

FAIRTRADE



COMMUNITY & GLOBAL

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WHY?

Whenever we buy goods, the money we spend is split across the supplier chain – from the producer to the point of sale. We would like that money to be shared fairly across the chain and result in a fair price to us too. We also want to know that workers have safe working conditions and are being treated well.

In order to receive some assurance that everyone is being treated fairly, we need to rely on the assessment and standards set by other organisations. As early as the 1950's Oxfam UK used the concept of 'fair trade' when selling products made by Chinese refugees in its shops.

In 1964 Oxfam created the Fair Trade Organisation, a forerunner to The Fairtrade Foundation which was established in 1992 in response to persistent appeals for fairness in trade from Mexican small-scale coffee farmers. Since then, thousands of other products have received the Fairtrade certification mark.

Churches have been at the forefront of promoting fair trade products for decades, making the connection between trade and poverty and committing to using fairly traded goods such as tea, coffee and sugar. Making a public statement to become a 'Fairtrade Church' adds weight to those involved in the conversation about justice for the farmers and workers we rely on.

HOW?

WHAT IS ETHICAL?

'Ethical' is now used on a wide range of products and by many suppliers, covering a variety of moral values and principles. It can be used to mean anything from eco-friendly to recycled, organic to vegan; fairly-traded imports to locally produced.

There is no legal definition of either 'ethical' or 'sustainable', so do look for goods which use these phrases but ask the supplier what they mean.



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BUYING PRODUCTS

There are a few well-recognised certifications. In looking for international products which are fairly traded and ethically sourced, seek out those which have the Fairtrade 'mark' or the Rainforest Alliance 'seal'.

The Fairtrade Foundation describes its certification as a set of standards that are met in the production and supply of a product or ingredient. For farmers and workers, Fairtrade means workers' rights, safer working conditions and fairer pay: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/buying-fairtrade/>

The Rainforest Alliance was founded in the USA in 1987 with an aim to stop deforestation of rainforests. They have subsequently developed a 'seal' which means that the certified product or ingredient was produced using methods that support the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/find-certified>

'**Ethical Consumer**', is a membership co-operative which researches the business practices and sources of thousands of products. It grades the impact of each on the environment, society, animal welfare and 'Good for Body and Soul'. In some cases, products might be good in one category and poor in another which means you need to choose between say human rights and animal testing: <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/about-us>

BECOMING A FAIRTRADE CHURCH

The Fairtrade Foundation asks churches to be part of the campaign and register with them, making commitments to:

1. Use Fairtrade products wherever possible.
2. Celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight (see below).
3. Engage with other Fairtrade events and connect with community groups: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-community/faith-groups/fairtrade-churches/>



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Encourage the local area of your denomination to apply for recognition and promote Fairtrade. This gives strength to the Fairtrade campaign: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-community/faith-groups/fairtrade-denominational-areas/>

Raise awareness of Fairtrade products by participating in Fairtrade Fortnight each Spring and encourage your friends, congregation, businesses and charities to join you. The Foundation provides plenty of ideas and resources to make it easy for churches to join in with the event: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

The Fairtrade Fortnight resources include an ecumenical worship service: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources-library/current-campaigns/fairtrade-and-the-climate-crisis/ecumenical-service/>

LONGER READS & OTHER RESOURCES

The Fairtrade Foundation and the Rainforest Alliance have different criteria of certification so you may want to read the details to be sure you understand what the marks do (and don't) mean: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/what-is-fairtrade/>

<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/faqs/what-does-rainforest-alliance-certified-mean>

The Fairtrade Foundation gives lots of ideas of how individuals and churches can get involved in supporting and campaigning for their work: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/>

You can read about the difference that the Fairtrade Mark makes here: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/what-is-fairtrade/the-impact-of-our-work/the-difference-that-fairtrade-makes/>