



Telephone (978) 934 – 2296; (978)934-2297
e-mail: info@mesoamerican.org
www.mesoamerican.org
www.cafesolar.com
1 University Avenue
Lowell, MA 01854
Alumni Hall, Room B3, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Café Solar



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Field Update September 2012

Training in Coffee Preparation and Quality, Cooperative COMISUYL, Subirana, Yoro, Honduras

With support from Fair Trade International (FLO Central America) and the government of Ireland (Irish Aid) to Cooperative COMISUYL, MDI and its partners are providing training for the young men and women who are operating the world's first off-grid coffee processing center.

This training permits Cooperative COMISUYL to prepare coffee according to strict quality standards and to export coffee directly to specialty markets in the US, Canada, Sweden, and Ireland.



Quality testing along the production line—the equipment and training is designed to meet Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA85 standards)

Fair Trade International consists of 25 organizations working to secure a better deal for producers. Headquartered in Bonn, Germany, they set international Fair Trade standards and support Fair Trade producers.

Training in the operation of the hybrid solar/biofuel drying systems allow the industrial drying of coffee, without the use of firewood, a first for the Honduran coffee sector.



(Left) Training in manufacture of fuel pellets from coffee husks; (Above) training in quality analysis for continuous checking of production line output.



World's first off-grid coffee processing center to be powered by renewable energy



Preparation and quality control at the facility start with drying in MDI's hybrid Solar/Biofuel drying systems. High-efficiency drying towers allow coffee to be dried at optimum temperatures, approximately 45 degrees centigrade. After the coffee has "rested" for two months, it is then mechanically milled to remove the coffee husks. The mechanical production line sorts the coffee according to size and density and removes any foreign objects. A final color sorting is done manually to further increase quality for export to specialty markets.

(Left) Manual color sorting line, the final stage of removing defects in the production line.

The final product, "green coffee" or "café oro," supplying the Café Solar® brand, is then placed in special hermetic bags called SuperGrainbags™. These layered bags with a gas barrier prevent the absorption or loss of moisture and preserve quality. Properly dried coffee stored in SuperGrainbags™ does not develop molds which otherwise can result in the production of Ochratoxin A, a suspected human carcinogen that is, by law, regularly tested in coffee entering the European Union.



(Right) Hermetically sealed Café Solar® inside the standard jute bag. (Below) Coffee ready for export



Partnering with MDI in the training effort is:

- The Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE), which operates a coffee school together with the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH).
- Solidaridad, a network promoting fair and sustainable supply chains from producer to consumer, is providing export assistance.

The first direct export for Cooperative COMISUYL, now with its own export license, is Café Solar® heading to alliance partner, Casa Progreso, in Sweden.



Loan officers of CABEI and Banhcafe gather to learn from their first CAMBio project

Onsite Seminar and Case Study of Renewable Energy for the Banking Sector

With the high efficiency drying chambers as a backdrop, MDI and COMISUYL presented on the competitive advantages of renewable energy technology, both in energy savings and in growing market appeal for advancements in sustainable coffee.

MDI and officers of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and Banhcafe, the banking institution servicing the coffee sector in Honduras, presented on their first use of Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds in a program designed to main stream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use within micro-, small- and

medium-sized enterprise development. MDI's renewable energy technology allowed COMISUYL to access CAMBio funds for the building construction and production line equipment to prepare and export organic Café Solar® to global markets.



(Above) Raul Raudales of MDI discusses IOC production for small producers and the potential role for UMass and the NERC/CIRED Consortium in the development of carbon trading based on IOC.



(Above) Nelson Merino of CABEI explains the CAMBio program and its intended role in promoting habitat preservation and global warming mitigation by means of clean technology and the businesses that adopt them.



Specialized and targeted training is essential for the youth of Subirana to operate industrial processes, institute quality programs and required documentation systems. Cooperative COMISUYL is providing an example for small producers with the first farmer-owned coffee processing center in the Department of Yoro, and the only facility in Yoro capable of preparing and exporting to the specialty market.

Special thanks to those partnering with COMISUYL and supporting Café Solar®.



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