



Organic Cocoa Ecuador

Asociación Artesanal Fortaleza del Valle



GENERAL INFORMATION

Organisation:

Actually 633 farmer families associated.

It is a 2nd degree association which gathers 5 baseline farmer groups, situated in the Carrizal Chone region.

Goals:

Offer a platform to support small scale farmer organisations in order to a more efficient technical assistance for production and post harvest management. Furthermore one of the main targets is to enhance marketing offering and the logistic channels for export.

International collaboration is canalized and managed through this organisation. In this way they have been able to negotiate important technical and social projects as well as set up the export of their cocoa harvest.

Structure

Farms: Small scale, familiar farms of 2-5 ha (average)

Very diversified agro-forestral parcels with fruit and timber trees

Historical background:

Association was founded in 2005 in aim to improve life conditions of small scale cocoa producers. First of all organizing them for better coordination of assistance and commercialisation.

In an arid zone unsuitable for agriculture, the farmers benefit from the Carrizal Chone irrigation project in line with an embankment dam, installed by the central government of Ecuador.

Location

It groups the 5 farmers cooperatives La Fortaleza, Valle Carrizal, Rio Grande, Quiroga and Rio Chico. Located all in the Carrizal –Chone region covering the cantons of Bolivar, Chone, Tosagua, Junin y Porto Viejo.

Fortaleza del Valle
Manabí

PRODUCT (Cocoa):

Type: pure Cacao Nacional (no CCN-51)

High quality, selected and exportable beans of Cacao Nacional fine flavour are offered.

To achieve this, farmers deliver fresh cocoa beans to a centralized post harvest management. Fermentation and drying process is there controlled in order to get the excellent uniform quality. The cocoa beans are fermented in wooden boxes during 4 days and sun dried down to 7% humidity degree for exportable quality.

The farms count with organic certification and the association is one of the few Fair trade certified organisations in Ecuador.

Certification: BioSuisse, EU-834/2007, NOP, FLO fair trade





ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Fortaleza del Valle is a recognized and well positioned farmer association with a positive example function in Ecuador.

It is a member of CONCACAO (corporation of fine flavour cacao national producers associations).

The association offers to the member farmer families:

- Micro credits, used mainly in pre-financing of harvest.
- Technical support with own staff of agronomists.
- Training and education of farmers.
Main topics are rehabilitation of farms (pruning and replanting) to increase yields.
Production of organic fertilizers and use of organic pest control methods.
- Centralized fermentation and drying infrastructure. This lowers the expenses on every single farm and guarantees controlled post harvest management to achieve the exportable product of uniform quality.

Fair trade premium is invested, following members decision, in diverse social funds:

- Shared production utilities, which are managed centrally and put at the disposal of all cooperative members. This pool has been completed with water pumps for irrigation, tools for pruning (chain saws a.o.)
- Mortuary fund: created to help to cover the high expenses incurred in case of death of family members.
- Microfinance: another part of the fair trade premium made it possible to expand the fund for loans handed out to member families for their individual projects.

PRONATEC'S CONTRIBUTION:

In order to strengthen the local organisation, amplify infrastructure for post harvest and commerce, extend organic certification, renewal of plantations and consolidate the export chain we are involved in:

- Long term commitment since 2006:
Joint set up of first independent cocoa export. As well as FLO fair trade and BioSuisse organic certification.
- Co-financing of working capital:
Triangular financing credits with Rabobank, based on Pronatec guaranteed purchase contracts
Direct loans in case of need.
- Co-financing of local micro projects:
PPP partnership between Fortaleza and Pronatec for the amplification of post harvest infrastructure, warehouse and offices in Calceta.

PRONATEC'S GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY:

- Produce top quality cocoa to generate safe income to members
- Maintain organic and fair-trade certifications
- Long-term business relationship for mutual benefit
- Promote fair and respectful behaviour towards the environment, business partners and society
- Set up sustainable projects in different areas
- Organic workshops and technical assistance to farmers in all of their agricultural requirements in order to optimize yields
- Women and men receive the same wage for the same work
- Support local social structures



- **Top quality fine flavour cocoa**
- **Full traceability**
- **Fair trade standarts**
- **No child nor forced labour**
- **Environmental friendly grown**
- **Agroforestral land use systems**
- **No chemical pesticide use**

Further Information
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