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LEAD Project.  
SPREAD Project.

Total immersion in the coffee sector for three solid weeks. Very complete, successful and fulfilling.

Uganda was the big starting point. Two work sites created some logistical concerns but not a great challenge. The class of 21 folks for the most part was motivated and spirited. The overall cupping and sensory awareness has increased dramatically in the last two years. The students were comfortable with the protocol and demonstrated a significant confidence in the procedures. The amazing fact that 18 students achieved Q speaks to the rising level of expertise.



The UCDA staff brought increased awareness regarding the increasing value of Arabica shipments from Uganda and the ability to increase further monies for the coffee sector. This awareness has led to a great increase in the desire to master the protocol used throughout the Specialty Coffee industry. Differentiation of coffees and the desire to discover those differences has led to a huge increase in motivation for the public sector in Uganda. The private sector remains committed to increasing the value of Uganda coffee and the determination of the value by accepted tools.



The support staff was competent and enthused. We relied on the staff for anticipation and set up for the exercises. The increasing confidence was a relief to us. The two locations and the logistics of water needs at both sites was handled by the staff with some direction but in a satisfactory fashion.



A pleasure.

The twelve triangulation retakes indicates a need for further team training and self training by the participants. The olfactory challenges indicates a need for translation of aromas and development of Uganda olfactory experiences. It is hard to capture and store aroma information in the brain without a corresponding life experience. In country partners and future trainers can develop the vocabulary to allow for the translation. Until this is done the olfactory training and tests will always prove unable to determine real abilities to detect aroma and fragrance in some participants.

The improvements to the lab planned will go along way to setting the standard in Uganda. The environmental improvements will greatly enhance team and individual training sessions. The use of the lab for Q and other trainings will add immense value to the Uganda Coffee Sector.





Talking about roasting.

Off to Kenya for a surprise visit. The hybrid training and Taste of Harvest competition cupping was hosted by the Coffee Research Foundation. EAFCA provided the logistics and financial backing. The support provided by the CRF was amazing. We provided 3 days of instruction and testing. The four olfactory tests and 5 triangulations were presented and tested. A roasting segment was requested (three coffee roasters) and well received. We also cupped two flights of coffees and discussed and used the SCAA form. The sensory skills tests (all 3 levels) was also administered. Several folks of the nine participants did very well on the tests. Some did well on some aspects but not the other tests. The introduction provided foreknowledge of the Q program and the SCAA cupping protocol. The inspiration to do more comes from the participants and will drive them to train with each other and to self train. These nine folks have a working knowledge of the Q and will be comfortable and confident when the remaining tests and retakes become available.



Olfactory.....tough. Once again the vocabulary was limiting



The helping folks were incredible. All were employees of the CRF and had experience setting up cuppings and triangulations. Susan roasted all the samples for the TOH.





Susan letting out steam.

The TOH was cupped on Friday with Peter, Cecelia from CRF, Joseph and myself. The top five coffees were stellar and presented very well at the EAFCA conference. The abilities of the cuppers were very apparent. The consensus at the conference was that the Kenya we chose number 1 was the best of the tables. It was an amazing coffee.



The Jury for TOH.

And of course the timing of the Ruiru Coffee Fair was great. Presenting the participants with certificates in front of their peers was fulfilling. The winning lots of coffee were celebrated and giving certificates of achievement. This public recognition greatly adds to inspiration. The coffee served at the event was exponentially better than two years ago. The coffee consumption culture in Kenya is growing. Highlighted by efforts of Dorman and Java House. The growth of consumption will provide an level demand which will negate the swings of the market somewhat.





Nice crema, getting there.



The winning lot.



Daily Walk.



From the Kenya Coffee College to the Coffee Research Foundation.



The eucalyptus had an incredible soothing aroma.

Can't beat that.



And on to Rwanda and the final week of trainings. Kelly prepared the entire place. Amazing lady. Again another 21 students. The participants have enjoyed varying experiences in the coffee industry. But what struck home was the elevation of the cupping culture in Rwanda. The past few years of support from all types of groups has really born fruit. The cuppers are inquisitive, curious and unafraid of challenges. The confidence level is high. The folks at OCIR were very supportive and gracious hosts. Claver, Arsene, Jean Paul and especially Eric gave valuable hands on and material support. We could not have been as successful without their assistance. Wonderful. The mix of participants from both the public and private sector came prepared for the most part to succeed. Coffee knowledge, cupping protocol, testing abilities were for the most part exhibited by the participants. The fact that 17 folks attained Q certificates attests to that preparation. Olfactory and triangulation, of course, provided enough suspense. The general knowledge exam also proved unassailable to some. But the overall success is a strong vindication for the Rwanda coffee industry.



5 7's, one 8, one 8.5 and no troubles= 81.5

The young cuppers had a distinct advantage. Well developed sensory skills coupled with strong confidence bodes very well for the future of Rwanda Coffee.





Smiles all around.

The push to develop in country consumption is still strong. Further ideas about a greater geographic distribution have also been bandied about. The value added motivation is very strong. But just like Malawi and Uganda the chances of sullyng the Brand must be thought out. Freshness and roasting abilities can both harm a wonderful Brand. Roasting equipment needs to be immediately repaired. The new Probat coming to Rwanda Coffee Roasters will add greatly to the coffee value and quality.



Tired, beat up and falling apart.



The problem with potato has not been resolved. While roasting the samples for the conference I was bombarded by the offensive aroma. The smell would waft out from the grinding and packaging room. I was amazed by the number of incidences. It is concerning to a coffee roaster to be exposed to the defect. The Rwanda coffee industry needs to solve this to gain our confidence.





To support the internal consumption of Rwanda coffees the industry needs to upgrade dramatically the equipment and processes. All the work that has proceeded the roasting and grinding and packaging is wasted. Brewing is another serious area for improvements. Just like everywhere in the coffee world.

But on a lighter note. I did manage to get some golf in.



I look forward to another journey. I am happy to roast and drink the wonderful coffees from East Africa. Rwanda is a wonderful beautiful country. The coffee is wonderful. It works.

Jeremy Rath  
Minneapolis.