

Why Bother...buying FAIRTRADE? - KS3/4

OK, so you are at the supermarket with a FAIRTRADE chocolate bar in one hand, and a non-fairtrade bar in the other. What do you do? Well here are a few questions you might be asking yourself...

What is FAIRTRADE exactly?

FAIRTRADE is about getting our chocolate fix, but getting better prices and decent working conditions for the people who've got that chocolate bar onto the shelves too. It's about fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world who do not have the same kind of legal rights that we do.

What does the FAIRTRADE Mark mean?

The FAIRTRADE Mark is an independent consumer label which appears on UK products as a guarantee that they have given their producers a better deal. The Mark is awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation, a registered charity set up by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft Exchange and the World Development Movement. It shares internationally recognised Fairtrade standards with initiatives in 20 other countries, working together as Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO).



Why are FAIRTRADE Products more expensive?

The additional price we pay for FAIRTRADE goods is to guarantee a decent income for the producer. When the price of goods here goes down, it sometimes means that the producer receives less than it costs to grow the crops and this means they have to sell out and become plantation workers or migrate to the cities in search of work. A guaranteed minimum price means they have security of income. Also the "standards" that are imposed by FLO mean that producers have to comply with a lot of regulations that take time and cost money. These standards, which contribute to sustainable development, do not apply to non-Fairtrade producers. As more and more people buy FAIRTRADE products the price is actually coming down, in some cases goods are only a few pence more than non-Fairtrade products. So basically the more people buy FAIRTRADE, the smaller the price differential between Fairtrade and non-fairtrade products!

Who benefits from FAIRTRADE?

There are around 1 million farmers and workers involved in FAIRTRADE. In addition, millions more people benefit from the investments in local communities which come from the “social premium” which is given them by FAIRTRADE. FAIRTRADE means better terms of trade and decent production conditions.

FAIRTRADE does not just **benefit suppliers** and stop them from being exploited. It can help make a real difference in people’s lives. FAIRTRADE is based on a clear set of internationally-agreed criteria, which are independently assessed and monitored to make sure these people get what they really need.

We benefit from FAIRTRADE because the products are always of a very high quality – with fewer pesticides, more organic cultivation techniques and offering a better quality. Growers naturally select the best of their crops for FAIRTRADE because they receive a higher price for these and of course, want to keep their supporters happy and coming back for more!

How do we know that they really get a better deal?

The FAIRTRADE mark is completely independent and all their business is done in an open and honest way. The Fairtrade Foundation, with its partners, maintains a strict set of standards by inspecting third world suppliers and checking contracts and trade terms to make sure there’s no funny business.

What products are available and where can I find them?

The FAIRTRADE Mark appears on over 2000 different retail products. They are available in most major supermarkets, wholefood and Fair Trade shops, and by mail order. If your store doesn’t have the product you want, ask the manager to stock it!