

## Newsroom

In the News

Press Releases

Media Contacts

Experts on Staff

### Coffee Farmers Fighting Climate Change

December 12, 2013

#### *Hundreds of Coffee Farms in Central America Achieve Rainforest Alliance Climate-Smart Verification*

The Rainforest Alliance announces that over 200 Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee farms in Central America have achieved climate-smart verification. Located in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, these forward-looking farmers are preparing for the challenges already evident from a changing climate by meeting the standards of the Sustainable Agriculture Network Climate Module. By adopting practices that curb emissions and increase carbon storage, these farms have captured more than 218,000 metric tons of carbon – equivalent to the annual emissions of approximately 43,600 cars.

This achievement marks the culmination of a two-year project of the Rainforest Alliance and the coffee trading company EFICO Green Coffee and Cocoa that aims to promote the Climate Module among Central American coffee farmers that are vulnerable to the higher temperatures, erratic rainfall and pest and disease outbreaks that are aggravated by the unstable climate. The project provided training and technical assistance to 538 coffee growers and saw 218 farms achieve verification, bringing 7,413 acres (3,000 hectares) of land under sustainable, climate-smart management. This project was carried out with the support of the Efico Fund, to improve the living conditions of poor communities producing coffee in developing countries, managed by the King Baudouin Foundation.



"These producers now understand the importance of adopting practices that help mitigate and adapt to climate change," commented Mario Lopez, project coordinator for the Rainforest Alliance in Guatemala. "As a result of the project, these farmers are better prepared to deal with the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods and recognize that their actions can have a tangible impact in addressing the problem."

To earn climate-smart verification, farmers were required to conserve existing forest on their farms and plant more trees. They also adopted soil conservation methods that sequester carbon, using organic matter as compost and burying fertilizer to help reduce emissions. The farmers learned to prepare for changing climatic conditions by conserving natural resources and establishing emergency plans to deal with extreme weather events.

"To EFICO as a coffee importer, the Climate Module represents a commitment to sustainability in our company and to the industry and society as a whole," said Renaud Cuchet, CEO of EFICO Central America (Guatemala). "We are pleased to have worked together with the Rainforest Alliance on this important project that has helped to promote agricultural practices that mitigate climate change among coffee farmers in Central America."

The Rainforest Alliance is working to educate coffee roasters in the US, Europe and other key markets about the efforts of these coffee farms and the importance of establishing a sustainable coffee supply that is also climate-smart. The Rainforest Alliance plans to expand its work in climate-smart coffee and other crops worldwide.

"We expect the markets to recognize and financially support the responsible practices that these farmers are adopting to protect the environment and to mitigate and adapt to climate change," noted Nils Leporowski, president of Anacafé – the National Coffee Association of Guatemala.

The Sustainable Agriculture Network Climate Module was developed by the Rainforest Alliance in 2011 in collaboration with the International Tropical Research Foundation (FIIT), EFICO and Anacafé. The module seeks to educate farmers about the impacts of climate change and promote the adoption of good agricultural practices aimed at reducing emissions, increasing carbon storage and strengthening resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions.