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# Opinion Editorial

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## Go COCO For Fair Trade Coconuts

By Matias Williams

Have you ever thought about how much the farmers that grow your favorite product coconuts make? You would be surprised to learn that coconut farmers only live on less than 25 cents per coconut. Did you know that coconut trees take 10 years until they start producing coconuts. Across the whole world 95% of the worlds coconuts are grown in smallholder farms. Coconuts are mainly grown in Indonesia, the Philippines, and India. Everyone should buy fair trade certified coconuts, because it helps the farmers that grow them.

One reason why you should buy fair trade coconuts, rather than conventional, is because it can really help the farmers that grow the coconuts. One way buying fair trade certified coconuts can help farmers is by giving them a livable wage. Why aren't the farmers getting a livable wage in the first place? In most developing countries people aren't paid the proper amount that is fair. One reason why farmers aren't paid fairly without fair trade is because the supply chain is much longer so the money is split multiple times and by the time the supply chain ends the farmers are stuck with a very little wage. Fair trade helps with this issue because the supply chains are shorter and every coconut farmer is paid a livable wage. With this wage farmers can pay for more important things like schooling for their kids, water, and food.

The second reason why you should buy fair trade coconuts is because many tropical storms smash the places in which coconuts are grown and these storms can destroy a farmers entire crop. In the Philippines, every year around 20 typhoons hit the island. This destroys farmers crops and houses. Fair trade can't stop typhoons from occurring, but it can allow farmers to have the money to rebuild in such large disasters. Also fair trade requires all their farmers to have their waste be dealt with in an environmentally safe way which keeps the land healthy and sustainable.

To conclude, the next time you are buying coconuts, make sure they are fair trade - whether you are buying soap, juice, or creams. To solve the problem of unfair wages and environmental protection, all you have to do is look at what you buy and try to find the fair trade logo. Even though many of these coconut farmers live very far away, you can still feel good that you helped the farmer have a fair wage.



*Matias Williams is a sixth grader at Vermont Day School. In his free time he enjoys playing lacrosse and hockey, and baking. When he is inside he likes playing fortnite.*

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