



TransFair USA

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Fair Trade Certification

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TransFair USA is a member of Fair Trade Labelling Organisations International (FLO), a non-governmental organization headquartered in Bonn, Germany. FLO serves as the umbrella group for the Fair Trade certification initiatives in 19 countries, and manages the Fair Trade Register, a list of licensed producers for Fair Trade Certified™ products. Consumers in the US can currently purchase Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa products, rice and fresh fruit.

Fair Trade coffee, cocoa, and sugar are produced by cooperatives run by small, family farmers; tea is produced on estates, where Fair Trade works to improve the socioeconomic situation of workers. Fair Trade fresh fruit is produced on both cooperatives and estates. Cooperatives are farmer-owned, and members approve co-op decisions through democratic processes. On estates, use of the additional money earned from Fair Trade is determined by vote of a worker-led Joint Body, the composition of which reflects the gender and cultural makeup of the organization. This Fair Trade income may not be applied to the estate's operating expenses.

Only producer groups that pass the certification process are eligible to sell their products in the Fair Trade market. If a producer's paper application is acceptable, that producer is physically inspected by a regionally based FLO inspector. That inspector then makes a recommendation on whether the producer meets Fair Trade criteria. The final decision to admit a producer to the Fair Trade Register is made by a committee of trade experts from both developed and developing nations. Once approved, producers are re-inspected annually.

Fair Trade criteria are summarized as follows:

1. Guaranteed floor price or income¹ paid directly to the producer;
2. Fair labor conditions for all people working on the farms;
3. Freedom of association for farmers and workers, and democratic decision-making processes;
4. Environmental standards that restrict use of agrochemicals and foster sustainability;
5. Removal of unnecessary middlemen that decrease producer income;
6. For cooperatives, pre-harvest lines of credit.

Any producer groups found to be in violation of the Fair Trade criteria are removed from the Register.

TransFair USA monitors the transactions among importers and processors in the US and producers on the Fair Trade Register. In order to become Fair Trade licensees these organizations contractually agree to provide documentation of all transactions on a regular basis. TransFair USA inspects this documentation and conducts rigorous chain of custody audits to ensure the integrity of the Fair Trade model.

TransFair USA's status as a non-profit, independent certifier allows for unbiased monitoring of Fair Trade products. If you have questions about Fair Trade certification, please call Christopher Himes, TransFair USA's Director of Certification & Global Producer Services, at (510) 663-5260.

¹ Floor price or premium based on costs of living and production.