

Transcript – Fair Trade Quality Products

Fair trade is not a charity. American consumers are not going to buy fair trade products just because it helps some farmer. If farmers get fair trade certified but don't produce a good product, it is not going to get sold in the fair trade market. One of the important features of fair trade is we are helping farmers invest in quality. Because they understand that their long term income is very closely connected with their ability to produce high quality products and be reliable business partners to the US companies that want to buy their products. So, we see a lot of fair trade and premium moneys being spent by co-ops strengthening their own quality strengthening their own business capacity.

I was in Rwanda recently visiting coffee farms that are part of the fair trade community and they built new mills, they've trained their farmers in how to produce better quality. They've built cupping laboratories that allow the farmers to learn the taste of their own products for the first time. I was very inspired to see how the Rwandan farmers have come together into co-ops and built the foundation for producing some of the most delicious coffee in the world.

So what we've discovered is that there's a direct correlation between the quality of a food product and how much money the farmer received. So if we insured that farmers get a decent return for their harvest, they are able to produce much higher quality. It's just logical and the difference is there in all of the contests and awards and competitions that the fair trade farmers continuously win every year.