



FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™

FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

COSTA RICA



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COOCAFE, Costa Rica



About the Co-op

Date Established: 1988

Number of Members: 3,500

Annual Production: 190 containers

About the Coffee

Varieties: Caturra, Catuai

Elevation: 750m - 1,800m

Processing: Wet processing, sun drying on patios and solar-powered ovens

Bean Characteristics: HB, GHB, SHB

Cup Characteristics: Varies

Harvest/Export Season: Sept/Apr, Oct/Jul

Organic Production: 1.5%

Organic Certification Agency: EcoLogica, ISO 9002, ISO 14001

Founded in 1988, COOCAFE is one of the most established Fair Trade cooperatives in the world with exports to Europe, the US and Canada.

Revenues from Fair Trade have helped COOCAFE families keep their children in school. The co-op has provided 6,700 scholarships for students and has helped fund 70 local schools. COOCAFE has given farmers opportunities to gain experience in leadership and democratic participation; they have representatives on all of Costa Rica's coffee boards and are part of an organization representing the small farmer perspective before the International Coffee Organization.

COOCAFE has introduced environmental initiatives which have helped convert approximately 1,200 acres of coffee to organic production, reforest nearly 14,000 acres of land, and assist many of their producers in reducing herbicide use and introducing shade trees. COOCAFE has recently begun to diversify its production into growing other products such as macadamia nuts.

The co-op has established two foundations: Hijos del Campo, which runs the educational program, and Fundación Café Forestal, which offers environmental programs such as:

- Researching rivers as alternative energy sources
- Constructing four water tanks and 11,800 meters of natural barriers to protect soil
- Working with 900 local children to plant 9,000 new trees and restoring 44 hectares of land

"Ten years ago, our children couldn't study past the age of eight because there was no bus to the school and we had no money. Now with Fair Trade, we have fixed the road and we have bus service. Our kids can go to school with the help of scholarships from the co-op's fund. One is getting a business degree at the university and the other is in high school."

Sabino Brenes, President of El Dos, member co-op of COOCAFE