

# The Coffee Farmer

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National Union of Coffee  
Agribusinesses and Farm  
Enterprises (NUCAFE)



(The Coffee Farmers Association of Uganda)

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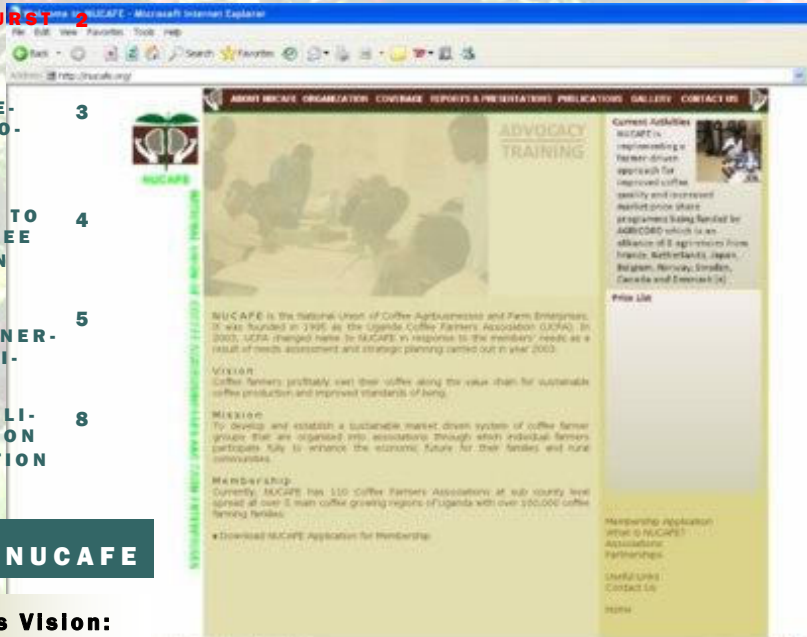
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### ABOUT NUCAFE

#### NUCAFE's Vision:

- Coffee Farmers profitably own their coffee along the value chain.

#### NUCAFE's Mission:

- To establish a sustainable farmer owned and operated organization for the benefit of the members.



#### A word from the Executive Director NUCAFE Mr. Joseph Nkandu

The last quarter of 2007 had great success having marketed coffee worth over Uganda Shillings One Billion (1bn) with an added value of over Uganda Shillings Four hundred Million (4m) earned by three thousand (3000) small holder coffee farmers.

For the first time in forty years, forty two (42) farmers from Nebbi district were able to purchase One thousand and five (1005) iron sheets and construction of new homes started. This impact is the result of the farmer ownership model. That quarter also marked the end of the NUCAFE 2004-2007 Strategic Development Plan adding to the development of the new Strategic Development Plan for 2008-2012. The New Strategic plan has the following programme areas:

- Support Membership development
- Strengthening the institutional capacity of NUCAFE
- Lobbying and Advocacy
- Enhancing production and profitability of coffee

For increased visibility, NUCAFE launched its website, "www.nucafe.org", however, the quarter was also marked with sorrow and grief having lost our former Chairman, Mr. Jack Bigirwa who died in a road accident on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2007. May his soul rest in eternal peace; this news letter is dedicated to him.

### THE COFFEE FARMERS SHALL MISS YOU GREATLY

Hon. Ssendaula Gerald Chairman—NUCAFE condolence message for the death of Jack Bigirwa

With deep shock we in NUCAFE learnt the sadden and tragic death of our beloved and committed member, Jack Lucas Bigirwa.

The late Jack Bigirwa was one of the founder members of NUCAFE as the Uganda Coffee Farmers Association and has been chairman of NUCAFE for six years until he honourably stepped down on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2007.

Because of his *Turn to page 2:*

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GOOD TARPULINS ARE AVAILABLE AT A FEE OF UGX 26,000/= . FOR DETAILS CONTACT THE NUCAFE SECRETARIAT

## ORGANISED FARMERS...

From page 1:

love to get his fellow farmers out of poverty, the Late Jack Bigirwa kept the voice of farmers very loud in organizations such as UCDA, NAADS, Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), Ugocert as a very active Board member.

At international level, the Late Jack Bigirwa has been the Vice Chairman of the Tropical Commodities Committee of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and so many others.

