

Embargoed until 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**FAIRTRADE IRELAND CELEBRATES 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH 10% INCREASE IN CONSUMER SPENDING, AND BEWLEY'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO CONVERT ALL BRANDED COFFEE TO FAIRTRADE.**

- **IRISH CONSUMER SPENDING ON FAIRTRADE PRODUCTS HAS INCREASED BY 10% TO APPROXIMATELY €250 MILLION.**
- **BEWLEY'S SWITCHES ALL BRANDED FRESH COFFEE TO FAIRTRADE**
- **IRISH CONSUMER SPEND ON FAIRTRADE COFFEE HAS INCREASED BY 11% IN 2015.**
- **IRISH CONSUMER SPEND ON FAIRTRADE BANANAS HAS INCREASED BY 20% IN 2015.**

Fairtrade Ireland marks 20 years of success in Ireland with a 10% increase in consumer spending, which reflects an overall spend in 2015 of €250 million. Fairtrade sales and levels of consumer awareness and support, have continued to thrive with sales of mainstream Fairtrade commodities like bananas increasing by 20%, and coffee by 11%, with more niche commodities like Fairtrade flowers and gold looking likely to propel growth further.

Peter Gaynor, Executive Director of Fairtrade Ireland commented on the resilience and growth of Fairtrade in the Irish market,

“I don't think anyone could have been confident of the success of this project when it started in 1996. Before this we had been selling small volumes of cocoa and coffee to committed activists in Oxfam, Trocaire and Amnesty shops and the influence of those activists has it seems inspired the whole country. According to an international report carried out by Globescan, Ireland has the highest level of unprompted awareness of Fairtrade and the second highest level of trust in the Fairtrade Mark. These figures are encouraging, but what's more inspiring is the fact that during one of the worst economic challenges our country has faced Irish consumers never wavered, they continued to purchase products with the Fairtrade Mark and the steady growth in Fairtrade sales has continued again this year.”

**IRISH COMPANIES SUPPORTING FAIRTRADE**

In 1996, Bewley's was the first Irish company to agree to source raw materials on Fairtrade terms when they decided to import the first two tonnes of Fairtrade coffee into Ireland. Their first Fairtrade coffee was called Bewley's Direct. Now 20 years later, the iconic Irish brand is doubling its commitment. From its present base of 50% of all coffee beans currently sourced through the Fairtrade certification system, Bewley's will now convert all of its branded fresh coffee products to Fairtrade Certified coffee by year-end. This will amount to US\$6 million in business for Fairtrade coffee farmers in developing countries.

Jim Corbett, Managing Director of Bewley's, commented on the importance of Fairtrade to the company,

“With Fairtrade you have the power in your pocket to change the world every day. Our objective always is to achieve high quality for the consumer and a fair deal for the producer. Fairtrade is the only certification that guarantees a minimum price to farmers and an additional premium for social development projects in coffee producing communities. Having pioneered Fairtrade in Ireland for over 20 years, we're very proud to continue this commitment by bringing all of our Bewley's branded fresh coffee products under the Fairtrade banner by the end of this year.”

Speaking about the business they do with Bewley's, Fátima Ismael from SOPPEXCCA coffee Co-op in Nicaragua says,

“We have consistently strived, through our support-work with our farmer members, to ensure a high level of quality in our coffee. We believe that this approach has been encouraged by Bewley's in their visits to Nicaragua and the Central American region generally.”

Fairtrade coffee sales have increased by 11% in 2015, and this is a result of the growing commitment to Fairtrade made by Bewley's, Insomnia, Starbucks, Robert Roberts, Java Republic, Matthew Algie, Topaz, Centra, Mace, and a number of key small independent Irish roasteries.

Irish coffee chain Insomnia, which sources 100% Fairtrade coffee, is celebrating its 10 year anniversary in 2016. The national coffee chain sold 18 million cups of Fairtrade coffee in Ireland in 2015, this represents a 30% growth.

