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NUCOFFEE WORLD SUPPORT

Program invests in technology and quality management from the farm to the cupping



Grower Célio Davi de Oliveira and Filipe, NUCOFFEE's consultant.

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NUCOFFEE provides three pillars of knowledge to promote productivity, quality, and transparency in the relationship between growers, cooperatives, and roasters: support, traceability, and commitment. Support is the investment done in the management of all coffee production phases, promoting good farming practices and in evaluating the beverage in the cup, for a better product position in the international market.

This number will feature a series of articles to familiarize you with each NUCOFFEE pillar and what each one represents within the program.

EVOLUTION THROUGH QUALITY

Willie Cintra, NUCOFFEE coordinator in the Cerrado Mineiro explains that there are tools available both for the grower who has not produced differentiated

coffee and for those who already do, but would like to produce larger quantities and better quality: "We have experts in pest and disease control to ensure higher yields, and others who focus on quality that represents the 'near future' of the entire coffee market."

To make this upgrade possible, several programs were designed, such as the Quality Diagnosis, by which technicians and agronomists are sent to each farm provide individual and focused training to the grower. In addition to feedback, NUCOFFEE also helps to implement the new management system. "We show what is best for each specific coffee for that region, and train the farm team in things such as the adoption of the recommended guidelines," says Cintra.

Another improvement program is the NUCOFFEE Protocol that advises partner growers about the environment and social sustainability required worldwide to make coffee sales possible to roasters in other countries.

The grower Mário Dornelles de Alvarenga, from Fazenda Olhos D'Água in the Campo das Vertentes, Sul de Minas (MG), values the program format: "We are in constant contact with NUCOFFEE agronomists, who give us guidance on how to improve our processes." According to Alvarenga, they focus on improving the Brazilian coffee position in the international market: "The program helps you to be known abroad and creates direct partnerships between the producer and the roaster. Sales abroad alone mean a 30% to 40% increase in profits compared to what we make in the domestic market, and by dealing directly with the buyer we avoid the middleman that would keep up to 70% of the sale proceeds."

NUCOFFEE's investment in the professional training of Brazilian cuppers - based on the methodology of the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) - results in improved ratings for the coffee. "The best cuppers are associated with NUCOFFEE. Neither through cooperatives nor in quality competitions do we have equally good evaluations of our coffee," says Alvarenga. At the end of the evaluation process, the producer receives a Cup Profile Report that certifies the quality of his product.

COFFEE IN BRAZIL

CONAB ANNOUNCES NEW PRODUCTION ESTIMATE FOR THE COUNTRY

The current harvest will yield 47.2 million 60kg bags of processed coffee

The national supply company (Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento - Conab), an agency under the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Breeding (MAP) published in September 2010 the third coffee harvest forecast for 2010.

It is expected to reach 47.2 million 60kg bags of processed coffee, i.e., up 19.6% (7.73 million bags) from the 2009 harvest of 39.47 million bags. This increase was expected, considering that 2010 is the “positive two-year period” for coffee farming. Compared to the previous forecast published last May, there was an increase of only 0.3%.



PHOTO ROBERTO SEBA/CAFE EDITORA

The coffee farming area in the country covers over 2.3 million hectares, 22.8 thousand less than the area accounted for in 2009 - especially in the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, due to a shift for sugar cane crops.

In Minas Gerais, where about 85% of the crop has already been harvested, 24.7 million bags are estimated, a growth of 19.95% represented mainly by the Cerrado Mineiro region. The average yield of the State of Minas Gerais was 24.46 coffee bags per hectare.

For the State of Espírito Santo, with over 90 percent of its coffee crop already harvested, production will probably reach 10.07 million bags, 2.74 million of Arabica (27.23%) and 7.33 million of Robusta (72.77%) coffees. Figures show the state production is 1.32 percent down, due only to a reduced Robusta production. The average yield of the two types of coffee is 21.74 bags per hectare: 15.22 of Arabica and 22.26 of Robusta.

For the State of São Paulo, 4.56 million bags of processed coffee are estimated, 33.2 percent up from 2009 (3.42 million) in 165.2 thousand hectares, with an average yield of 27.44 bags per hectare.

The State of Bahia will produce 2.29 million bags in an area covering 139.5 thousand hectares, which means a 16.45 bags per hectare.

