



Haiti Coffee Project

March 2000 — February 2001

In early 2000, EnterpriseWorks began short-term activities to improve the production, processing, and marketing of the Haïtien Bleu brand of gourmet coffee produced by the 32 member cooperatives of FACN in southern Haiti. Although Haïtien Bleu garnered significant interest among international buyers during its inaugural season, problems with quality and productivity endangered its viability with international specialty coffee importers. By providing specialized assistance to coffee farmers as part of a larger initiative to increase hillside farmer incomes, EnterpriseWorks addressed the situation with improvements in processing systems, marketing links, and institutional strengthening of FACN member cooperatives.



Project Budget

\$614,969

Funder

USAID/Haiti
(through SECID)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Improved the quality of Haïtien Bleu coffee by building or upgrading wet processing facilities at individual cooperatives or associations.
- Increased the volume of coffee production by improving extension services and attracting more farmers to market their coffee under the Haïtien Bleu label.
- Expanded U.S. markets for Haïtien Bleu coffee and introduced the brand in Europe and Asia.
- Explored the organic specialty niche by helping farmers at one cooperative grow and certify organic coffee.
- Increased incomes of participating farmers. Progress Report

LESSONS LEARNED

FACN staff and members' success depended on upholding the stringent quality standards of the Specialty Coffee Association of America. EnterpriseWorks discovered that excessive humidity in the FACN-owned dry processing plant and coffee warehouse was the primary cause of declining coffee quality. Field staff instituted new quality controls, such as periodically rotating and sun-drying bags of coffee, to maintain an acceptable moisture level in the coffee beans before and after initial processing. §

The large international market demanded that processing capacity increase. Field staff inspected 27 existing processing facilities, upgraded obsolete machinery, and identified potential new locations for additional processing capability. The project also trained plant personnel and farmers as to best practices for coffee production and processing and produced a simple manual in Creole for member cooperatives. §

International marketing contacts essential for project success. Project staff helped FACN leadership to rekindle interest in Haitien Bleu in the U.S. market and to develop new relationships with European buyers. The project supported international marketing efforts at major specialty coffee trade events in Europe and the U.S. and helped FACN seek fair trade certification as another market development tool.