

Renwick Rose



Renwick Rose is Coordinator of the Windward Islands Farmers Association (WINFA) an umbrella body that represents national farmers' organizations of five Caribbean countries - Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, Martinique and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Rose's background involves journalism and political activism. He has been actively involved in advocacy work in defence of small banana farmers in the Caribbean.

WINFA is currently celebrating its 25th anniversary as a campaigning force having amalgamated various organisations across the Islands into one entity in 1982. Its original aim was to break with the traditional form of commodity based farmers organization and provide more access for farmers to export markets. WINFA has been exporting Fair Trade bananas since 2000.

Fairtrade's involvement in the Windward Island is positively welcomed by Rose who says, "I think Fairtrade has saved the industry in the Windward Islands. I am under no illusion that had it not been for Fairtrade we would have gone out of bananas.

He also welcomes the recent decision by Sainsbury's, second largest supermarket chain in Britain, to convert its entire banana stock to Fairtrade and believes that the decision will open further opportunities for increased production in the Windward Islands.

"It is the confidence it can instil in farmers that all is not lost, that in fact the long years of us trying to break into the Fairtrade market is really paying off and that the consumers in Ireland and Britain are supporting them, I think that is going to have a very positive effect in terms of the farmers, and they'll pay attention to increased production".

Under the scheme producer organisations get a stable price for bananas that cover their full costs of production plus an extra US dollar per box of fruit, known as the Fairtrade Premium.

"I think we have shown that farmers, when they get the opportunity, can in fact manage their business and meet the rigorous standards which are set internationally" he observed.

WINFA has initiated a number of programmes that are aimed at securing farmers long-term livelihoods. Management of production to international standards, the linking up of the tourism and hospitality sectors, joint initiatives between associations and diversification of production have helped to keep the profession viable.

Currently the islands are selling well over 70 thousand boxes of bananas under Fairtrade per week.

Renwick Rose brings his mission to encourage people to buy Fairtrade Bananas as the guest speaker at the launch of Fairtrade Fortnight on the 25th of February.