

**Universal Leaf
Tabacos
predicts
another large
Brazilian
tobacco
harvest in
2005.**

Flue-Cured:
2004:
701 million kg
2005 estimate:
731 million kg

Burley:
2004:
144 million kg
2005 estimate:
140 million kg

Dark Air-Cured
Galpão:
2004:
7.5 million kg
2005 estimate:
7.5 million kg

Source: Universal Leaf Corp.

READY TO TEACH

UNIVERSAL LEAF TABACOS OPENS ITS STATE-OF-THE-ART TOBACCO TRAINING CENTER/RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT STATION IN BRAZIL.

Universal Leaf Tabacos (ULT) will officially open its Tobacco Training Center/Research and Development Station in Brazil on Feb. 23. The center was built to educate ULT's contract farmers, personnel and customers about Brazilian tobacco production. After hosting 24 participants last year, some of the center's programs have proved to be successful, and ULT is optimistic about its newest venture.

The research and development station was originally established in October 2003, as a seed production center for ULT's contracted farmers in Brazil. The center also conducts research on how to enhance the quality of Brazilian leaf. After one year of operation, ULT decided to expand the seed production center with a training facility for its technicians.

"We decided to integrate training for our field and processing personnel," says Horst Deeke, one of the center's managers. "We made arrangements to have local staff be trained in our tobacco cultural practices, curing and grading. We also extended the training to our leaf buying, grading and processing personnel." Encouraged by the success of its training programs, ULT recently decided to also offer them to its affiliates and customers.

"The benefits of the activities at our experimental station are enormous," says Deeke. "ULT will have better-trained personnel with enhanced knowledge about the complete operation of the company. And having foreign trainees with us will project ULT's name and advertise the good reputation of Brazilian tobacco."

PROGRAMS. The Training Center/Research and Development Center offers three programs: a breeding program, a seed production program,

and a training program. Each program comprises three weeks of intensive training.

The breeding program covers the production of tobacco varieties adapted to Brazilian conditions. Participants use the facility's laboratories to improve tobacco quality and yield, and study ways to enhance disease resistance.

"The program has already released more than 26 new flue-cured and burley tobacco cultivators," says Deeke. "[Eliminating] tobacco mosaic virus, potato virus Y, nematodes and bacterial wilt have been some of the main objectives of the breeding program. Also, we are proud to have been successful with new bacterial wilt-resistant burley hybrids."

Deeke says that new projects are under way to help ULT's wrapper tobacco operation and other ULT affiliates with breeding programs.

In ULT's seed production program, participants learn about the development of seeds and agronomic research within the Brazilian tobacco industry. Deeke says that participants learn about the seeds and cultural practices that produce the 250,000 tons of tobacco that ULT processes in Brazil. Participants learn how to employ modern equipment and accurate techniques to foster seed production. ▶