

FAQs

WHY ARE YOU CAMPAIGNING ON THE CLIMATE NOW?

Fairtrade has long called for strong action to tackle climate change. The climate emergency strikes at the very heart of Fairtrade's mission to support and empower smallholder farmers. We are shining a spotlight on climate change at this year's Fairtrade Fortnight because of the huge opportunity that 2021 presents, with the UK hosting the UN climate talks in Glasgow later this year.

Fairtrade Fortnight comes after two major hurricanes have devastated Central America late last year. The farmers Fairtrade works with have seen their crops of coffee, cocoa, honey, and vegetables in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua be completely devastated. As a matter of justice and a matter of science, action on the climate crisis simply cannot be delayed any longer.

But global trade is still not fair. Our global trading system is balanced in favour of the powerful few. The prices that businesses pay for the crops behind some of our favourite foods need to increase significantly if farmers are to escape poverty and still have the means to adapt to and mitigate economic and environmental shocks. We cannot expect – and it is not fair to expect – producers to absorb the costs of more sustainable methods of farming when they're often not even able to earn a living income or living wage, and cannot even adapt to the challenges they are already seeing, because the price they receive for their produce is far too low. This needs to change – and it needs to change fast.

Until farmers earn more for their crops, they continue to struggle to cover just their basic human rights; a nutritious diet, children's education and healthcare, let alone face the challenges of the climate crisis. Farmers in climate vulnerable countries need empowerment, fair value, fair prices, and fairer trading practices to resource the investment needed for mitigation, adaptation, diversification and resilience in the face of the climate emergency.

WHY ISN'T FAIRTRADE ALREADY SUPPORTING FARMERS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?

Fairtrade has always believed that there is no climate justice without trade justice. Farmers and workers are on the front line of the climate emergency. Choosing Fairtrade supports higher incomes so that farmers can adapt to and mitigate against the effects of climate change. We highlighted this issue last year as part of our campaign for Living Incomes, because we know that climate justice can't happen within a context of poverty. Farmers are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events and this is affecting their livelihoods and our long term food security.

Currently, farmers, producers and workers can spend the Fairtrade Premium – that's the extra money they get from sales of Fairtrade certified crops and products – on projects such as tree planting, irrigation, crop diversification and clean energy, which are more sustainable on a local level but also contribute to the global fight against climate change. Fairtrade farmers and workers decide for themselves how the Premium money is spent, because it is they who know best what they need to become more resilient.

Training on and implementing good farming practices (which is part of Fairtrade Standards) also leads to a reduction of CO2 emissions. Proper use of fertilizers leads to less nitrous oxide emissions. Avoiding destruction of conservation value areas, restoring buffers, and introducing ground covers all contribute to capture carbon in the ground and prevent it being released into the atmosphere.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LIVING INCOME CAMPAIGN 'SHE DESERVES'?

In 2019, Fairtrade launched an ambitious new living incomes campaign to lead the way to a sustainable future for cocoa farmers. A living income would provide farmers with a decent standard of living - enough to cover all their cocoa farming costs and enough to cover their basic human rights, like a nutritious diet, children's education and healthcare. We've seen successful adoption of our Living Income framework, from Tony's Chocolonely to Ben & Jerry's and initiatives from Lidl, Oxfam Belgium, Belvas and more, and we continue to pioneer new models.

Fairtrade works on many levels to strengthen environmental and climate protection for producers and is committed to find new ways to support producers with the challenges of climate change. Buying Fairtrade means you are making a wider impact on the planet by supporting a global fight for climate justice.

IS FLYING OVER ALL THIS PRODUCE CAUSING CLIMATE CHANGE?

Fairtrade focuses mainly on products such as cocoa, coffee and bananas that can't be grown in temperate climates or products that can't be grown in sufficient quantities in the UK. But these are things shoppers in the UK want and they are also supporting vital livelihoods in the countries in which they are grown.

The carbon emissions from flying and shipping in produce do need to come down, but it is also the case that produce grown in greenhouses in the UK and Europe can also have a large carbon footprint as they are often not heated using clean energy.

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DOES FAIRTRADE SUPPORT PRODUCERS TO REDUCE THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT?

Training on and implementing good farming practices (which is part of Fairtrade Standards) also leads to a reduction of CO2 emissions. Proper use of fertilizers leads to less nitrous oxide emissions. Avoiding destruction of conservation value areas, restoring buffers, and introducing ground covers all contribute to capture carbon in the ground and prevent it being released into the atmosphere.

