

Info sheet 2013: Fair trade products



Many people are increasingly interested in knowing the things they buy have been produced in fair ways, without exploitation. A fair trade label acts as a guarantee to consumers that products, or the ingredients they contain, meet fair trade standards. The most well-known is the Fairtrade label, but a range of others are available. Some fair trade initiatives choose not to apply for fair trade certification, but aim to be transparent about their practices directly to consumers.

This info sheet aims to provide students and staff with an overview of different types of fair trade products they may wish to consider buying.

Fairtrade products



The Fairtrade label can be found on over 3,000 products. These include:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Hot chocolate
- Chocolate
- Cut flowers
- Gold
- Cotton
- Fruit
- Juice
- Vegetables
- Honey
- Beer
- Wine
- Rum
- Olive oil
- and more...

You can find products with the Fairtrade label in fair trade shops and also in supermarkets, including on supermarket own-brand products.

Products from WFTO fair trade organisations



The WFTO certifies organisations producing:

- giftware
- household goods
- furniture
- garments
- jewellery
- food & beverages

The variety of products available is wide, as organisations meeting the criteria to become a Fair Trade Organisation can then produce whatever they like, providing they continue to meet the criteria through their practices. You can find products from WFTO organisations in fair trade shops, and in shops/websites of the Fair Trade Organisations themselves.

This year, the WFTO have launched a new product label to be awarded to companies that are 100% committed to fair trade. This label will allow consumers to identify products made by companies with fair trade as their core motivation, and will not be found on supermarket own-brand products. Clothing company People Tree, for example, has been awarded this label for use on its products.



Fair trade products on offer at the University

In both University and EUSA shops, bars, cafés and catering services, a wide range of fair trade products can be found. These include fair trade labelled products - for example all tea and coffee served or sold in the University is fair trade, and EUSA sell fair trade garments, among a wide range of food and drinks.

The University also supports initiatives not covered by a fair trade label. Just Trading Scotland supply rice from Malawi to the University's catering services – a company that is committed to fair trade values but that chooses not to gain certification due to associated costs for producers. Other non-labelled fair trade initiatives are also being explored.

Evidently there remains a whole range of product types not yet covered by fair trade schemes, such as electronic equipment. University staff and students are keeping track of new developments and will incorporate new fair trade options into its procurement and retail strategies.

Buying fair trade for your events and offices

If you are looking for fair trade food and beverages for your events, you may wish to contact Edinburgh First (<http://www.edinburghfirst.co.uk/>) who will be able to offer you a range of fair trade options.

If buying small quantities of refreshments for offices/meetings, you have the choice of:

- buying from EUSA shops around the University
- ordering from a value-driven fair trade company like Traidcraft (<http://www.traidcraft.co.uk>) or Equal Exchange (<http://www.equalexchange.co.uk>)
- visiting a fair trade shop such as the One World Shop (<http://www.oneworldshop.co.uk>)
- checking out the product range in cooperative supermarkets that focus on fair trade like Scotmid or The Cooperative
- or selecting fair trade products from supermarkets

Questions raised

- How can consumers decide which fair trade labels to buy into?
- How can we increase public awareness of the different fair trade labels and initiatives?
- Should we aim to buy from fair trade companies, rather than buying products with fair trade labels from supermarkets?
- If a product does not have a fair trade label, how do we know it is really fair trade?
- Which labelled and non-labelled initiatives should the University buy into or promote?
- Is there a risk of fair trade encouraging people to overconsume?

See our info sheet on 'current debates on fair trade' for more discussion.



What you can do

- Choose to buy fair trade products, and encourage others to do so
- Get involved in campaign or action groups e.g. student societies, our staff/student Fair Trade Steering Group, NGO campaigns, Scottish Fair Trade Forum etc.
- Take part in our fair trade volunteering projects
- Attend our fair trade lectures, seminars and other events
- Host your own fair trade events – we can help promote them
- Consider carrying out research on fairness in trade (we have a Fair Trade Dissertation Prize for all students and a Fair Trade Academic Network for academic staff/PhD students)
- Follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfEdinburghFairTrade>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/UoEFairTrade>) and share our posts

For more information on all of the above, see our website www.ed.ac.uk/fairtrade or contact liz.cooper@ed.ac.uk