The late Jack Bigirwa has been so innovative that even where it was believed to be impossible for farmers to add value to their coffee, he made it a policy within NUCAFE that the only way to alleviate poverty is for farmers to move up the value chain by adding value to their coffee which meant more money into farmers' pockets. Today, there are many farmers who quickly embraced the Farmer ownership model and their livelihoods have already changed for the better. At international Coffee Organization (ICO) forums, the late Jack Bigirwa did not shy away with his vision for coffee farmers to be the owners of the coffee and he did not hesitate at all to talk about the trade imbalance brought about by a curtail of coffee roasters that resulted into the famous coffee crisis.

Today farmers are enjoying good prices and this is attributed to concerted efforts of people like the late Jack Bigirwa across the world. We in NUCAFE cannot fully narrate the contribution the late Jack Bigirwa has made not only to the coffee farmers of Uganda but also across the coffee sector in the whole world. Although Jack Bigirwa has died his vision will live on beyond people and institutions.

I pray that the almighty God strengthens his family to go through this trying moment. The Board of NUCAFE is together with you and we do pray that his soul rests in eternal peace.

## BOOM OR BURST: HOW COMMODITY PRICE IMPEDES POVERTY REDUCTION, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

[Oli Brown](#), Jason Gibson, [Alec Crawford](#), IISD, 2008

Commodity price volatility is a big problem for commodity-dependent countries and producers. With 95 developing countries deriving at least half their exports earnings from commodities, the rollercoaster of commodity prices, which can rise or fall by 50 per cent in a year, makes sound fiscal planning extremely difficult for both countries and producers. Predictable incomes are critical if commodity-dependent countries are to escape the cycle of commodity dependence, which is in turn integral to wider economic stability and poverty reduction.

Since the turn of the millennium, the risks facing commodity producers have been partially disguised by strong

and promise of five different types of economic tools: supply management, national revenue management, market-based price risk management, compensatory finance and alternative trade initiatives.

Experience leads us to four conclusions:

1. There is no 'silver bullet'—no one policy that will address all aspects of commodity price volatility.
2. Price or income stabilization interventions can create their own moral hazards and market distortions.
3. Supply-side constraints, such as limited access to knowledge and poor infrastructure, are enduring obstacles.
4. But despite the challenges, we have options that will work—under the right circumstances.

Policy-makers need to tackle the very real risks facing commodity-dependent countries and producers. If the international community is indeed committed to reducing poverty, then thoughtful, decisive action is needed. Taking the following seven guidelines into consideration will help ensure that future policy responses are more coherent and successful than past initiatives:

1. Look for complementary policies.
2. Engage stakeholders at all levels.
3. Do not underestimate the importance of the private sector.
4. Keep it as simple as possible.
5. Address the potential moral hazard by integrating income stabilization into a wider rural development or diversification program.
6. Build flexibility into programs.

Ensure that the reach of the implementing agency matches the scope of a policy's goals.

**....no 'silver bullet'—no one policy that will address all aspects of commodity price Volatility...**

prices for certain commodities. But the basic problem has not gone away. At its heart is the imperfect nature of commodity markets. The theoretical ideal of a supply-meets-demand market equilibrium is rarely, if ever, achieved because commodity supply and demand forces respond inflexibly to price fluctuations. But it is not *price* volatility per se that is the problem—rather it is the volatility of national and individual *incomes* that obstructs long-term planning, drives commodity dependence, widens inequality and leads to environmental degradation.

Commodity price volatility is a serious issue, but it is not a hopeless one. The basic economic tools necessary to help commodity producers get more predictable incomes are better understood than ever before. This publication looks at the experience, problems

# UCTF TO ACTIVATE SECURITY PROTOCOLS



Ms. Betty Namwagala Ag. Executive Director UCTF, Mr. Paul Mugambwa - The Chairman UCDA and Mr. Vicent Mulindwa - The Director Rehabilitation and Replanting (NUCAFE) share a cup of coffee, as Paul explains the techniques in the business

at \$1.61 a kg on the London commodities exchange.

Officials at the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) have noted that the incidents are on the rise and have held several meetings to see how to handle the situation. These incidents are serious enough as to threaten Uganda's coffee export industry.

