



Combating the Coffee Crisis with Quality Products



Photo: USAID/Nicaragua Jan Howard

U.S. specialty coffee roasters and buyers sampling Nicaraguan coffee at a USAID-equipped cupping lab in Aranjuez, Nicaragua.

With a glut of low quality coffee saturating the world market, coffee prices for producers have plummeted. The specialty and organic markets, which often pay more than double the price of conventional coffee, offer Nicaraguan farmers a solution to the coffee crisis.

An important component of USAID's quality coffee program is to help Nicaraguan farmers with market links - particularly in capturing niches in the organic and specialty markets. Taking a big step in that direction Cafenica, a 6,000 member federation of small scale growers' cooperatives, joined Thanksgiving Coffee, the Interamerican Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA), and USAID to form an alliance to help raise farm incomes through market linkages with specialty coffee buyers willing to pay fair prices for quality, sustainably-produced coffee. The agreement includes the building of a roasting company in Nicaragua, funded by Thanksgiving Coffee and Cafenica, with assistance and marketing promotion from USAID through the IICA.

USAID financed nineteen cupping labs throughout Nicaragua's coffee growing regions as part of its quality coffee program. Producers receive technical assistance to improve coffee quality through better farming and processing methods. The program has also trained forty-two Nicaraguan coffee cuppers to monitor quality.

Photo & Caption

