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New Degrees of Transparency & Traceability at NUCOFFEE

NUCOFFEE aims to be a true sustainable program for Brazilian coffee growers while creating better integration throughout the supply chain.

Access to reliable, current information is one of the key components to increasing the environmental and financial sustainability of agricultural enterprises such as coffee production. As the tried and true adage “you can’t monitor what you can’t measure,” states, a company will struggle to become more sustainable if it isn’t able to accurately measure and track data regarding metrics like price, farm size and harvest yields.

NUCOFFEE, Sao Paulo, Brazil, is a program that allows Brazilian growers and cooperatives and international roasters to access a broader panorama of information that integrates data from all points of the supply chain.

“NUCOFFEE is a program created by Syngenta, Basel, Switz., aimed at real sustainability for coffee growers,” said Carolina Silva, intelligence coordinator.

NUCOFFEE’s mission statement outlines that the objective of the program is, “To promote greater integration in the coffee chain, rendering the producer more visible to those who purchase coffee.” True transparency and traceability work both ways: not only does a roaster gain greater access to information about the agronomic conditions and production costs of the coffees he purchases, producers have the ability to trace their coffee through to its final sale, see what price that coffee fetched, and why. This allows growers to build a formerly unattainable understanding of various consumer markets.

“NUCOFFEE offers coffee growers an integrated platform of solutions to earn greater profits, increase production through Syngenta’s agronomic offer [of inputs and recommendations], build transparent connections with roasters throughout the world and access services that improve harvest and post-harvesting practices,” said Silva, commenting along with NUCOFFEE’s management team. This full portfolio of tools is available to participating growers and cooperatives

through an online traceability platform called Webmap, a cloud system with dedicated and individual access for Syngenta, producers, distributors, and roasters. “The whole coffee chain can be connected through Webmap,” explained Silva. “Each user has a custom password which keeps the privacy of all business. It’s easy for everyone to access their information by any computer with internet access.”



Members of the NUCOFFEE management team holding “Proof of Destination” certificate.

Moving away from a model where information is passed from one link to the next and different parties often received information first or second hand, online models offer upstream and downstream players equal and timely access to the same information. Integrated, online technology platforms mean that a roaster no longer has to rely on a distributor for information about a given harvest and a grower no longer has to rely on an exporter to relay what buyers are looking for. All parties can engage in a sort of digital roundtable, making the kind of collaborative, long-term planning that leads to true sustainability an immediate reality.

“Syngenta is present in the main coffee-growing regions of Brazil and has data on more than 4,000 farms registered in the Webmap,” noted Silva. “The system can provide the QR Code (special bar codes that can be read by a Smartphone app and link to online content) that can be used in any package and

also show to final clients the complete traceability of this coffee.” End users scan QR Codes on packaging (using Smartphone apps) in order to immediately see an online profile about the coffee they are purchasing. Bringing transparent and traceable data all the way to final consumers makes any investment [in transparency and traceability] simultaneously an operations strategy and a marketing strategy. Giving consumers access to the same supply chain information industry members see is now a way for coffee to sell itself.

NUCOFFEE’s management team said, “Our quality team samples all lots and populates [Webmap] databases with cupping notes, SCAA [Specialty Coffee Association of America] score points, farm certification information, etc. This step is very important because then the grower can see the evolution of his coffee.” Online platforms aggregate data from the soil through the cupping table in one comprehensive format. “If the producer delivers a better quality than the contractual one, NUCOFFEE gives him discount [on agricultural inputs], recognizing his farm work and development,” explained the team.

“When the customer approves the sample, we allocate the lots approved in the business contract, completing the traceability of the coffee purchased by the client. From here we start populating the “online universe” with information about our producers as well as cooperatives directly reaching the roaster,” said Silva and the NUCOFFEE team. “As the client has total visibility about his purchases and the producer has total visibility about when and where his lot was sold, we are comfortable to say that we established a totally transparent way of business.” This level of integrated farm, cupping and price data permits all parties of the coffee supply chain to make informed decisions aligned with their companies’ sustainability goals, creating an environment designed to foster business that can be sustained for the long term.—Rachel Northrop