Our exporters normally ship out coffee to meet contractual obligations. A consistent pattern of non-compliance on these contracts could see them blacklisted by the major trading houses and collapse the industry. This is a matter of national importance, because whereas the dominance of coffee as an export earner has fallen in the last decade, one in eight or 3.5 million Ugandans derive their livelihood from the crop.

A blacklist of Ugandan coffee on world markets would be a disaster. These incidents highlight

how exposed we are to road transport as the main means to trade with the outside

**...a black list of Uganda Coffee on world markets would be a disaster...**

world. A functioning train system would have reduced the possibility of theft and we would not find our coffee exports in danger.

That aside this is where security protocols entered into under the East African Community should be activated. All the evidence points to the coffee being stolen in Kenya and the Ugandan government should not leave the matter to be pursued only by the UCDA but should intervene with the Kenyan authorities at higher levels to resolve the issue.

BILLIONS of shillings of Uganda coffee for export have been stolen while in transit by thieves in Kenya this year alone. The thieves are able to break into containers without tampering with the seals, empty them of the coffee and then refill them with sand or some such rubbish and send it on its way to

Mombasa.

The thefts seem to have been triggered by the higher prices of Robusta coffee on the world market, up 21% to \$1.95 a kg from the same time last year when it was trading

## COMING TO YOU SOON IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

*The challenge of getting certified, the tough road, sacrifices involved in getting certified....*

*Contracts in the coffee industry; what to consider in terms of quality, shipping, mode of delivery, terms of payment and using intermediaries....*

*Experiences of Business Managers in the past year, their view of challenges and Successes achieved....*

*More coffee prices, And so much more....*

Current coffee prices:

Robusta Kiboko

1000 - 1100 UgX

Robusta F.A.Q

2100 - 2100 UgX

Arabica:

2400 - 2500 UgX

## SH 1.5 BILLION TO BOOST COFFEE PRODUCTION



An elderly farmer climbs a ladder to harvest his coffee, such coffee trees are targeted by the coffee production campaign, on the right a couple harvests a well managed coffee bush, such bushes are high yielding, ease to harvest

During the month of October coffee prices recorded a further increase, with the ICO composite indicator price at 115.71 US cents/lb. Market fundamentals remain favourable to the continuation of this firm price trend. October was also marked by the beginning of the crop year in many exporting countries. Adverse weather conditions have continued to affect most of these countries, particularly in Mex-

ico, where floods have caused serious damage to infrastructures and loss of human life. If bad weather continues, it could affect production and quality potential for crop year 2007/08. On the other hand, coffee-producing areas in Brazil benefited from significant rainfall, alleviating concerns about the effects of drought on the 2008/09 crop. These developments have maintained price volatility of Arabica coffee at a relatively high level in comparison with the first semester of 2007. Total exports for coffee year 2006/07 (October – September) amounted to 96.74 million bags, an increase of

By Ronald Kalyango

ABOUT sh1.5b is to be spent to increase coffee production from the 2006 level of about 2.3 million 60kg-bags to 4.5 million bags by 2015. The campaign is spearheaded by Café Africa, the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) together with Agribusiness Development Component (ABDC) of DANIDA, and Coffee Research Centre scientists at Kituza in Mukono.

Other players are the National Agriculture Advisory Services, the National Union of Coffee and Agribusiness and Farm Enterprise and the Uganda National Agro-Inputs Dealers Association.

So far, Rukungiri, Rakai, Kanungu, Bushenyi, Kasese, Masaka, Mukono, Luweero, Mbale, Manafwa, Kapchorwa, Ntungamo, Mbarara, Ibanda, Nebbi, Arua, Kibaale, Sironko, Mpigi and Nakaseke districts have been selected.

The districts are to be supported with clean planting materials, inputs and credit, given tips on seedling multiplication, exposed to better farming practices and post-harvest handling.

“With yields currently running

between 0.25 and 0.40kg of clean coffee per tree, the first target is to increase productivity to between 0.75 and 1kg,” Henry Ngabirano, the man-

**...increase coffee production from the 2006 level of about 2.3 million 60kg-bags to 4.5 million bags by 2015....**

aging director of UCDA, said at a workshop at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

Ngabirano, however, said the targeted levels could be achieved when farmers go back to the basics of better husbandry like improved pruning, mulching and fertilising practices. He further adds that, they would empower farmers in negotiating for input purchases, coffee sales and information transfer.

