

Nespresso is dedicated to providing you the highest coffee quality with each cup. This includes ensuring the consistency of our coffee from the very start – long before the actual harvest occurs. That’s why we teamed up with our green coffee suppliers, Nestlé experts and the Rainforest Alliance to develop the Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality™ Coffee Programme. These pages are dedicated to addressing Club Members’ questions and concerns directly. Our coffee experts are at your service.

What does “sustainability” mean?

There are many different definitions of the term sustainability, but in essence the word describes a commitment to ensuring that business activities and development programs balance the economic, social and environmental needs of communities. The idea is to ensure that as we fulfil the needs of society today we do not compromise the ability of future generations to fulfil their needs.



How does the AAA Sustainable Quality Program help coffee farmers?

The AAA Programme builds on Nespresso’s fundamental principle for buying coffee: to reward farmers with premium prices for producing highest quality coffee. That is why Nespresso worked with the Rainforest Alliance to develop its tailor-made farm assessment process called TASQ™ (Tool for the Assessment of Sustainable Quality), which monitors the performance of farms and milling stations across clearly defined quality, social, environmental and economic aspects. The assessment process helps farmers understand what improvements they should make in order to improve quality – leading to higher prices – and/or increase productivity – leading to lower costs. Farms that meet certain agricultural, environmental and social standards are included in the AAA programme. These coffee growers are further helped to improve their agricultural practices through technical assistance, training, workshops and specific investments to improve the farms and wet milling stations. Farmers in the AAA Programme also benefit from a long term relationship with Nespresso, which minimises risk and instability in terms of finding a market for their coffees.

Why doesn’t Nespresso participate in the Fair Trade initiative or use a seal of approval such as Max Havelaar?

The Nespresso AAA Programme differs from Max Havelaar or Fair Trade in that it seeks to find a long term balance between highest quality – which is the primary basis for the selection of our coffees – and social, environmental and economic criteria. Although Fair Trade is an important initiative for some farming communities, after reviewing the needs of Nespresso we decided that we needed a program tailor-made to fit our focus on quality. This program has been developed in close collaboration with the leading non-government organisation Rainforest

Alliance and AAA farm assessments are independently verified by Rainforest Alliance.

Does Nespresso know where its coffee comes from?

Since only certain kinds of coffees are suitable for the specific taste and aroma profiles of our Grands Crus, we have taken considerable time, effort and resources to locate the regions where such coffees can be grown. As part of the Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality Coffee Programme, we use the latest electronic tagging and GPS technology and work closely with green coffee suppliers in order to more efficiently pinpoint and account for the exact location of the numerous small, individually owned farms in remote districts that provide Nespresso with many of its highest quality coffees.

Who is the Rainforest Alliance?

The Rainforest Alliance is an umbrella organisation for a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are committed to preserving the rainforest ecosystem and the communities and wildlife that are found there. They do this in a number of ways, one of which is to ensure that farming practices are in harmony with the social and environmental needs of the tropical regions (e.g., in the case of Chiquita). Nespresso chose to work with Rainforest Alliance to create the AAA Programme and the Tool for the Assessment of Sustainable Quality (TASQ™), which helps coffee farmers by highlighting areas to improve their product quality and income and the social and environmental impact of farming. For more information, see www.rainforest-alliance.org.

QUESTIONS

Where does Nespresso grow?

The Nespresso Grands Crus are blends of coffees that bring together different taste and aroma profiles from different regions and countries in specific compositions. Most of our coffee comes from Latin American countries such as Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and Brazil, others are grown in Ethiopia, Kenya or other countries in Africa or Asia. The annual Limited Edition (available in spring) is typically a single origin coffee – not a blend – chosen for its exceptional flavour. Special Club Grands Crus (available in autumn) are a blend of single origin varieties. These originate from highly specialized coffee producing regions, such as the remote islands of Indonesia, the Central American highlands, and other coffee-growing areas.

What is the main difference between Arabica and Robusta coffees?

Arabica and Robusta are different botanical varieties of coffee growing in different areas and under different conditions. With regard to our Grands Crus, it is fair to say that the main difference between the two coffee sorts is in the taste. Arabica is more fine, acidic and aromatic. Robusta is more pronounced and as the name is suggesting more robust in flavour strength. Nespresso uses mostly Arabica coffees. It uses Robusta in a minor amount, a bit like a spice, to contribute to the balance of the blend.

What goes into creating high quality coffee?

The specific region, qualified pickers, quality of the plants and an ideal combination of soil and climate are essential factors for a coffee bean’s quality. Highest quality coffee grows at an altitude of more than 1,200 metres

ANSWERS



In four ways: Firstly, our green coffee quality and buying team based in Switzerland makes regular visits to coffee regions and farms in different countries of origin in search of highest quality coffee. Secondly, we have established a network of agronomists based in the various origin countries to be involved in the farm assessment programme. Thirdly, we work closely with the suppliers of coffee who have extensive operations throughout the coffee producing regions. And last – but certainly not least – is through our collaboration with Rainforest Alliance, which has a presence in all the regions where Nespresso has implemented the AAA Sustainable Quality programme, and Rainforest Alliance experts are on location to assess and assist the coffee farmers and their communities.

What does “traceability” mean?

In simple terms traceability is the ability to follow the journey of raw materials from where they originate to the point when they are used in a product. For coffee this means being able to track the route of coffee beans from the tree to the cup throughout the many intermediate steps in that journey. This can be complex, as especially the highest quality coffees that Nespresso buys often come from hundreds and thousands of small producers in remote highland regions. As important as knowing where the beans come from is also knowing that the money (especially the significant price premiums) that Nespresso pays can be traced back to the farmers who cultivate AAA coffees. This is called “economic traceability”. As part of the AAA Programme, Nespresso is putting new systems and measures in place to improve the traceability of both its highest quality coffees and the money paid for them.

where it is subject to major variations in temperature between day and night, which contributes to the full development of the beans’ nuances of taste. Considerable precipitation is also necessary, the minimum being 1,300 mm/year. The selection process naturally plays a key role as well. Only fully ripe cherries are harvested, and not all parts of the plants yield best quality cherries – that’s why Nespresso prefers hand picking. And of course, green coffee suppliers and Nespresso coffee experts monitor the quality of coffee numerous times along the entire coffee journey, from pre-harvest to shipping, and beyond.

How do you maintain contact with the countries of origin?