

Guest Profile



Name: Mr. Wilbert Valverde

Title: Part of the Fairtrade team at COOPEAGRI

Organisation: Cooperativa Agrícola Industrial y de Servicios Múltiples El General (COOPEAGRI)

Location: San Isidro del General, Perez Zeledon County, Costa Rica

About Wilbert Valverde

Wilbert is part of the Fairtrade team at COOPEAGRI, a cooperative of coffee and sugar cane producers, based in the south of Costa Rica, in the town of San Isidro de El General. He is the fifth of eight brothers of a family of coffee growers.

Wilbert has been part of cooperative organizations all his life, performing a number of different roles such as the promotion of cooperativism and its principles, and the promotion of Fairtrade.

'Fairtrade in these times of economic instability plays an important role in the future of our organization, allowing us to support our producers, not only by offering them a fair price, but also by continuing to develop and implement our projects.' **Wilbert Valverde**

Organisational Profile

Cooperativa Agrícola Industrial y de Servicios Múltiples El General (COOPEAGRI)

- 12,000 small coffee and sugar cane producers
- Located in the Brunca Coffee Region in southern Costa Rica
- Established in 1962

COOPEAGRI is made up of thousands of small coffee and sugar cane producers and owns one of the main sugar mills in the San Isidro del General region. COOPEAGRI's mission is to utilize research, technology and human ingenuity to produce high-quality coffee and sugar, provide excellent customer service and develop a strong community for its members. Since becoming Fairtrade Certified in 1994, the cooperative has taken great strides toward fulfilling its goals through a wide variety of social, environmental and production programmes.

The Fairtrade price has enabled COOPEAGRI to establish various social and productive programmes

Education

The cooperative offers college scholarships to five students from each public school in Pérez Zeledón county.

Productive Investment

The cooperative has its own coffee processing plant, sugar mill and is also installing five gathering centres. New investments in the sugar mill include juice clarifiers, automated mill control systems, juice heaters, vaporizers, and high tech centrifuges.

Environment

COOPEAGRI's environmental programmes include production of organic fertilizer, reforestation projects, and soil conservation. New policies have been established to process and treat waste from the coffee processing plant and sugar mill.

Credit Programme

COOPEAGRI has established a fund to provide monthly economic assistance to members over the age of 65 who have been active in the coop for at least 20 years.

Costa Rica facts

Full Name: Republic of Costa Rica

Population: 4.3 million (UNDP 2006)

Capital City: San José

Languages: Spanish (official), English

Currency: Colón

Major agricultural exports: bananas, coffee, fruits, palm oil

Life expectancy: 79 years

Adult Literacy Rate: 95.00%



Did you know?

- Costa Rica is home to a rich variety of plants and animals.
- While the country has only about 0.1% of the world's landmass, it contains 5% of the world's biodiversity.