

Beauty products to carry the FAIRTRADE Mark for the first time



You can now buy products including lip balms, face masks, body butters and shower gels from 5 companies including Boots, Essential Care, Lush and Neal's Yard. Each beauty product contains one or more Fairtrade certified ingredient such as cocoa butter, shea nut butter, sugar or brazil nut oil, benefitting disadvantaged producers from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Fearne Cotton, a UK TV presenter and long-standing Fairtrade supporter, says: 'I am really excited about this new opportunity to transform trade through the way I shop. I've tried out several of the new beauty products for myself and love them. Not only are they great quality, but they make me feel good using them because I know that the farmers who grew the ingredients that went into them are now able to improve their lives.'

Beauty products, toiletries and fragrance products play an important part in our lives. In Europe at least 5 billion units of cosmetics are sold each year using around 1.5 million tonnes of ingredients. Increasingly, people are keen to lead a Fairtrade lifestyle and expect sustainable attributes to be an inherent part of the products and services that they buy. There is huge potential within the beauty and cosmetics sector for producers of existing Fairtrade certified ingredients and also of potential new ingredients or their derivatives to benefit from this new market opportunity.

Introducing Fairtrade labelling to beauty products will increase the overall number of Fairtrade products in Irish shops and the volumes of ingredients which producers are able to sell under Fairtrade terms, which in turn increases the benefits back to farmers.

Ms Nana Yago, a Fairtrade shea nut producer from Burkina Faso says: 'When we work together, we can help many people out of poverty. Most importantly, Fairtrade enables us to help ourselves and to support each other. The premium allows us to offer training courses to the women in our group. They learn to write and can see how important it is to have their independence in life. The status of women in our society has now increased.'

Landlocked Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. Ms Yago is a member of the Union of Women Producers of Shea Products of the Sissili and Ziro provinces, a group representing 2,000 women. The group was set up to improve the position of women involved in shea butter production, most of whom are illiterate, and reduce poverty in the villages. Traditional shea butter processing is done by village women who gather, boil and sun-dry the nuts before they are pounded and ground to a paste. The paste is mixed with water to separate the fat, which is then manually churned into creamy butter.

Through Fairtrade labelled beauty products, producers will benefit in three ways.

1. Producers will get the Fairtrade minimum price plus a premium, a bit extra to invest in community projects such as schools and healthcare.
2. The companies behind the products will have a partnership plan in place showing how they will additionally support producers to develop their businesses and communities.
3. Fairtrade Organization International (FLO) has worked hard to set minimum thresholds of Fairtrade ingredients at levels which allow best selling volume lines of beauty products containing natural ingredients to be certified.