

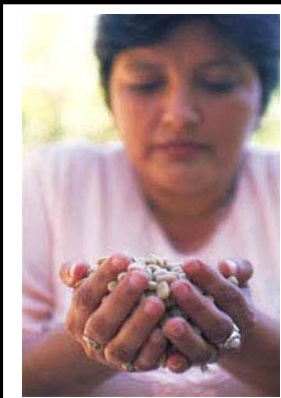
Coffee for Waste Campaign




January 2004

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What is the waste for fair-trade coffee campaign? 

So, you're probably already wondering why there suddenly seems to be a lot of hype about fair-trade, organic coffee, and once you start seeing friendly faces in Ross and Proctor asking if they can scrape you plate, you're going to start wondering what on earth fair-trade coffee and food waste have to do with each other. The relationship is both simple and complex. Fair-trade coffee is something that Middlebury, with its reputation for

environmental excellence and social awareness, ought to have; but it costs money. Wasting food is something that most students take for granted; and it also has costs.

The aim of the "coffee for waste" campaign is to reduce the amount of food wasted in the dining halls, thereby saving money. The money that would have been lost on wasted food can then be used to buy fair-trade, organic coffee for the dining halls.

Why is fair-trade coffee important? 

If we can save enough by reducing waste, you might ask, why is buying fair-trade coffee the best use of that money? Some of you might even be asking: what is fair-trade coffee anyway?

Fair-trade coffee is coffee that is purchased from farmer cooperatives as opposed to large coffee plantations. Farmers are ensured at least \$1.26 per pound of coffee - a rate at which a farmer can support a family of five with adequate nutrition, health care, and education. In the current coffee market, because of speculation and flooding of the market by cheap coffee grown on industrial-sized plantations, the price that most farmers

receive has fallen to \$0.50/lb, which is rarely enough to cover the cost of production.

Although the outspoken motive of fair-trade is to support individuals and communities, also imbedded in its philosophy is environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture. Most fair-trade coffee is organic, in contrast to regular coffee, which uses pesticides and fertilizers, including DDT, that then contaminate local watersheds and can harm the health of workers. Regular coffee is usually grown on large plantations with methods that cause erosion, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.



For a college that prides itself on social and environmental responsibility and that consumes over 10,000 pounds of coffee a year, the decision to buy fair-trade should be easy. Over 200

schools across the U.S. have already switched to fair-trade coffee, including Yale, Cornell, and yes, our rival, Williams. It's time for Middlebury to follow suit.

Why is waste reduction important?

Middlebury students waste between 1/10 and 1/5 of a pound at every dinner. That's over 60,000 pounds wasted at dinners alone during the academic year.



While Middlebury Dining is renowned throughout Vermont for its fine compost, food waste is a major problem for the dining halls.

Everything, whether it's eaten or not, costs money to purchase, prepare, and serve. On average, every pound of wasted food represents \$2 that could have been spent elsewhere - like on fair-trade, organic coffee. Considering that almost 300 pounds of food is wasted each night between Ross and Proctor, the amount of money that could be saved through food-waste reduction is significant.

Goals of the campaign:

1. Bring fair-trade, organic coffee to Middlebury.
2. Reduce food waste by at least 10,000 pounds a year, enough to cover the additional costs of serving fair-trade, organic coffee at Middlebury.
3. Involve the Middlebury student

body in making a positive local change (food-waste reduction) and a positive global change (supporting socially and environmentally responsible coffee).

4. Stimulate meaningful debate about the issues of fair-trade, and sustainable agriculture.

What you can do to help:

Want to get involved in the campaign? Email ajumars@middlebury.edu.

Making a difference is simple. As an individual, all you have to do is think carefully before getting your food in the cafeteria. How hungry are you? Error on the side of taking too little, and then come back for seconds if you're still hungry. Lick your plate clean!

Also, when it comes to drinking

coffee, at Middlebury or beyond, give fair-trade blends a try, and if you like them, drink 'em! Over the course of J-term, there will be one fair-trade blend in every dining hall. Only if we can save enough through waste-reduction can we continue to have fair-trade coffee in the dining halls.