Gerald Ssendaula, the chairman NUCAFE, asked UCDA to draft laws to help farmers, and arrest and punish middlemen, who adulterate the quality of coffee. He warned farmers against buying seedlings from roadside nurseries, saying such plants take long to mature.

**....Adverse weather conditions have continued to affect most of these countries....**

9.70% compared to coffee year 2005/06. The rate of exports slackened slightly, however, with exports for September 2007 at 6.99 million bags compared to 7.37 million in September 2006.

## UCTF TO ACTIVATE SECURITY PROTOCOLS



After collecting their coffee, farmers from Buwama Coffee Farmers Association in Mpigi district gladly display their coffee after hulling. Value addition of coffee is key, for farmers to earn better from their produce

The Robusta crop has just concluded from the south and south western Uganda in August marketing of the mainly Arabica Crop from eastern and North western Uganda (west Nile) started in October at the beginning of this quarter. Despite the lack of funds, efforts were made for better prices for the best quality produced by farmers through meetings with kyagalanyi coffee exporters Ltd, Head office and there respective buying center managers in paidha and mbale districts. A fair price of Ushs 2900 per kilo of premium coffee for NUCAFE groups in west Nile was given with a promise of an additional 200shs after the sale of coffee by kyagalanyi for each kilo of premium quality. In the eastern Uganda the negotiations resulted into a price of Ushs 3000 per kilo of premium coffee for NUCAFE groups with a promise of an additional 200shs after the sale of coffee by kyagalanyi for each kilo of premium quality. Some of the farmers have been able to obtain this price whereas others have failed mainly because of lack of access

to pulpers and bad harvesting and post harvest practices

The Robusta crop is coming in mainly from the central region north of the equator where it is a main season and little is expected from the districts in the southern and south western Uganda south of the equator up to the end of January 2008. The marketing done so far in this quarter is as below

A total of 114 metric tonnes of Fair average Quality (FAQ) for Robusta and parchment for Arabica with a market value of Ug Shs 315,989,444 were linked from the farmer groups and associations in the predominantly Arabica areas of eastern and north western Uganda. The total added value to the member farmers was Ug Shs 90,996,000. Market linkage fees collection amounted to Ug Shs 2,050,200. The average price received

by NUCAFE farmers increased to Ug 2620 for Robusta and 2825 for Arabica because of more bulking by farmers, improved quality and direct marketing to the exporter (kyagalanyi) in Kampala.

The defaults in market linkage fees payments were as a result of some groups paying 20 Ushs per kilo in some areas, refusal by the farmers who did not meet premium quality to pay market linkage fees. Sensitization on the importance of the 50 shs market linkage fees has been done and better payments are expected. Some projects working on coffee in the same areas have told farmers not to pay market linkage fees.

In Arabica coffee growing areas the farmer groups showed need for pulpers, weighing scales and moisture meters to help in improving quality and facilitate the collective marketing in order

**....average price received by NUCAFE farmers increased to Ug 2620 for Robusta and 2825 for Arabica....**

to access the premium prices.

A total of 466 MT mainly Robusta Fair average quality and some Arabica parchment coffee with a market value of Ug Shs 1,192,522,114, has been linked from NUCAFE farmer groups and associations to Mainly Kyagalanyi coffee exporters, Kawacom and Savannah Ltd. This has resulted into a total added value to farmers of Ug Shs 321,372,257 with the additional Robusta and Arabica sells in the remain-

# THE LATE MR JACK BIGIRWA ONE OF THE FOUNDER MEMBERS OF



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with his Former Vice Chairman Mr. Muluya Phillip Luyombo during his last Annual General Assembly



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with the New NUCAFE Chairman Hon. Gerald Ssendaula hold hands as Jack explains to him the roles his about to partake.



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with the former Youth Representative Mr. Ggaanya Francis sign a guest register at the AGM held in Masaka last year.



