



Indian sandalwood oil producer ramps up production to supply new markets

Indian sandalwood oil producer Tropical Forestry Services (TFS) is poised to break into new markets thanks to an expected 10-fold increase in the size of its next harvest.

The company, which has an Indian sandalwood plantation in Kununurra, in the far north of Western Australia, said it planned to harvest 300 tonnes of sandalwood heartwood next year.

TFS managing director Frank Wilson said while 300 tonnes was still "not a large amount", it would allow the company to supply new markets.

"It makes a big difference. Up until now we've only had enough production to supply a few of our customers, the majority in the pharmaceutical industry," he said.

"But with the increased harvest we will be able to extend that to a much broader range of our customer base in the Chinese wood manufacturing industry, the Middle East, India (and) the western European fine fragrance and cosmetics industries, which we already supply quite a lot of sandalwood oil to.

"It's great because it gives us that capacity to start feeding some of the markets which we know we are in high demand from."

TFS held its annual general meeting on Friday, reporting strong financial growth and more than 1500 new plantings in the 2015 financial year.

Company keen to expand in the east Kimberley

Mr Wilson said the company was interested in acquiring more land to expand its operation in the Ord River Irrigation Area in the east Kimberley.

He said TFS was a "keen tenderer" for Ord West Bank and Mantinea — parcels of land recently released for expressions of interest by the State Government.

"We're keen to expand our operations in land and no doubt we'll be expanding our processing operation in Kununurra," Mr Wilson said.

While none of the land in Ord Stage 2 was suitable for the company to develop, it would be interested in future opportunities in Ord Stage 3.

"My understanding is that Ord Stage 3 does have some prospective land for us, and anything that has land and water is highly sought after by us," he said.

Mr Wilson also said potential sites for a northern Australia distillery were still under consideration, and a decision would be made in the next year.

Last month TFS announced its drug development company Santalis would begin trials of an oral rinse formula to help with cancer treatment side effects.

Mr Wilson said he believed the pharmaceutical market was "highly prospective" for TFS.

"That's hinged off (sandalwood oil) usage for many years in traditional medicine... the scientific results that we've achieved to date certainly suggest that we're on the right track," he said.

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-17/tfs-predicts-ten-fold-increase-in-harvest-yield/6948308>

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