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Coffee could disappear from shelves by 2050, warns Fairtrade Ireland

COFFEE could disappear from shop shelves by 2050 due to climate change, Fairtrade Ireland has warned at the launch of its annual Fairtrade Fortnight event.

The Irish charity that manages the ethical label said that coffee beans, cocoa and other foods grown in hotter climates could become extremely rare and expensive treats within the next 30 years.

“We could be looking at the end of the much-loved cup of coffee,” said Fairtrade Ireland’s Executive Director, Peter Gaynor, speaking at the launch of Fairtrade Fortnight, a festival of ethically sourced products, at Dublin’s Mansion House.

“Farmers who grow coffee beans are experiencing serious challenges due to many extreme weather events, such as in Kenya, East Africa, which is right now experiencing its worst drought on-record.

“A worrying 93 per cent of the Fairtrade coffee farmers in Kenya surveyed are already experiencing the effects of climate change.

“By 2050, it is estimated up to half of the world’s land currently used to farm coffee may be unusable due to floods, droughts and increased temperatures.

“The coffee fungus La Roya, also known as coffee rust, is also a threat. Between 2012 and 2017 it caused more than \$3 billion in damage and lost profits and forced almost 2 million farmers off their land.

“We Irish are very fond of our tea, and bananas and increasingly of our coffee. But the question now is what’s going to happen to our food given the increasing impact of climate change on the 500 million small farmers who grow most of the world’s food?”

Fairtrade Ireland have invited Daniel Jose Aguilar, [the Assistant General Manager of the COCAFELOL](#) coffee coop in Honduras, who grew up on a coffee farm, to Ireland to discuss the impacts of climate change on coffee at public talks.

The Irish branch of the popular Fairtrade movement, which provides higher incomes for farmers of products with its label, also launched a new mural on the wall of Busy Feet & Coco Café on William Street in Dublin, which was the first Irish coffee shop to sell Fairtrade coffee.

The mural, by artist Shane Sutton, shows an astronaut holding a banana next to empty shelves with the words “The future of food. By 2050, coffee, chocolate and bananas may disappear.”

Peter Gaynor said ethically sourced coffee remains incredibly popular in Ireland and thanked the Irish public for choosing products with the Fairtrade label.

“We are delighted that Fairtrade coffee sales are ahead of where they were in 2019 after a 30% reduction in sales due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021,” he said.

“This is largely thanks to the two local 100 per cent Fairtrade coffee brands Bewleys and Insomnia. “Consumers are also buying Fairtrade in supermarkets like Lidl, Aldi and Dunnes and we cannot thank them enough.”

The extra income generated by Fairtrade sales in Ireland in 2022 is expected to be over €2 million.

Fairtrade Fortnight was launched at an event in the Mansion House hosted by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Darcy Lonergan.

Details about Fairtrade Fortnight and how people can support it and find out about local Fairtrade events can be found at www.fairtrade.ie/fortnight.

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For more information or to arrange an interview please call Peter on 086 346 2054 or email Peter@fairtrade.ie

Fairtrade Ireland is the Irish Member of Fairtrade International and is supported by all the main international development agencies. www.fairtrade.ie

Climate facts...

- **80 percent of the world's food comes from 500 million family farms, where people are increasingly facing the worst effects of the climate crisis.** Furthermore, small-scale family farmers often lack access to the resources they need to adapt to a changing climate (source: UN Food and Agriculture Organisation)
- By 2050, in fact, **up to half of the world's land currently used to farm coffee may be unusable.**
- Between 2012 and 2017, Coffee Rust (aka La Roya) **caused more than \$3 billion in damage and lost profits and forced almost 2 million farmers off their land.** Changing weather has created conditions that has made coffee farms more vulnerable to the disease.
- **93% of the Fairtrade coffee farmers in Kenya surveyed** are already experiencing the effects of climate change.
- Recent drought events in 2015 and 2017 in East Africa, a key coffee growing region, have been attributed to human-caused climate change. Similarly, the **extreme rainfall and floods in Peru in 2017**, which led to mass agricultural losses, including crops such as bananas, were made more likely by human-caused climate change
- With higher incomes farmers can take positive steps. For example, in 2022, using their extra Premium income to cover their costs, (cost of the trees, labour and preparing the soil) **Fairtrade producers across Latin America and the Caribbean have planted more than 300,000 trees** in a six-month tree-planting drive, with more than 100 Fairtrade organizations across 20 countries getting involved. (Fairtrade producers plant more than 300,000 trees, highlighting urgent need for climate action -)
- Fairtrade is also **supporting coffee, tea, and flower farmers in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda** to improve their resilience to climate change and adapt to future changes through the Fairtrade Alliance for Climate-Smart Supply Chains in Africa programme. As part of this ongoing programme, over 500 Fairtrade coffee farmers and 490 tea farmers have increased their knowledge about climate change, climate mitigation and how to best prepare their farms for climate change through sustainable agricultural land management (SALM) practices. (FACSCA Annual Report, 2022).