
Opinion Editorial

Fair Trade Coconuts are More Than Fine!

By Max Behrens

Have you ever thought of where all tasty coconuts come from and how much work is put into making coconut products? A surprising fact is that over 60% of coconut farmers live in poverty. They live on less than \$400 a year, and get \$0.12-0.25 per nut. Think about trying to support your farm, family and community on that wage. Most coconuts come from the Philippines, Indonesia, and India. People should buy fair trade coconuts because the money that they are using to buy coconuts pays farmers fairly and helps them to keep up with the demand and replant their coconuts after severe storms due to climate change.

The first problem is that there is an increasing demand for coconuts but farmers do not make enough money to meet that demand. The demand for coconuts was not anticipated for the coming years so farmers are pressured to produce coconuts they don't have. When planting new trees farmers are pressured because it takes 15-20 years to start producing fruit. Fair trade helps this by providing enough money to the farmers to be able to plant more trees to meet that demand.

Climate change also has a huge effect on coconut farmers because climate change causes typhoons and about 20 typhoons hit the Philippines per year. The Philippines are a huge coconut farming land. Typhoons are so devastating to coconut farmers because they uproot newly planted trees and trees that have just reached the point to when they start producing fruit. When you think about how long it takes trees to start producing fruit, farmers are very negatively affected by this. With fair trade, farmers get enough money to replant without having to worry about severe storms damaging their entire crop. Fair trade also helps this by investing in more environmental practices that will support sustainable waste and water management to keep the local environment healthy.

People should buy fair trade coconuts because the money that they are using to buy coconuts pays farmers fairly and helps stay consistent with the demand and replant their coconuts after severe storms due to climate change. When buying food at a local grocery store, be looking for the fair trade logo on the foods you buy. When you buy fair trade coconut products, you are helping farmers and their families live a more sustainable life.



Max Behrens is a fifth grader at Vermont Day School. He can be found playing soccer and lacrosse with his friends in his free time.

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