



AS IT IS

## Company Tests Paying Coffee Farmers Who Grow Sustainably

June 10, 2023

The food and drink company Nestle says it is testing a plan to give money to farmers who grow coffee beans **sustainably**. The test is part of Nestle's larger goal of greatly reducing greenhouse gas **emissions** in its coffee business by 2030.

Sustainable farming methods include using organic **fertilizers** to improve the soil, planting shade trees to protect coffee beans, and intercropping to protect **biodiversity**. Intercropping is when two plants are grown on a farm close to each other.

Nestle's announcement on Tuesday comes as major food companies face increased public and legal pressure to reduce emissions worldwide.

Nestle is the world's largest packaged food company. It has promised to spend \$1 billion by 2030 on its plan to **source** coffee sustainably. The plan now includes efforts to increase farmer pay.

The company says it has offered money to about 3,000 coffee farmers in developing countries to help them change to sustainable farming practices. Those countries include Ivory Coast, Indonesia and Mexico.

A group of non-governmental organizations published a report in 2020 that looked at coffee production worldwide. The report found there was little evidence that efforts by the world's top coffee companies to protect human rights and the environment were having much of an effect. Most farmers, it said, were unable to pay for sustainable coffee farming.

The report, called the Coffee Barometer, found that 10 major companies produce 35 percent of the world's coffee. And the companies are not meeting sustainability goals set by the United Nations. Companies in the "coffee sector are increasingly **aware** that we are way **off track** to meeting even the most basic economic, social and environmental goals," the report said.

The coffee industry is valued at \$200 to 250 billion a year, based on the report. But producing countries receive less than 10 percent of that value when exporting beans. Farmers receive even less.

About 125 million people around the world earn their living producing coffee. But an estimated 80 percent of coffee-farming families live at or below the poverty line. The information comes from the non-profit organizations Fairtrade and Technoserve.

I'm Dan Novak.

*Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting by Reuters.*

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## Words in This Story

**sustainable** — *adj.* involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources

**emissions** — *n.* the act of producing or sending out something such as energy or gas from a source

**fertilizer** — *n.* a substance that is added to soil to help the growth of plants

**biodiversity** — *n.* the existence of many different kinds of plants and animals in an environment

**source** — *n.* someone or something that provides what is wanted or needed

**aware** — *adj.* knowing that something exists

**off track** — *n.* away from the main point, thought, etc.

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