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with his former Board of Directors, hold a brief meeting session before meeting the Farmers Representatives from different areas of the country



The former Chairman Mr. Jack Bigirwa talking to one of the Candidates and his wife Mrs. Bamukyawa the chairperson of Luwero District Farmers Association



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with one of his coffee colleagues share a joke at Hotel Africana during the coffee production campaign



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Prof. Julius K. Zake the Director Research for Development share a word about soil fertility and coffee



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with the UCDA Board Secretary Mr. Luzinda .....and the Chairman Uganda Coffee Roasters Association Dr. Abudhlah Shire



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Dr. Francis Byekwaso of NAADS and Mr. Joseph Nkandu NUCAFE - Executive Director at the signing of NUCAFE - NAADS Partnership M.O.U



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Dr. Francis Byekwaso of NAADS and Mr. Joseph Nkandu NUCAFE - Executive Director after the signing of NUCAFE - NAADS Partnership M.O.U

# NUCAFE. HIS LIFE WITH THE ORGANIZATION IN PICTURES



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Patrick Eeckloo technical adviser to NUCAFE from IVA on one of the farm visits at Mr. Bukenya Vincent's Bukenya Estates in Manyagwa Gayaza



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Patrick Eeckloo technical adviser to NUCAFE and the Executive Director NUCAFE - Mr. Joseph Nkandu, viewing the wet processing process



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Executive Director - Mr. Joseph Nkandu during one of the Farm tours in Kabonera C.F.A with the President of Belgian Farms Union and Mrs Aaltje de Roos of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) demonstrates to the Belgian delegates on how to stump coffee after it has aged.



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with his Old Board Members during his address to the AGM in 2007 in Masaka



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Ms. Hilde Timmerman, the Deputy Director of TRIAS and another delegate enjoy a glass of wine during the 37th IFAP world farmers congress in Seoul South Korea .



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with some of the delegates pose for a photo shoot during the 37th IFAP world farmers congress in Seoul South Korea .



Mr. Jack Bigirwa (Former NUCAFE Chairman) with Mr. Henry Ngabirano the Managing Director of UCDA share a word during the coffee farmers convention that was held in Mandela National Stadium in 2004.



Right: Jack addresses the congregation that attended the coffee farmers and the coffee farmers convention



# COFFEE QUALITY IN REALATION TO PRODUCTION



After collecting their coffee, farmers from Buwama Coffee Farmers Association in Mpigi district gladly sort their coffee after hulling., removing all black beans. Value addition of coffee is key, for farmers to earn better from their produce

## Quality in relation to production

Much but not all quality evaluation is subjective, and many people buy certain coffees because they get what they want from them. All exporters should know the market for the type of coffee they produce; it is pointless to offer the wrong coffee to the wrong market. Once the 'right' quality is established, it then needs to be produced in the most efficient and *consistent* manner.

Production and processing systems influence quality. Exporters can never be certain of all the components and inputs that make up consistent quality, but they should know the basic norms in climate, soil, and other agricultural factors in the growing areas. Once this is known exporters can adjust their processing techniques to get the best result for the given agricultural environment. Even annual variations in climate can often be at least partly offset by processing adjustments.

The best quality is obtained from selective

picking in which only red, ripe cherries are gathered, by hand, in successive picking rounds until most of the crop has been harvested. When coffee prices are low this time and labour consuming method is expensive. But it is impossible to produce exemplary quality coffee when the cherries are simply stripped, all at once, regardless of the degree of maturity.

## Variety, soils, altitude, irrigation, processing

### Variety, soils and altitude

A vast number of different coffees are traded in the market. Together these represent an almost immeasurable number of combinations of variety, soil and altitude. The better combinations can obviously aspire to better prices but growers, especially smallholders, cannot easily change their location, that is, change their soil type or altitude. Commercial growers however can relatively easily change the variety they grow: depending on their cropping cycle, modern commercial farms automatically replant 10%–15% of their tree park annu-

ally. But the choice of variety can be difficult. It is in the best interest of growers to stay informed of the types of coffee available for planting, and to match the best variety to the soils and the altitude conditions of their farms. For smallholders uprooting and replanting are especially costly undertakings, requiring careful consideration and realistic advice concerning *all* the potential consequences. This applies equally to genetically modified (GM) coffee that may appear in future. As yet there is no commercially available GM coffee but work in this area has been underway during the last decade. For more on this see, for example, *Coffee Futures* by CABI Commodities (<http://www.cabi-commodities.org/>; ISBN 958-332356-X).

