

First Person: IFEAT 2010

Alain Frix (LyondellBasell Flavors & Fragrances), chairman of the IFEAT Marrakech conference committee, on regulations, sustainability and the future of F&F and ingredients



The 2010 International Federation of Essential Oils and Aroma Trades (IFEAT) conference will be held September 26–30 in Marrakech, Morocco. For additional details on speakers and topics, visit www.ifeat.org.

The IFEAT Conference has always been unique, as it not only combines a rare opportunity to meet many people and friends from our vast industry, but also to learn about new topics. At each congress it seems as though the frontiers of our F&F ingredient world continue to expand. IFEAT is about people, from all corners of this world, all passionate about this amazing essential oils and aromas business. During the presentations in Marrakech, we will learn from and interact with many specialists from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey and sub-Saharan African countries.

• Changes to **EU flavoring regulations** in 2011 are an important step to ascertain our needs for the very near future. Today, numerous investments in flavor ingredients and novelties are waiting for a clear legal framework within the European Union (EU). Similarly, customers do not want to launch new products without a legal green light. It is expected that this clarity will come soon; however, we will have the opportunity to learn more from various leading experts who are working on this matter with the EU's committee of experts. In addition, the IFEAT conference will be updated on the US regulatory environment, which seems to be changing almost daily, and has the potential to have a profound impact on the global F&F industry. • The challenge of proposed **EU pesticide legislation** is another complex topic. IFEAT's scientific committee has held a meeting with the European Commission about various topics including pesticide concentrations. The purpose is to make sure that the EU fully understands some specific aspects of our industry, and how to address specific problems according to best manufacturing practices, which also will depend on good agricultural practices (prevention of cross-contamination when treating neighboring fields with pesticides). • The **sustainability**

of essential oil production is very important to members of the F&F industry. Groups are being established, such as the Natural Resources Stewardship Council, to develop sustainable and ethical methods of production and processing in order to ensure continued supply of ingredients to our industry. These initiatives relate to concerns regarding the production of products collected from the wild (e.g. rosemary and argan), processed timber products (e.g. rosewood and guaiac) and commercially grown products, particularly those facing competition from alternative crops. While these initiatives are growing, they are still very much in the early stages of development. However, increasing consumer concerns regarding sourcing and sustainability issues, including the adoption of good agricultural practices, will ensure the continuation of these developments. • These initiatives are also part of a wider global concern about sustainability of **natural resources**. By 2050, the global population is projected to grow by 50%, and global grain demand is expected to double. It is a fact that agriculture adds globally significant detrimental amounts of fertilizers, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It is the same for pesticides. Past practices cannot be used to achieve another doubling in food output. These environmental costs, typically unmeasured, will have to be recorded. Only then will people be able to measure the net benefits from agriculture, including essential oil production, and if the net balance is positive, it is sustainable. While it is expected that sustainability will be a fundamental of every best agricultural practice in the near future, we are still at the beginning of this new and necessary adventure. Our biggest essential element, water, should play a key role in assessing these costs (water purification costs, irrigation and water extraction costs). It is also difficult to predict how fast the environmental regulations will change in the next few years as a result of this sustainability.

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