

Fair Trade Certified™ Fresh Fruit: Frequently Asked Questions

Bananas, Pineapples, Grapes & Mangoes



What is Fair Trade Certified™ fresh fruit?

The Fair Trade Certified™ label on fresh fruit guarantees that farmers and farmworkers receive a fair price for their labor. Low conventional market prices for fruit often leave farmers unable to cover even their cost of production. The Fair Trade price is the equivalent of a living wage. It allows farmers to meet production costs, feed their families, send their children to school, protect the environment and invest in the quality of their farms for the future. In addition, Fair Trade standards assure that strict labor and environmental guidelines are followed by fruit producers.

Why is Fair Trade certification for fresh fruit important?



Benefits for small-scale producers: Without direct access to buyers willing to pay a fair price, small-scale fruit farmers receive only a fraction of their harvest's worth. In Fair Trade, small-scale producers are

organized into democratically-run cooperatives and receive a fair price for their crop, no matter how low the market price falls. These minimum prices vary by country and organic status, and are designed to cover the costs of sustainable production and provide a decent standard of living for their families. In addition, small farmers receive a Fair Trade premium on top of the selling price. Cooperatives use this fund for business and human resource development, as well as social and environmental projects.

Benefits for plantation workers: On Fair Trade fruit plantations, Fair Trade ensures that owners can and do provide fair wages to their workers. Several recent media stories have told of banana farmworkers in

Central and South America who have been intimidated and even attacked for trying to unionize. Fair Trade standards ensure that management respect the rights of workers to be part of unions. Plantations also receive the minimum Fair Trade price which covers basic production and labor costs. An additional Fair Trade premium goes into a fund managed jointly by farmworkers' representatives and plantation management. The premium is used to fund social, environmental and business improvement projects.

Benefits for worker health and the environment:

Fair Trade certification requires that farmers use sustainable agricultural practices which protect workers and the environment. On most non-Fair Trade plantations, dangerous pesticides are used throughout the growing and harvesting process. International standards for pesticide use are often disregarded by plantation owners and unknown to workers. Neurological disorders including muscle pains, nausea, dizziness; organ damage to eyes, liver, and lungs; and even sterility in male workers are ailments that fruit farmers and workers face because of exposure to these chemicals. Fair Trade certification ensures that farmers adhere to all national and international legislation regarding the use and handling of chemicals, and that the most dangerous chemicals are not used at all.

Who sets the standards for Fair Trade Certified fresh fruit?



TransFair USA is the only Fair Trade certification organization in the US and is a member of Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International (FLO), the representative and monitoring body for Fair Trade labeling initiatives in 17 consuming countries

and over 40 producer countries. FLO sets producer requirements and monitors producer groups, while TransFair USA monitors US companies for compliance with Fair Trade criteria.

Where does Fair Trade Certified fresh fruit come from?

There are currently 28 fresh fruit producer groups registered with FLO. These groups represent many thousands of farmworkers and farmers in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ghana, the Windward Islands, Egypt, South Africa, and Burkina Faso.

How many tons of Fair Trade Certified fresh fruit are sold worldwide?

In 2002, over 40,000 tons of Fair Trade bananas were sold, a 25 percent increase from 2001. In Switzerland, Fair Trade bananas represent 24 percent of the total market, and 20 percent of banana sales at a leading supermarket chain. Other fresh fruits have recently been introduced, and are quickly gaining market share.

What are the Fair Trade standards for fresh fruit producers?

Fair Trade has separate standards for small farms which are not dependent on permanent hired labor and large farms which do use farmworkers.

Small Family Farms

Small farmers can participate in Fair Trade if they have formed organizations (eg. cooperatives or associations) which are able to contribute to the social and economic development of their members and their communities and are democratically controlled by their members.

Farms Dependent on Permanent Hired Labor

Farmworkers can participate in Fair Trade if they are organized, normally in unions, and if the plantation they work for is prepared to promote workers' development and to pass on to the workers the additional revenues generated by Fair Trade.

Standards for all Fair Trade producers:

- Workplaces, machinery and equipment must be safe and pose no risks to health.

- International guidelines for the use and handling of agro-chemicals must be followed.
- Producers must follow strict environmental standards which create buffer zones between crops and natural habitats; and promote biological pest control, intercropping, and natural fertilization.
- Wages must meet or exceed the national minimum wage or the local wage, whichever is higher
- No forced or child labor abuses are allowed.

How does Fair Trade help the environment?



Fair Trade standards require producer farms and cooperatives to make environmental protection an important part of their land management. Farms must use Integrated Crop Management techniques; protect virgin forests, surface water, and springs; and control erosion. Fair Trade standards also encourage farmers to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides, gradually replacing them with organic farming methods. Certain dangerous pesticides are not allowed at all. An important benefit of the higher Fair Trade price is that investments can be made by the plantation or cooperative to train farmers and farmworkers in organic farming techniques and to gain organic certification.

How does TransFair USA make sure that farmers receive the Fair Trade price?

In order to become licensed to see Fair Trade Certified fruit, exporters, importers and distributors contractually agree to provide TransFair USA with documentation of all Fair Trade fruit transactions on a quarterly basis. For every container of fruit purchased from a Fair Trade farm by a certified importer, TransFair USA receives copies of invoices that show how much was paid for the product. These invoices are matched with producer reports to ensure that whenever the Fair Trade Certified label appears, the farmers did indeed receive a fair price. TransFair USA's status as a non-profit, independent certifier allows for even-handed, unbiased monitoring of each company's Fair Trade products.