



Fair Trade and Environmental Sustainability

Use this information to educate yourself and others about how Fair Trade protects the environment.

Fast Facts

- **75 percent** of the world's poor and food insecure people rely on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods.
- Due to climate change, the amount of land suitable for growing coffee and other crops on a global scale could be **cut in half by 2050**.¹
- Deforestation and forest degradation accounts for **20 percent** of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Approximately **30 percent** of Fair Trade producer organizations invest a portion of their Community Development Funds in environmental conservation and climate change resiliency initiatives.
- Over **50 percent** of Fair Trade certified farms also hold organic certificates.
- Without significant, coordinated global action, climate change will push **132 million people** into poverty over the next 10 years.²

Fair Trade and Environmental Sustainability

By paying farmers and producers fair wages, Fair Trade provides financial security and stability in an ever-changing environment. This increased security, combined with standards and incentives for environmental stewardship, enables workers to consider how they can help conserve the environment and make their communities more sustainable, all while maintaining a sustainable livelihood. Moreover, many producers invest their Community Development Funds into obtaining organic certification, resulting in over half of all Fair Trade Certified products being organic certified. If a producer wants to become Fair Trade Certified, they must meet a variety of environmental standards including but not limited to:

- Biodiversity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Limited and safe use of agrochemical
- Soil and water management
- Pest and waste management

• ¹ <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/706751601388457990/pdf/Revised-Estimates-of-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Extreme-Poverty-by-2030.pdf> (September 2020)

• ² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange/overview#1> (October 2021)

Climate Change

From coffee to cocoa to bananas, farmers' yields around the world are increasingly impacted by drought and disease as a result of climate change. With Community Development Funds, farmers can spend more time and money on things like climate change resiliency training, quality testing and equipment efficiency. These funds help farmers adapt to the changing climate while ensuring the sustainability of their land for future generations.

Soil and Water

Fair Trade standards for soil and water preservation include:

- Limiting overall water use
- Sourcing water sustainably
- Employing sustainable irrigation practices which preserve soil nutrients
- Maintaining soil quality through animal and green manure, agroforestry, and crop rotation

Pesticides, Waste and GMOs

Fair Trade standards for pests and waste ensure farmers and producers are:

- Controlling pests in a sustainable, environmentally sound manner
- Educated on the safe use of certain approved pesticides
- Exploring alternatives to chemical pest control
- Developing safe disposal plans for hazardous waste
- Not using genetically modified seeds or plants

Fair Trade Premium Projects <https://zoom.us/j/93534361148>

- In Kenya, members of the tea cooperative Sireet OEP have used premium funds to establish tree nurseries, and provide trainings on organic composting, diversification, and reducing deforestation.
- After leaf rust or *la roya* devastated 70% of coffee crops across Latin America in 2011/2012², Fair Trade cooperatives supported farmers in replanting and provided training to mitigate future risk. Farmers invested in new, more resilient varieties of coffee plants and organic pesticides to protect against the disease.
- Banana growers in St. Lucia have reduced the use of agrochemicals, protecting local wildlife. This change has also increased the amount of available land for grazing livestock and planting other crops, which is now done safely on land closer to the banana plants.

“We have planted trees and reduced the number of pesticides we use by 80 percent in the last ten years. We’ve used the Fair Trade premium to buy environmentally friendly ovens to dry our coffee [...] which mean we no longer need to cut up to 50 acres of forest every year.”

- Gerardo Arias Camacho

Coffee Farmer and Member of the COOCAFE
Cooperative in Costa Rica

² <https://perfectdailygrind.com/2019/04/how-to-monitor-for-prevent-coffee-leaf-rust/> (November 2020)