

Fairtrade Food Composite Products Standard

The Challenge...

From cookies to cola, muesli to mustard, the possibilities for Fairtrade certified food products are endless. Consumer ready products that contain several ingredients are known as Fairtrade food composite products. A classic example is chocolate: it's made with Fairtrade certified cocoa and sugar, but also contains other ingredients for which there are no Fairtrade Standards, like milk or emulsifiers. Hundreds of Fairtrade food composite products are currently on the market and demand is on the rise.

Composite products offer Fairtrade producers an exciting opportunity to expand their market. But as the demand for more variety of Fairtrade products grows, so does the need to make clear rules for the composition of these products. Fairtrade published the first guidelines for composite products in 2003 and updated them in 2007. However they were vague in parts and therefore interpreted differently by various licensees. The challenge was to create a set of common international rules defining which composite products can use the FAIRTRADE Mark.

The Standard at a glance

What it is: Mandates the conditions under which a food composite product may carry the FAIRTRADE Mark and which food composite ingredients can be considered Fairtrade

Who it is for: operators (producers and traders) and licensees

Products: Finished products or ingredients containing more than one components

Valid from: 1 July 2011

Where to get a copy:

Under section "2.2 Product Composition" of the Generic Fairtrade Trade Standard:

www.fairtrade.net/standards.html



Fairtrade responds...

After extensive consultation with producers, traders and licensees, Fairtrade International has created the Fairtrade Food Composite Product Standard, which has become section "2.2 product composition" of the Generic Fairtrade Trade Standard.

The new Standard makes the rules for Fairtrade composite products simpler and clearer. It gives consumers more opportunities to choose Fairtrade in their everyday shopping, leading to higher Fairtrade sales for producers and greater benefits for farmers, workers and their communities.

Minimum requirements for Fairtrade food composite products

For a food composite product to be considered Fairtrade, at least **20 percent** of the content must be Fairtrade certified. Also, if a Fairtrade certified ingredient is available, it must be used, regardless of what percentage it makes up in the final product. Even ingredients that are added in small quantities have to be Fairtrade, such as Fairtrade herbs, spices and vanilla. This gives vital improved market access to Fairtrade producers.

Industry-friendly units of measurement

In the new Standard, minimum percentages are calculated in weight for solids and in volume for liquids. Added water and/or dairy can be excluded from the calculation if they make up more than 50 percent of the product. The units of measurement are now in line with food industry norms

The Standard ensures that all Fairtrade products contain as many Fairtrade ingredients as possible and also allows a wider variety of products to qualify for Fairtrade certification. Research has shown for example that there's a lot of growth potential in composite products such as ice cream, dairy beverages and baked goods. The Standard opens up opportunities for higher sales and more benefits for producers.

Transparent procedure for exceptions

Recognizing that the landscape for Fairtrade products is always changing, the Standard now includes a process for granting exceptions when necessary. While the goal is always to use as many Fairtrade ingredients as possible, sometimes ingredients are not available for a variety of reasons. For instance, when a product has only recently been certified Fairtrade, mass quantities are not yet accessible to manufacturers. An exceptions committee has made guidelines for granting exceptions and makes sure that any exceptions are made in a consistent and transparent way.

Labelling

Manufacturers of Fairtrade food composite products are allowed to use the FAIRTRADE Certification Mark on the front of packaging. The percentage of Fairtrade certified ingredients should be displayed on the back of pack (unless these requirements contradict national law).

About Fairtrade International:

Fairtrade International is a global non-profit organization that works with farmers and workers to improve lives through fairer trade. We lead the Fairtrade system, develop the Fairtrade Standards and support producers. Fairtrade International owns the FAIRTRADE Certification Mark, a registered trademark recognized around the world.

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