

“Industrial visit to Gulf Mushroom Products Company”

The department of Biotechnology & Chemical Engineering has organized an industrial visit to Gulf Mushroom Products Company on 24th October, 2017 for the students of IIIBT, IIICE, VBT & VIIBT. Around 35 students visited the plant and were accompanied by the faculty members, Dr. Sharmila Queenthly and Ms. Atiya Tabassum.

This company was established in 1997 with the mushroom farm located in Barka. It is the largest hi-tech industry in Oman, with the state-of-the-art Dutch technology. The objective of the visit was to give students a fair idea regarding the hi-tech industrial processes and production of high quality and healthy mushrooms, the basic set up of the mushroom plant, the common types of mushrooms produced and the demand in market, and discussion regarding the rules and regulations followed by the industry for the safety of their co-workers and the machinery.

The industry welcomed us to their main office and took us to the discussion room to give us a brief introduction about the company and world renowned certificates that were awarded to them. This includes: HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) awarded in 2007 by Germany and the Global GAP awarded by USA in 2011.

They told us about the major types of mushrooms that are produced by the company. The most widely produced species are the White button mushrooms, i.e. *Agaricus bisporus*. Other varieties that are cultivated by Gulf Mushrooms are: Portabella (Portobello) and Brown mushrooms of different sizes.

They also mentioned about the safety measures taken to produce fresh, healthy mushrooms. The compost which is used to produce the mushrooms; their components are also brought from foreign industries. The whole procedure was explained to the students regarding the production of mushrooms, from the phases to the flashes and then to the final cook out of mushrooms. The nutritional benefits of mushrooms were also told that it is a very good source of protein, rich source of folic acid and also helps to fight diseases like anaemia and reduces the risk of spinal defects in kids. Finally, they took us into the industry, as to show the mushrooms were produced. They provided us with the safety gear. We went in one of the cold stores, where grown mushrooms were dried and then directly taken to the package section, where all the mushrooms were packed hygienically.

Industrial visits to Gulf Mushroom Products Company were inspiring to WCAS students and faculty through the experience to hi-tech industrial processes and production of high quality healthy mushrooms.