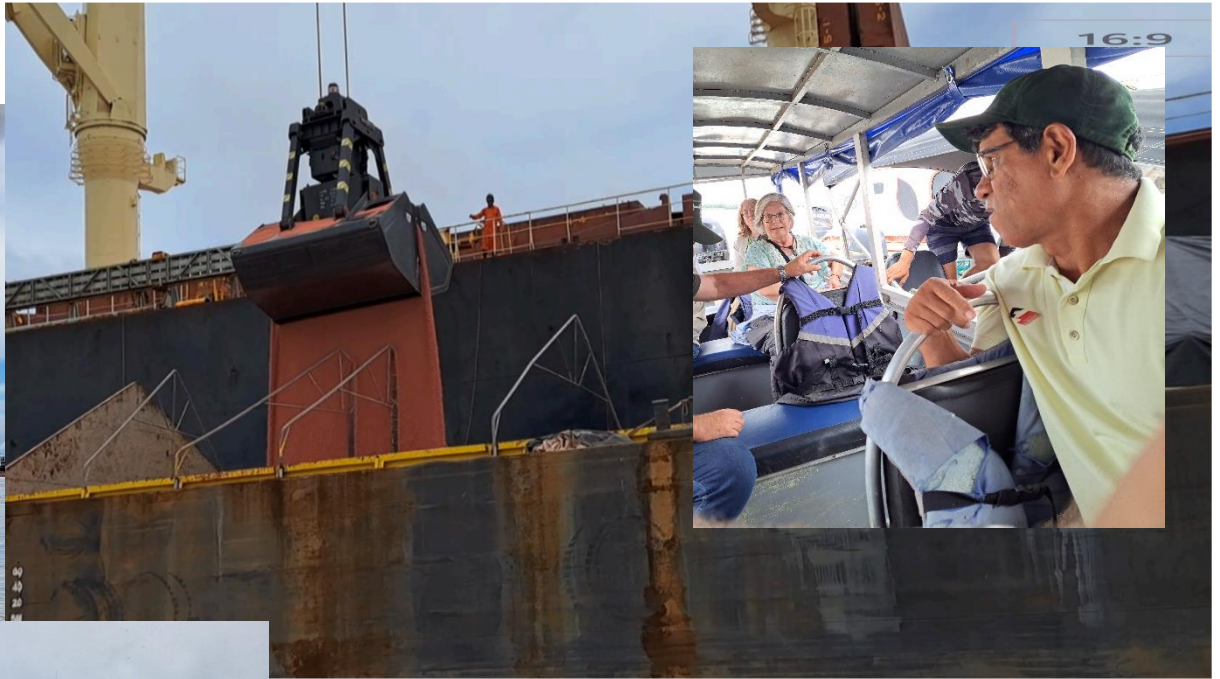
Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> – We departed early to visit the Mill Madeiras Precious Wood sawmill operation in Itacoatiara. They manage 1.2 million Hectare of forests including this local operation consisting of 573,000 Hectare of forests. The Amazonas state regulations require that they set aside 30% of their ground for preservation. The company harvests about 10,000 Hectare (25,000 Acres) per year. Taking 2 to 3 trees per Hectare



After our visit to Precious Woods, we very much enjoyed our local seafood lunch at the Bohemia Puro Malte riverside diner in Itacoatiara.



Wednesday, after lunch we did a small boat tour of the Hermasa Amaggi transshipment facilities in the [Port of Itacoatiara](#) by small boat. This is the last port on the Amazon supporting ocean going freighters. There, fertilizers from overseas are transferred onto river barges, and grain from the Amazon River barges is loaded onto the freighters for shipment overseas. The Hermasa/Amaggi grain terminal and its river operations replaced the Cargill grain operation here. However, due to an accident the previous day, we were unable to do a walking visit to the facilities. We observed the transfer of a load of Potassium from freighter to river barge and the subsequent loading of grain from Barge to Freighter.



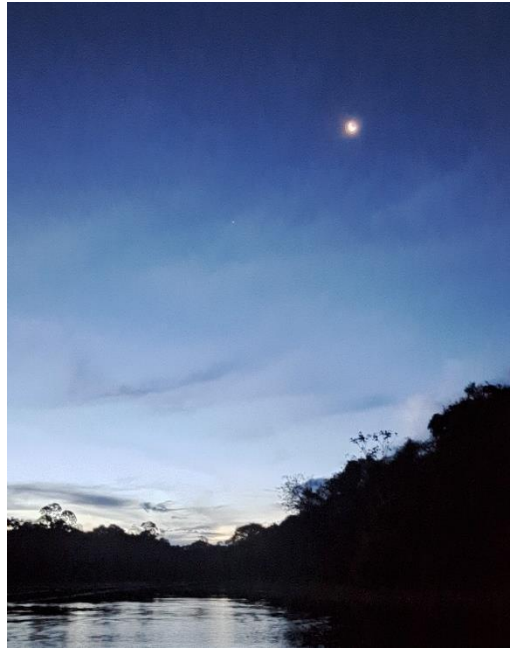
Late Wednesday afternoon, our group departed [Itacoatiara](#) for the 4-hour drive to the [Amazonia Jungle Hotel](#) southwest of Manaus. We arrived in the dark of night and loaded into a small boat for a short trip across the lagoon to our hotel just in time to avoid a hard rain. After we settled in, the hotel served us a wonderful late dinner including our favorite Brazilian beverage the Caipirinha.



Thursday, March 14th – After breakfast, our local guide Issac took us on a small riverboat safari where we enjoyed the native birds on the Ariau river and visit to the ruins of a deserted Aurias Amazon Towers Hotel at the confluence of the Ariau and Negro Rivers. In the late afternoon we enjoyed another river trip and animal safari, piranha fishing.



The exciting Thursday evening safari included the catching and release of a 3-foot-long baby alligator by our amazing local guide, Issac! Yes, it was amazing to watch him stealthily sneak up on the creature and catch it before it leaped into the river. Then, back to our hotel for another delicious meal.



**Our House Guest**



Friday, March 15th – After a hearty breakfast, this morning we enjoyed a visit to the largest Tree in the Amazon region. Later, we visited an indigenous people’s hand craft market enjoying a children’s tribal dance and a native granary. Next, we enjoyed swimming with the dolphins on the Rio Negro. On the way home we experienced heavy seasonal rain on the river! Our last dinner was a delicious local seafood buffet.



The fantastic [Amazonia Jungle Hotel](#) was our home for 2 days. We enjoyed wonderful local seafoods and beverages prepared by the staff.



Saturday, March 16th – Our final day in the Amazon. We had a morning of rain and plenty of time to reflect on the wonderful service provided by the staff at the Amazonia Jungle Hotel. They were very friendly and helpful during our entire visit. Our intrepid group departed at noon in a torrential downpour as we headed for Manaus Airport to begin our journey home.



Tiffany, Daniel and Sandy, we very much appreciated your hard work in assembling our special itinerary.