COFFEE AND CULTURE

SHADE-GROWN COFFEE

Different species of trees are interspersed with coffee trees to improve quality and productivity

The original coffee plants in Ethiopia were grown in the shade of the native trees. In Brazil, the first coffees were grown in open sunlight. If, on one hand, the production was high, on the other hand the plant suffered from excessive radiation and wind. Not until the 70's and 80's did we start to consider protecting coffee plantations from the weather.

However, the unique climate conditions of each region have to be considered. As Central America coffee plantations are closer to the Equator, there is little difference in the length of sun exposure, thus allowing a more intense practice of shading. In the Sul de Minas and Mogiana Paulista regions, however, the day is shorter during winter, so shading cannot be too pronounced otherwise the floral induction will be affected.

Minas Gerais uses shading to a good extent. In the Sul de Minas, a mountainous windy area, shading is also used as a shield against the wind. In some properties located in Poços de Caldas, “prata” banana and coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) trees are used for intercropping, which also brings an additional financial return.



PHOTO COURTESY

In general, trees must have deep roots, high organic matter generation capacity, seeds that cannot be mistaken with coffee, and must be deciduous - to drop their leaves during winter when the coffee plants need more sunlight to grow.

In the early stages of the crop, fast growing plants should be used to protect the coffee plant. As the growing rate of the coffee plant is slow, it should ideally be planted next to annual species such as beans and corn up to the second or third year. For the mature coffee plantation it is recommend using plants such as “prata” banana trees, rubber trees, coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), *Bactris gasipaes* (pupunha), *Cupressus lusitanica* (cedrinho), and the *Grevillea robusta*.

PROS AND CONS

The key advantages of shade-growing are related to weather mitigation: protection from the wind that brings pests and causes branch breakage, from solar radiation and frost, in addition to abating the temperature within the plantation and securing moisture for the environment. The technique also guarantees a slow coffee maturation that permits a longer harvesting period. The quality of the beverage is directly improved as a consequence.

With relation to the environment, shade-growing reduces soil erosion, increases the biodiversity, and the farm’s sustainability. Fallen leaves enrich the soil with nutrients and reduce fertilizing costs.

While there are many positive points to the technique, it also has a few negative impacts, such as the difficulty in using mechanical harvesters especially in flat areas. Another negative issue is the exposure to infestation by the coffee borer beetle because of a more humid soil and shading.

COFFEE AROUND THE WORLD

REASONS TO DRINK COFFEE

Truths and myths about this typical Brazilian tradition and its impact on human health

In 2009, coffee consumption in Brazil reached 18.39 million coffee bags. It is estimated that it will increase to 19.31 million during the current year. A study by the Brazilian Coffee Industry Association (*Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Café - Abic*) confirmed what was common knowledge: Brazilians are drinking more coffee. The question then is: Is it important to nurture this tradition? Learn some of the myths around drinking coffee that have been totally demystified.

Is it bad for our health? According to studies, moderate coffee consumption is safe and good for your health. Coffee is a stimulant, maintains the brain active and helps keep you awake. For this reason, it should be consumed during the day. The ideal daily consumption is four 125 ml cups per day. In addition to caffeine, coffee has other beneficial substances such as minerals, Vitamin B3 (niacin) and antioxidants. Children are recommended to drink it with milk because it increases the nutritional value of meals.

Does it stain our teeth? Melanoidins, brown pigments formed during roasting give the typical color to the beverage and cause the browning of coffee pots and cups that hold



ILLUSTRATION GUSTAVO GIALUCCA/CAFE EDITORA

coffee for a long time. As coffee remains in the mouth and in contact with teeth for a very brief time, there is minimum risk of staining. Nevertheless, the habit of brushing teeth regularly helps prevent staining.

Is it fattening? Unlike soft drinks, chocolate, and alcoholic beverages, pure coffee does not have any calories and does not cause obesity. Caffeine can however, help in losing weight because it stimulates fat mobilization thus increasing and anticipating its use during physical exercise. It can also help an obese person in burning calories as it stimulates heat production.

Is it harmful to the stomach? There is no evidence that the regular consumption of caffeine drinks can directly cause digestive diseases. However, because the substance increases the secretion of gastric chloride acid and pepsin enzymes in the stomach, people with peptic ulcers should avoid consuming too much coffee.

Is it addictive? Any experience causes a chemical reaction in the brain. This means that we can become addicted to coffee, water, milk or exercises, or of unhealthy substances (alcohol, tobacco and drugs). In this case, the problem lies in abusing a substance and becoming addicted to something that is harmful to your health. And this is definitely not the case with coffee.