

DEEPENING IMPACT



Case study: Raising a cup to quality coffee in Brazil

The company

Waitrose has made a significant commitment to Fairtrade, selling a range of own-label and branded Fairtrade products in-store. This has been a long-term relationship. In 2007, Waitrose became the first supermarket in the UK to sell Fairtrade bananas exclusively. As well as selling a wide range of Fairtrade products, Waitrose has a strategic partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation which aims to deliver social and economic impact.

The challenge

Cerrado coffee from Brazil is well known for its quality. However, while plantations in the region are gaining recognition in the speciality coffee market, many small producer organisations don't have the resources they need to invest in the infrastructure and training which can drive quality improvement.

The project

Boosting the quality of APPCER's coffee

One of the small producer groups Waitrose sources from in this region is APPCER, a co-operative which has been Fairtrade certified since 2011. The project was aimed at working with farmers to improve the quality of their coffee, and therefore increasing their access to the domestic and international market.

A key strand of the project involved installing concrete drying patios for members of the co-operative who didn't have them, to overcome the waste and lowering of quality which drying coffee beans directly on the soil can bring.

Focus was placed on training farmers in the growing and processing of their beans to maximise the quality of their crop. The number of quality defects could be reduced significantly by improving agricultural practices. These include:

- Reducing the amount of immature cherries picked during the harvest.
- Ensuring that the coffee beans remain free from potential taints during the drying process.
- Introducing mechanisms that will result in more uniform and consistent drying of the beans.

A cupping competition was also held to encourage a focus on quality and give recognition to the best farmers.



Coffee being cupped at APPCER as part of quality testing

Waitrose's top tips:

Work collaboratively. Develop joint objectives at the start of the project that everyone can buy into.

Factor in time for delays. These can be because of the distances, different languages and unexpected setbacks. For example, the weather can severely delay infrastructure construction.

Be clear on the business case. Get all the correct internal stakeholders brought into the project from the start.

Visit the project as early as possible. This demonstrates to the producers the value that you are placing on the project's success.

Make sure that the project is addressing a local need. Work with local partners to ensure that it has the correct local engagement.

CONT/...

DEEPENING IMPACT cont/...

The benefits

The members of APPCER have seen the quality of their coffee improve. Together with the Fairtrade Premium, the investment that this project has brought has given coffee farmers hope for the future, particularly in the face of climate change. Training on classification and cupping meant that co-operative members are better able to identify coffee defects. Farmers expect the training and cupping competition to bring long-term improvements in quality. Increasing APPCER's capacity to coordinate activities and support from local organisations will also drive sustainable supply chain relationships for the future.

Waitrose is committed to working with producers wherever possible, and this project enabled them to work with a specific group as they respond to global challenges such as climate change and changing market demands. The project also fits with Waitrose's view that strong communities and engaged workers create supply chain resilience and sustainability for all partners involved.

The outcomes

The project has led to stronger and more transparent relationships between Waitrose and the co-operative. The more efficient and effective production processes also mean that Waitrose can source more quality Fairtrade coffee from a known supplier.

The co-operative has seen an increase in the quality of their product and a reduction in production time due to the new drying platforms, which enable farmers to collect the coffee beans in half the time. This exposes them to less risk – for instance, bad weather.



Jose Antonio Ferreira Pinto, a farmer from APPCER, stands on one of the drying platforms built as part of the project