

Coffee co-operatives - every cup tells a story

When you visit co-operatives and see what goes into producing your coffee, you gain a new appreciation for your morning cup. This is according to Jonathan Robinson, founder of Bean There Coffee Company, a South African roaster of Certified Fairtrade Coffee.



Burundi coffee cherries

Every cup of coffee tells a story, many of them involving small family farms and co-operatives who grow, harvest and sell coffee to develop their communities. For Bean There, building relationships with these farmers is a key aspect of their business.

Fairtrade agreements help farmers to be more resilient when faced with some of the challenges of the coffee industry, such as global warming, political unrest, and fluctuating coffee prices.



I Love Coffee empowers the hearing-impaired

23 Sep 2019



The Tarakea co-operative on the slopes of Kilimanjaro is the source of Bean There's new Tanzanian coffee. High altitudes mean that the coffee grows slower, absorbing more nutrients, which results in a coffee with unique and distinct flavours. "Bean There's premiums are being saved to assist in the building of a new central wet mill, which will further enhance these incredible coffees," says Robinson.

Operated by close to 3,000 farmers, Tarakea is an established co-operative that is both financially stable and well run. Wise financial management and planning have enabled Tarakea to build a social hall, which they rent out to the community for weddings and social gatherings providing additional revenue for the co-operative.

“Tarakea is a beacon in the community and their ability to offer pre-harvest advances to farmers for farming inputs, education and medical fees without the need for bank loans is unique in the coffee world,” says Robinson.



The Tarakea co-operative in Tanzania.

Entering its ninth season of working with Musema, the first co-operative established in Burundi, Bean There has witnessed an improvement in the coffee and in the lives of the coffee farmers. “They’re a small co-operative committed to excellence in the production of their coffee,” says Robinson.

On his most recent visit in July, Robinson was able to get members of the co-operative to try their own coffee for the first time. “There was great excitement at the washing station as I passed around a few of the freshly brewed cups. Most farmers don’t get the chance to taste their coffee; this experience showed them that they’re harvesting and producing a world-class product,” says Robinson.



Fair trade at the core of Bean There's buying philosophy

28 Feb 2018



Bean There ethically sources coffee from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo and Kenya. Through its [Tip the](#)

[Farmer](#) initiative, the company aims to provide a necessary financial boost to small-scale producers. Money raised goes directly to Virunga Coffee in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Musema Cooperative in Burundi.

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