#### **And Elsewhere**

- Aldi Ireland have partnered with a Fairtrade certified plantation in Ethiopia to source Fairtrade roses. In 2015 the discounter store sold 2 million Fairtrade roses nationwide, and Aldi have launched special Fairtrade Fortnight bouquets, as well as diversifying in to Fairtrade cotton tee-shirts.
- Mars Chocolate launched a Fairtrade Sourcing Programme in 2015, this means that all of the cocoa used to produce the iconic Mars Bar is Fairtrade certified cocoa.

#### **FAIRTRADE BANANAS**

- 20% INCREASE IN SALES OF FAIRTRADE BANANAS IN 2015
- LIDL CURRENTLY SELLS 21% OF ALL ITS BANANAS AS FAIRTRADE BANANAS AND STILL ACCOUNTS FOR OVER 40% OF TOTAL FAIRTRADE BANANA SALES IN IRELAND
- ALDI SELLS 14% OF ALL ITS BANANAS AS FAIRTRADE BANANAS
- OTHER IRISH RETAILERS HAVE YET TO DISCLOSE PERCENTAGE OF FAIRTRADE BANANAS STOCKED
- CONSUMPTION OF FAIRTRADE BANANAS IS 9% COMPARED TO 35% IN THE UK

In a bid to encourage greater sourcing transparency and responsibility, Fairtrade Ireland has asked Irish retailers to publically disclose their respective percentages of Fairtrade bananas .

Peter Gaynor, Executive Director with Fairtrade Ireland says,

“In 2001, the first Fairtrade bananas, sourced from Costa Rica, Ghana and Windward Islands, were sold in Ireland. Today, just 9% of bananas sold in Ireland are Fairtrade certified compared to 35% in the UK and 55% in Switzerland. As in those countries Irish customers should be able to walk into a shop and purchase a banana without having to give it a second thought, secure in the knowledge of the benefits they bring to farmers and workers. If retailers in the North of Ireland can sell 100% of their bananas on Fairtrade terms then retailers in the Republic can do the same surely?

We have just heard about Bewley's converting all their Bewley's branded coffee to Fairtrade - again if they can do it presumably the retailers can do it too.”

Fairtrade Ireland reiterates the challenge to Dunnes Stores, Tesco Ireland, and SuperValu/Centra to disclose the percentage of Fairtrade bananas they sell to consumers and to commit to sourcing 100% Fairtrade bananas.

| Gaynor comments on the impact from increasing volumes of Fairtrade sales,

“Albert Einstein, when asked what was the most powerful force in the universe, replied: ‘Compound interest’, and the benefits of Fairtrade are similar - all of those small amounts of money add up - and when paid regularly over time you get a powerful force for improvements in farmers' and workers' circumstances.”

Consumer commitment has also led to iconic brands like Dairy Milk, Maltesers and KitKat converting to Fairtrade.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2016 will take place from the 29<sup>th</sup> February - 15<sup>th</sup> March, celebrated with a series of nationwide events.

[www.fairtrade.ie](http://www.fairtrade.ie) / [www.facebook.com/FairtradeIreland](https://www.facebook.com/FairtradeIreland) /@Fairtrade\_ie

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Notes to Ed:

#### **About Fairtrade Ireland**

FAIRTRADE Ireland was established in 1992 to promote justice in trade between Irish consumers and producers and workers in developing countries. Fairtrade products ensure 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, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam Ireland, Trócaire, Amnesty International, and by the ICTU. Fairtrade International developed Fairtrade Sourcing Programmes (FSP) for cocoa, sugar and cotton last year as a new and innovative model to drive greater impact and sales for small-scale farmers by encouraging businesses to scale up their purchases of a specific commodity.

For more on the Fairtrade Sourcing Programmes, please visit <http://www.fairtrade.net/fairtrade-sourcing-programs.html>

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