But tackling long term climate change means helping farmers and workers with the cost of switching to low-carbon production and transport. We cannot expect – and it is not fair to expect – producers to absorb the costs of more sustainable methods of farming when they're often not even able to earn a living income or living wage, because the price they receive for their produce is far too low. This needs to change – fast.

IF THE MARKET IS CHALLENGING FOR CERTAIN COMMODITIES DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, WHY DON'T FARMERS GROW SOMETHING ELSE?

For the same reasons many UK dairy farmers still keep cattle, when the price of milk is so low, even to the point of not covering production costs. Simple economics suggests when the price falls people leave farming to do something more profitable, but this relies on an assumption of 'freedom of entry and exit to the market' – that anyone can simply stop one job and move to another and 'perfect information' - that all actors in the supply chain have access to information about pricing and production to be able to predict what will happen. In many supply chains, these are far from the case in reality.

- Firstly, there are very few other employment opportunities in rural areas – where most of the world's coffee, cocoa and bananas are grown. It's simply not possible for producers to stop growing a particular commodity. Partly because most of them live under the poverty line and have no access to capital to invest. Partly because a generation of low and declining market prices have left them unable to invest in education, or building up vibrant and resilient local economies.
- Secondly, in the case of cocoa, cocoa trees take 3-5 years to reach maturity, and live for 30 years or more. Which means a farmer's investment in establishing a farm is realised over many years. It's a very difficult decision to stop doing what you have done for years, possibly what your parents did too, when you have no other savings and can't capitalise the only asset you do have – cocoa trees on a small plot of land.
- Finally, earning income from other sources has to be a major part of the solution. Fairtrade Premium is used by cooperatives to invest in diversifying incomes, making them less susceptible to economic shocks from the main product they grow.
- That is why this [Fairtrade Fortnight](#) we call on more people to buy more Fairtrade products, to [join our festival](#), [subscribe to our newsletter](#) and take the actions they can. Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 is an opportunity for all of us all to join together to support farmers in the fight against the climate crisis.

FAIRTRADE IS SO MAINSTREAM NOW, WHY SHOULD CONSUMERS STILL CARE?

Fairtrade is highly trusted and visible, and each purchase has a cumulative ripple effect that helps producers improve their lives.

But the need is greater than ever before, following an unprecedented year of global climate disasters and the pandemic. Our trading system is still balanced in favor of the powerful few. The prices paid for the crops behind some of our favorite foods need to increase significantly in order for farmers to escape poverty and still have the means to adapt to economic and

environmental shocks. Systemic change in trade is not happening fast enough.

Until farmers earn more for their crops, they continue to struggle to cover just their basic human rights; a nutritious diet, children's education and healthcare, let alone face the challenges of the climate crisis. Farmers in climate vulnerable countries need empowerment, fair value, fair prices, and fairer trading practices to resource the investment needed for mitigation, adaptation, diversification and resilience in the face of the climate emergency.

AFTER MORE THAN 25 YEARS, WITH ALL THESE OTHER SCHEMES AND BUSINESSES TAKING ACTION – ARE YOU STILL NEEDED?

To say the last year has been a challenging year is an understatement. The Covid-19 pandemic's devastating impact on health, employment, education and the economy has been widely documented and debated since the coronavirus outbreak began nearly a year ago. What has received much less attention, however, has been the widespread disruption the pandemic has played on the international supply chains that we depend on for putting food on our tables.

Throughout the crisis, the Fairtrade Foundation has continued to highlight the harmful consequences of Covid-19 on the farmers and workers in developing countries who are behind many of the UK's favourite products, including bananas, coffee, cocoa and fresh cut flowers.

In March, Fairtrade acted quickly to ensure producer organisations are able to respond to the needs of their members. Specifically, Fairtrade's multi-stakeholder Standards Committee changed the rules around the use of the Fairtrade Premium to introduce more flexibility. The Premium is an extra sum of money on top of the selling price that producer organisations earn on every Fairtrade sale, and invest in projects of their choice to benefit their businesses and communities.

In addition, Fairtrade Premium Committees on the farms have been able to spend the Premium much more quickly than usual. In normal times, the committees on the farms first submit a formal request to the Standards Committee. Removing this step has allowed the Fairtrade Premium Committees to respond to the crisis with greater urgency. This has compared favourably against other external funds by donors or other actors, some of which took months to reach the front line.