

# HELPING FARMERS TO SHARE THEIR WORKLOAD IN JARDÍN, COLOMBIA



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NESPRESSO

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## AT A GLANCE

- In 2010, *Nespresso* co-funded a new community coffee processing centre in Jardín, Colombia.
- The mill will enable coffee farmers to double the volume of AAA standard coffee, secure a higher premium and with time, seek to increase progressively their net income by 30%.
- More water efficient facilities and waste management systems at the mill are helping to protect the local ecosystems.
- The mill currently benefits 170 farmers in Jardín.

## ACTIONS & RESULTS

### BUILDING A COMMUNITY COFFEE PROCESSING CENTRE

The mill, built by *Nespresso* and partners including Expocafé and USAID, creates a centralised and more efficient milling process. This will enable coffee farmers to double their volume of *Nespresso* AAA Sustainable Quality™ standard coffee, secure a higher price premium and seek to increase their net income by at least 30%.

The milling and drying process transforms the coffee cherries into coffee beans, ready to be exported for roasting. Better milling techniques at the central mill result in a higher yield of AAA coffee, because cherries are less likely to be damaged during the milling process. And the 3,000 metre square solar drying capacity helps to maintain the highest quality because sun drying the cherries is the best way to create the taste and aroma profiles required for our Grands Crus. As a result, the quality rejection rate of the coffee beans has fallen from nearly 50% to less

than 4% to 9% in average. Producing higher quality coffee means that coffee farmers can earn a premium and so increase their income.

Employees at the central mill now do the milling and drying of the coffee beans. This provides cash flow benefits for farmers because they are paid when they take their coffee to the mill, rather than after it has been processed, which could be up to eight days later. And it also means they can spend more time on farm management or with their families.

The project brings environmental benefits too. The average smallholder on the AAA Program in Colombia will use around 25 litres of water to process one kilogram of coffee. However, at the central mill, only 11 litres of water per kilo of parchment are required to produce coffee. It represents a reduction of 24,800 litres of water per farm, meaning an overall reduction of 4.2 million litres of water. Additionally, the leftover pulp from the milling process is used as compost. All these developments help to ensure that smallholder farmers in Jardín are producing the highest quality coffee, more sustainably.

## WHY WE INVESTED IN THE CENTRAL MILL

The average size of a coffee farm in Jardín is just 2.5 hectares. Yet, despite the relatively small size of the farms, individual farmers have traditionally completed their own milling and drying. Processing coffee on the farm is not only labour intensive, nor is it the best way to guarantee the highest quality coffee beans. Milling and drying coffee beans on the farm can have a negative impact on the farmers' income, because if the quality of the beans is poor, they will not be able to secure a price premium.



Colombia

The central mill currently benefits 170 farmers belonging to the AAA Program community.



Milling centre, Jardín, Colombia

## OUR APPROACH

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE  
BENEFITS FOR ALL

A partnership that included *Nespresso*, regional and national farming associations, NGOs, international development organisations, our coffee supplier Expocafé and the local community, was launched to work together to build a central mill for farmers in Jardín.

The foundation stone was laid in July 2010, the first phase of construction completed on 8 December 2010 and the central mill was operational two days later. The site includes a quality testing laboratory, a wet mill, where the natural fermentation and washing process takes place and 3,000 square metres of solar drying capacity, where the cherries are sun dried before being hulled, sorted and graded. There is also a waste management system at the mill to prevent pollution of the natural environment and help protect local ecosystems. Wastewater is treated in the water treatment system and the leftover pulp from the milling process is used as compost.

The central mill is run by a cooperative. Farmers bring their coffee cherries to the mill and are paid a premium based on the expected volume of high quality AAA standard coffee at the end of the milling and drying process. Any profits created by the central mill are shared among the farmers in the cooperative at the end of the season.

## OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The central mill is currently being extended. These developments will benefit additional farmers and will increase the volume of coffee that can be processed at the centre to over 450 tonnes each year. *Nespresso* is already seeking to replicate the concept of community coffee processing in other regions of Colombia.



A lower coffee rejection rate due to quality improvement

## WHAT THE EXPERT SAYS

*"I have been with Nespresso since the beginning. My daughter is studying to become a nurse and the three others are still at school. I no longer have any children working on the farm. I get up every day at five o'clock in the morning, milk the cows and take breakfast to my workers. Before, I used to have to work the full day up to five o'clock in the evening, but now I no longer process my own coffee cherries. They are delivered straight to the cooperative the day they are harvested and I have free time to grow my own vegetables and bananas.*

*When I was still processing my own coffee, I had to depulp it immediately after harvesting and ferment it to get rid of its mucilage, like you blanch a tomato before removing its skin. I then had to wash it within twelve hours (or it started to rot) and run it through a water-based sorting system to separate out the good beans – the over-ripe coffee floats and takes a different path to the rest. Next came the drying stage, in a clean area. At this point in the process, the coffee is always like a sponge and absorbs everything around it. If, for example, you dry it with your washing under a glass canopy, it will take on the flavour of washing powder."*

*Luis Alfonso,  
Coffee Farmer, Jardín*



Effective water management



Classification and depulping module