

PRESS RELEASE (Embargoed 12.00am, Sunday, February 22nd)

FAIRTRADE SALES UP 30% IN 2008

Launch of Fairtrade Fortnight, February 23rd-March 6th



‘MAKE IT HAPPEN – CHOOSE FAIRTRADE’ is the theme for this year’s Fairtrade Fortnight which will highlight the continued growth in Fairtrade sales and support in Ireland.

Retail sales of FAIRTRADE Mark products in Ireland increased by estimated 30% in 2008 to €30.5million and while the rate of increase has slowed compared to ’07 and ’06, Fairtrade’s core business remains buoyant despite the recession.

“Given the depth of the recession and the staggering loss of jobs in Ireland, our rate of growth and increased sales can’t be taken for granted in 2009,” said Peter Gaynor, Executive Director, Fairtrade Mark Ireland.

“And while it might seem inevitable that Fairtrade sales will decline, there are sound commercial reasons to believe that any decline won’t be universal: we are confident that we will continue to grow sales and expand our product range.”

Fairtrade Mark Ireland continues to forge partnerships with some of the country’s leading retailers. **Topaz** and **Musgrave/Centra** recently announced that they are converting all their ‘coffee to go’ to Fairtrade, while **Starbucks** is committed to converting all its espresso-based coffee sales to Fairtrade-sourced produce from September 2009.

Hundreds of competitively priced Fairtrade products are now available in all the main multiples and new products are being added all the time.

Not alone are traditional FAIRTRADE Mark products like coffee and tea being stocked by all the main retailers including **Tesco, Dunnes Stores, Marks & Spencer, Lidl, Superquinn, Londis, Supervalu/Centra,** and **Spar**; these retailers are extending their ranges to include products such as wine, rice, chocolate, fruit, juices, snacks and clothing.

Discount giant **Lidl**, for example, is running an in-store Fairtrade promotion to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight and is marking the event with the launch of Fairtrade roses.

Suppliers like Meath-based **Celtic Chocolates** have launched three new Fairtrade chocolate products and **Ben & Jerry** is introducing a new Chocolate Macadamia ice cream in hundreds of outlets nationwide.

Stocking Fairtrade mark products isn’t just the ethical thing to do – it’s also good for business.

“The Fairtrade movement in Ireland has always been consumer led,” added Peter Gaynor, “and what we have seen in recent years is big business catching up with Irish consumers in recognising the life-enhancing difference a fair price can make for producers in developing countries.”

“Fairer trade is still an imperative for millions of people in developing countries. It is as much an imperative in recessionary times – when prices paid to producers are likely to fall – as in the good times.”

Apart from highlighting retail and business developments, Fairtrade Fortnight 2009 will also focus on the dozens of individuals and voluntary groups who are spreading the Fairtrade message through the Fairtrade Towns and Fairtrade Schools initiative.

Thirty five towns and cities north and south, including Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway, have been certified as Fairtrade Towns and three more – Cashel, Tralee and Leighlin (Co Carlow) – will be

Fairtrade-certified in the next fortnight. An additional 25 towns are working towards Fairtrade Town status.

Four overseas producers will be touring the country during Fairtrade Fortnight 2009 to share their first hand experience of the difference that Fairtrade's support has made for their families and communities. They are:

- **John Nuwagaba**, general manager of Ankole Coffee Producers' Cooperative Union (ACPCU) in Uganda
- **Emiliana Aligaesha**, a retired schoolteacher in Tanzania who grows coffee for the Karagwe District Co-operative Union (KDCU), a Cafédirect partner
- **Nasser Abufarha** from Palestine who will be launching the Zaytoun Fairtrade Olive Oil and Olive range
- **Wilbert Valverde** from the COOPEAGRI co-operative which represents 12,000 small coffee and sugar cane producers in southern Costa Rica

NOTE TO EDITORS

***For more information and to arrange interviews with visiting Fairtrade certified producers, contact John Daly, Fairtrade Mark Ireland: (01) 4753515 e-mail: john@fairtrade.ie web: www.fairtrade.ie,**

FAIRTRADE MARK IRELAND – KEY POINTS

- **FAIRTRADE Mark Ireland** was established in **1992** to promote justice in trade between Irish consumers and producers and workers in developing countries. Fairtrade products are sourced directly from the producer ensuring the producer receives a fair and stable price for their products.
- The organisation is supported by all the **main development agencies** including Actionaid Ireland, Concern, Christian Aid, Comhlámh, Oxfam Ireland, Trócaire, Amnesty International, and by the ICTU.
- Irish Aid, the Government's programme of overseas development assistance, is among the largest donors to Fairtrade development assistance programmes in the world. In 2008 Irish Aid approved grants of over €3.25 million in support of producers in developing countries including four countries in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia) and four countries in Central America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala). Irish Aid has also supported the Irish Fair Trade Network's development education work in Ireland since 1994.
- **The retail value** of Fairtrade sales in Ireland increased by **30% in 2008 to €30.5million.**
- **Tesco, Dunnes Stores, Marks & Spencer, Lidl, Superquinn, Londis, Supervalu/Centra, and Spar all stock FAIRTRADE Mark** coffees and teas and have also extended their ranges to include new FAIRTRADE Mark products such as wine, rice, chocolate, fruit, juices, snacks and clothing.
- Other high profile nationwide chains and companies including **Topaz, Insomnia Coffee Company, Java Republic and the Thomas Read Group** continue to expand their commitment to FAIRTRADE Mark products.
- The **first two tonnes** of Fairtrade coffee beans were imported into Ireland in **November 1996**. This **increased to over 500 tonnes in 2008.**
- An **IMS consumer survey** conducted in April 2008 found that **57%** of Irish people were now aware of the Fairtrade compared to just 16% in 2002.
- **35 Irish towns and cities** have been awarded Fairtrade town status,

they are: Athlone, Ballymun, Baltinglass, Bandon, Bantry, Belfast, Bray, Carlow, Castlebar, Clonakilty, Cork, Dublin, Ennis, Galway, Greystones, Kilkenny, Kinsale, Limerick, Longford, Maynooth, Midleton, Mullingar, Newbridge, Newry, Portlaoise, Roscommon, Roscrea, Skibbereen, Sligo, Thurles, Tubbercurry, Waterford, Westport, Wexford

- **Cashel, Tralee, and Leighlin** will be awarded Fairtrade town status during Fairtrade Fortnight 2009.
- Antrim, Athy, Buncrana, Cahir, Carrick On Suir, Clones, Clonmel, Dun Laoghaire, Glanmire, Gort, Leixlip, Mallow, Naas, Nenagh, Schull, Temple Bar, Templemore, Tipperary, Trim, Tuam, Tullamore, Warrenpoint, and Newcastle West are also working towards Fairtrade town status.