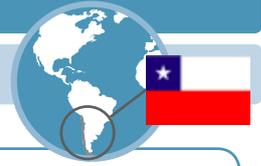


Fairtrade: a World of Difference

Producer Group Profile: MiFruta

MiFruta, Chile, Raisins



MiFruta

MiFruta, (Productores de Fruta del Valle del Aconcagua SA) or the Fruit Growers Society of the Aconcagua Valley, was created in 2008 in central Chile with support from Traidcraft. Before this, Traidcraft had only one supply of Fairtrade raisins from Eksteenskuil Agricultural Co-operative (EAC) in South Africa. EAC had the monopoly on Fairtrade raisins worldwide! MiFruta is an organization of 30 small-scale farmers who have about 180 hectares of land between them, 94% of which is used to farm grapes. The farms are naturally irrigated from the Andes. The farmers' land is in front of the highest mountain in the Andes, Mount Aconcagua.

"It is difficult for small producers to make a living from our work here. Many farmers have had to sell their land and move to the city. Now, with Fairtrade I expect my son will have access to a better education."

Pili Contreras. Her father, Juan, is a member of MiFruta.



The founding of MiFruta has cut out the middleman for raisin producers in the Aconcagua Valley. More of the profits pass directly to the farmers, they have greater security and receive better prices for their products. Until MiFruta, buyers and exporters in the region had complete control over these farmers, paying them very low prices for their products (sometimes 6-8 months after purchase.) Many small farmers in the area had to sell their land because it was not possible for them to make enough money to survive.



As part of the process of creating MiFruta, workshops were developed to train the raisin farmers on Fairtrade. These were funded by Traidcraft and an organisation of the Chilean government. Traidcraft also persuaded the Fairtrade Foundation and the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO) to develop standards for raisins for Chile and MiFruta were awarded Fairtrade certification in 2009. Traidcraft became MiFruta's biggest customer.

30% of the farmers' grape crop are used for raisins. The rest are exported as table grapes. The two main varieties of grapes are Thomson (white) and Flame (dark) though there are four more varieties with smaller volumes. Harvest is in March for the raisins and table grapes are harvested in February. Once dried, the raisins are taken to Redondo SA, a small plant where the raisins are separated by size, cleaned and packed.

