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coffee corps & acdi / voca

Coffee Quality Improvement and Cupping Training

*Agoga Plantation Ltd. Papua New Guinea
Mr. Kembridge Tokave, Managing Director
Mr. Boka Muo, Chairman*

*Final Report
August 2004*





Executive Summary

- *Assignment #* *414043-001*
- *Volunteer Name:* *Daniel R. Kuhn*
- *Host Organization:* *Agoga Plantation Ltd.*
- *Country:* *Papua New Guinea*
- *Dates:* *July 17 to July 31, 2004*

Coffee Quality Improvement and Cupping Training

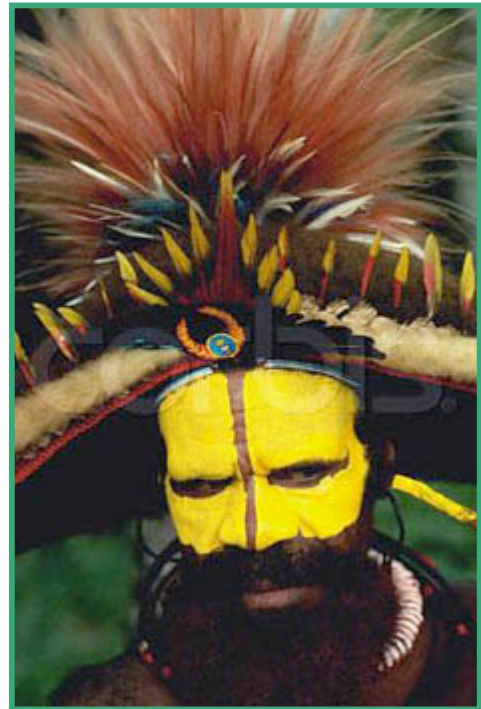
Due to the on-going coffee crisis and low prices worldwide, many small coffee producers worldwide are experiencing difficulties selling their coffee above their production costs. Many producers are not able to maintain the sustainability of their incomes and are unable to offer employment opportunities to their seasonal work force. Coffee producers are also facing the potential loss of their farms and subsequently their livelihoods.

The potential for increased premiums and economic sustainability for many farmers worldwide lies primarily within the Specialty Coffee market in the United States and the European Union. The barrier to this market is the quality and differentiation of their product, as many markets not only have strict regulations regarding quality of the beans, but require the coffee to be unique and without defects. Buyers then need to be educated on these unique coffees.

The Agoga Plantation Ltd. has requested the participation of a Coffee Corps coffee expert to aid in the improvement and evaluation of their member's cultivation methods, post-harvest handling techniques, processing methods and distribution and marketing practices. The volunteer will visit producer areas and design a short Cupping Training Seminar. A volunteer expert with coffee cupping skills and the ability to identify problem areas, especially in processing, would enable the various producers to focus their efforts and resources to mitigate problems and eventually increase export specialty coffee sales to other markets.

Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Cupping results suggest that the inherent potential coffee quality of Agoga Plantation coffee is very good.
2. Different fermentation practices should be explored and cup tested by potential specialty coffee buyers for evaluation.
3. Taste profile for Agoga Coffee needs to be established as a guide towards quality control for processing and future development.
4. Some problems with off tastes were found in regards to fermentation practices. Off flavors were found in parchment from smaller producers as well.
5. Cupping skills need to be learned and applied internally to assure and monitor processing practices in regard to maintaining the taste profile of the final product.
6. A quality control system is necessary to improve and assure consistency of product.
7. Infrastructure improvements for processing should be considered to make quality production easier.
8. Management practices in regards to Cherry reception and handling need addressing. Only ripe cherry should be purchased from members of the producers group. Parchment purchases should be discontinued.
9. Continue to integrate, from growing to processing, marketing and exporting in order to maximize returns.
10. Related recommendation: No transport animals were seen anywhere. The availability of **mules for the transport of coffee parchment from remote areas** would make transportation much easier and be cost effective. This would also apply to the transport of general supplies.



Tribal head dress, distinct to the various tribes. Photo: PNG Website



Conclusion

It has been interesting and a great pleasure visiting Agoga Plantation Ltd. in PNG. The people are self reliant, uncomplaining and goal oriented. The strong social ties, with the traditional village culture, are impressive, and deserving of recognition. It is sincerely hoped, that the goals of Agoga Plantation will become a reality, and the benefits will become available to all the members. After this visit to the beautiful highlands of PNG, it is now understandable how important coffee really is. It is the opinion of the writer, that Agoga Plantation has achieved 85% of its goals. The last 15 % might be difficult due to lack of funds but the demonstrated willingness to try, and perseverance will bring success. It is sincerely hoped the coffee culture of Agoga Plantation can be expanded, and the returns for the coffee be maximized.