

PRODUCER PROFILE



Name: Asociación de Pequeños Productores de
Café Manos Campesinas

Products: Coffee

Country: Guatemala

FLO ID 711
Fairtrade certified since 1997
Number of members 1,116



Introduction

Asociación de Pequeños Productores de Café Manos Campesinas is a 2nd grade organization based in western Guatemala. It unites 11 cooperative groups spread over the departments of San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Sololá and Chimaltenango. The union was founded in 1997 by 6 producer groups who originally came together after receiving training from the Catholic Church. The name Manos Campesinas translates as 'in the hands of the small farmers'. Today Manos Campesinas is made up of over 1,000 members. Women make up 23% of the membership.

Manos Campesinas' main goal is to support the commercialization of its members' coffee. They aim to be the financially independent and responsible company so they will be the first choice of clients and partners around the world, and known for their first class product and service. As an ethical and forward-thinking organization, Manos offers its members a stable working environment and opportunities for personal growth. Their 7 strategic values include commitments to social responsibility, quality, sustainability, gender equality and environmental protection.

Coffee growing and processing

Most of the organization's coffee is grown at high altitude. 80% of their coffee production is based in San Marcos, and the rest is dispersed across the other 3 departments. Coffee profiles vary considerably between Manos Campesinas' cooperatives due to the different climatic conditions of each region. Coffee from San Marcos is particularly unique. This coffee is known as Volcanic San Marcos, as its taste is influenced by the soil and altitude of the Tajumulco volcano.

Ripe coffee cherries are picked by producers and then delivered for de-pulping and processing on the same day. Manos Campesinas owns its own processing plant and drying patios, which it uses to dry and sort its coffee for export. They also own their own cupping lab to test their coffees for quality and taste.



Mr Pedro of the San Marcos cooperative in front of their drying beds. ©Manos Campesinas

Coffee profile

Altitude 1,000-2,100m
Smallholders 0.5 ha on average
Total area of production 1,175 ha
Growing practices 100% Fairtrade and organic
Coffee variety Arabica: Bourbon and Caturra
Coffee quality FR 81-89
Typical profile Crisp acidity with floral notes and hints of chocolate and nuts
Harvest November – March
Other certifications EU Organic Farming Standard, NOP/USDA (Organic), SPP

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Benefits of Fairtrade

The organization holds an annual general assembly where the use of the Fairtrade premium is discussed and approved. They also have a yearly development plan to organize and monitor the use of their funds. Manos Campesinas have successfully supported the development of their communities and business through a number of infrastructure, training, social and environmental projects.

Productivity and training

Farmers have been given training workshops on Fairtrade standards and credit is available to members to improve productivity.

Women and gender

Each cooperative in the union has an active women's organization. Manos Campesinas supports gender equality as a founding principle. They have women's training programs and encourage female participation at all levels.

Environment and water

Protecting the environment is one of the organization's key values. All their land is under water conservation measures, and they have done environmental and climate change risk assessments. Members are trained in biodiversity techniques and land is set aside to encourage biodiversity.

Community and cooperative infrastructure

Thanks to the Fairtrade premium, Manos Campesinas have been able to improve the infrastructure of their cooperatives and local communities. In 2015 they bought new land to build extra drying beds and develop their office infrastructure. They have also improved the roads of their communities, and purchased vehicles to help producers transport their coffee.

Challenges

- Climate change is beginning to alter the harvest season, and increase the risk of diseases such as leaf rust (*la roya*).
- Roads can be difficult to navigate at some points in the year. Manos Campesinas are continuing to improve their local road infrastructure to overcome this.

Contact:

info@manoscampesinas.org

www.manoscampesinas.org



Manos Campesinas members receiving training on Fairtrade standards. ©CLAC



Producers working on a coffee seedbed in Tajumulco, San Marcos department. ©Manos Campesinas

'The Fairtrade price of coffee is better than our local market price and thus favors us, the small producers. After the first year, we have been able to use the Fairtrade premium to improve 200 meters of road, allowing us to deliver our coffee more efficiently.'

Oscar Ramos, Manos Campesinas producer