## Rain fed or irrigated

Stressed trees cannot produce decent, well formed cherries. Coffee is drought-resistant, but not drought-proof. It has remarkable recuperative power from dry spells, but like all living things it needs water to produce.

Only very few coffees from marginal rainfall areas have made it to the ranks of truly notable coffees. These notable coffees have specific, inherent quality aspects (linked to their variety) which command premiums high enough to compensate for very low yields. Non-irrigated coffee in marginal rainfall areas usually shows the greatest seasonal quality variation.

## Wet or dry processed

Washed Arabica not only needs adequate rainfall or irrigation for growth, but also requires water for wet processing. In many areas it is not uncommon to see multiple washing stations (or wet beneficios) using common sources of water, either small rivers or streams.

Below-average rainfall can then result in insufficient or poor quality water for wash-



We are on the web:

**WWW.NUCAFE.ORG**

[www.ugandacoffee.org/stakeholders/farmers](http://www.ugandacoffee.org/stakeholders/farmers)

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**Coffee Farmers profitably own  
their coffee along the value chain  
for sustainable livelihoods.**

ing, which has a direct effect on the quality produced. The preparation of natural or dry processed coffee does not use water, but of course the trees still require adequate water for growth. Harvesting and drying need dry conditions and the best natural coffees are obtained from areas that have little rain in the harvesting season. Examples are Yemeni mochas and some Ethiopian Harars, but the largest group of natural Arabicas comes from Brazil, with the best originating from dry areas where the cherry matures and dries quickly.

#### **Cost and yield versus quality**

If a coffee lacks the inherent quality to make it a best-seller capable of commanding premium prices, then most growers, and specifically estates, cannot tolerate low yields unless their input costs are low as well. Estates, especially when using irrigation, can optimize yields much more easily than can

## **QUALITY PRODUCTION CONT'D**

most smallholders. This can be done by planting high yielding and/or disease-free varieties, by increasing planting densities, or by applying larger amounts of inputs, especially fertilizer (although excessive use of fertilizer can result in thin, almost bitter liquors).

There is an element of truth though in the often heard lament that such actions at times reduce *quality*, especially when taken to excess (for example very dense plant populations necessitating very high fertilizer applications). But the bottom line return from higher yields of medium to sometimes mediocre quality is, unfortunately, often better than that from lower yields of superior quality, even when higher prices are obtained. The market does not always like such comment but in recent years this has been particularly true, with many decent coffees selling, in real terms, at close to historical lows.

Estate managers can usually take these considerations into account and so make relatively well-informed decisions. But when smallholders replant it is sometimes perhaps more a case of being recommended to do so, rather than a well-informed choice on their part. Yet

therefore sustainable cost' has in the past kept many smallholders going but, as some would argue, perhaps it has also kept them poor.

#### **Estate or smallholder grown**

It is not true that smallholders can never match the quality standards of estates. For years and years many smallholders in Kenya have consistently outperformed large and well-managed estates while growing the same varieties. But much depends on the personal circumstances of each individual smallholder and it is fair to say that many smallholders in the world face daunting circumstances.

There are no accurate data on the proportions of estate and smallholder coffee in the total world production, partly because there is no definitive measure of what constitutes a smallholder. But it is believed that over half the world's coffee crop is grown on farms of less than 5 hectares.

In Africa only about 5%–6% of the annual output of about 1 million tons is grown on estates. The remaining 95% or so is grown by people whose holdings range from perhaps one or two to ten hectares, to just a few hundred trees in all, sometimes even less than that.

The world's main resource of original coffees, and their future, probably lies within the smallholder sector. Ironically though because of the heterogeneity of most of these coffees (a single shipment is made up from many small growers), they often fail to get into the exemplary segment of the specialty market because they lack visual perfection, or they are 'unknown' and it is easier to market well-known coffees. On the other hand, their availability is also not always adequate or regular enough to match expectation, which limits their scope in the marketplace. Even so, it seems reasonable to say that apart from relatively small amounts of specialty cof-

**...reconvert coffee farms into  
self-sustaining agricultural  
units through diversification ...**

for many smallholders it is not an easy matter to maintain the level of inputs required by higher yielding hybrids. In times of trouble, such as when prices fall, they run into difficulty and may finally end up with neither yield nor quality. Respect for the old adage that 'low inputs equal low yields but also low and



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