

News Release

For immediate release

How Fair Trade Can Be: Peruvian cocoa producer visits Canada

October 16th, 2007 - Canadian shoppers can enjoy a sweet and fair Halloween this year. Fair Trade Certified chocolate offers them the opportunity to reconnect with the small farmers who grow and harvest the cocoa in some of these delectable treats they'll find on grocery shelves this Halloween.

From 23rd October to 2nd November 2007, La Siembra Co-operative will host, for the first time, a producer partner from award-winning Peruvian coffee and cocoa co-operative CACVRA (Agrarian Coffee Cooperative – Valle Rio Apurimac). Mr. Timotéo Vargas Aguilar, a cocoa producer and president of CACVRA's Board of Directors will be in Vancouver to share his personal experiences related to the challenges that farmers face in growing cocoa, and to explore the value of Fair Trade, organics and the worker co-operative model as they relate to supporting sustainable livelihoods for small-scale Peruvian farmers like himself. During his visit, consumers, clients and the media will have a unique opportunity to connect with a cocoa producer and learn first-hand how their buying decisions impact on the lives of these producers. As this is his very first visit to Canada, Mr. Vargas will also be learning about the Canadian market, and building new networks and partnerships.

Our Fair Trade Halloween tour includes activities for the media and the public, including a Halloween Haunted House and in-store demos at Choices, White Rock, a Fair Trade Evening with a Cocoa Producer at the Pacific Palisades Hotel, a Co-op Evening with a Cocoa Producer at Mountain Equipment Co-op and an OXFAM UBC student/community event at UBC.

Partnering with La Siembra and supporting this Western tour are Ten Thousand Villages, TransFair Canada, The Big Carrot, Mountain Equipment Co-ops, Choices, the BC Co-operative Association, Envision Credit Union and the OXFAM UBC Club. La Siembra will also be distributing informative postcards and Cocoa Camino chocolate in Vancouver as part of the North American Cocoa Coalition's Reverse Trick-or-Treating campaign, through which young people will be the ones giving Fair Trade chocolate to adults this Halloween.

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For further information or to attend an event: Please contact Shannon Sutton, Communications Manager at 613 235-6122 ext. 305 or e-mail shannon_s@lasiembra.com.

Notes for Editors

1. La Siembra Co-operative (www.lasiembra.coop) is the largest producer of Fair Trade Certified organic cocoa and sugar products in Canada and the pioneer of Fair Trade chocolate products in North America.
2. Cocoa Camino is a line of premium Fair Trade Certified and certified organic chocolate, cocoa and sugar products produced by La Siembra Co-operative. These products include chocolate bars, sugar, hot chocolate, cocoa, chocolate chips, syrup and couverture.
3. All of La Siembra's Cocoa Camino products are certified Fair Trade by TransFair Canada and have undergone the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) monitoring process. The Fair Trade logo ensures guaranteed fair prices and premiums paid to improve social conditions and organizational capacity building in producer communities, support for democratic participation in farmer-owned co-operatives, support for sustainable production methods and no forced or child labour used in production.
4. Cocoa Camino products are available in natural health food stores, pharmacies and grocery stores across Canada including, but not limited to, Loblaws, Provigo, A&P/Dominion, Shoppers Drug Mart, Thrifty's, Overwaitea, IGA, Metro and Wholefoods.
5. La Siembra is a worker co-operative within the Fair Trade movement. The co-op has chosen to identify with its producer partners by adopting the same democratic, participatory and transparent model that they follow. Employees are member-owners of the co-op and participate democratically in the operation of the company.