

Norms for Production, Processing and Marketing of “Bird Friendly®” Coffee



Certified Organic Shade Grown Coffee



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Introduction

The shade criteria for “Bird Friendly®” coffee has been developed by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in the spirit of mutual interest and cooperation with others involved in coffee (producers, traders, retailers, researchers, etc.) who share concerns about this very important aspect of sustainable coffee production.

The criteria relating to the bio-physical aspects of coffee shade pertain to farms characterized by *planted* and *managed* shade, not to those in which coffee has been inserted into an existing natural forest (a category known as “rustic” shade, which—although uncommon—easily meets the SMBC criteria). See “Rustic Shade” in Sec. 2 below

Any person or producers’ group that wishes to have their coffee certified as “Bird Friendly®” must have an organic certification.

Apart from the criteria that the coffee plantation must fulfill to be certified as Bird Friendly®, all Bird Friendly® coffee handled must be separated physically or temporally from any other during the processes of depulping, washing and drying, storage, transport, roasting and marketing. All documentation relating to this coffee must be kept separately.

A pre-requisite for any farm’s Bird Friendly® certification is its organic certification. The prevailing international norms for organic certification, therefore, govern the production method, processing and marketing of Bird Friendly® coffee.

To verify compliance with the criteria for “Bird-Friendly®” coffee in all stages, a programmed inspection shall be carried out once a year.

The decision for granting the certification is based on complete compliance with these criteria.

The criteria applied in the field for “Bird Friendly®” coffee aim to promote the following:

- Environmental sustainability, with the aim of protecting and/or improving the ecological indicators of environmental health;
- Coffee’s cultivation within an agroforestry setting;
- Protecting structural as well as species biodiversity, in order to guarantee shelter and food for birds, especially migratory ones.
- That any land transformed or incorporated for coffee production not be part of any protected zone or natural reserve;
- Guaranteeing that agronomic practices relating to the production process must leave intact



specific ecosystems and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;

- Permitting cultural practices involving the use of epiphytes for ceremonial or festive purposes.
- Keeping documentation describing the unit and demonstrating the management of the plantation and shade.

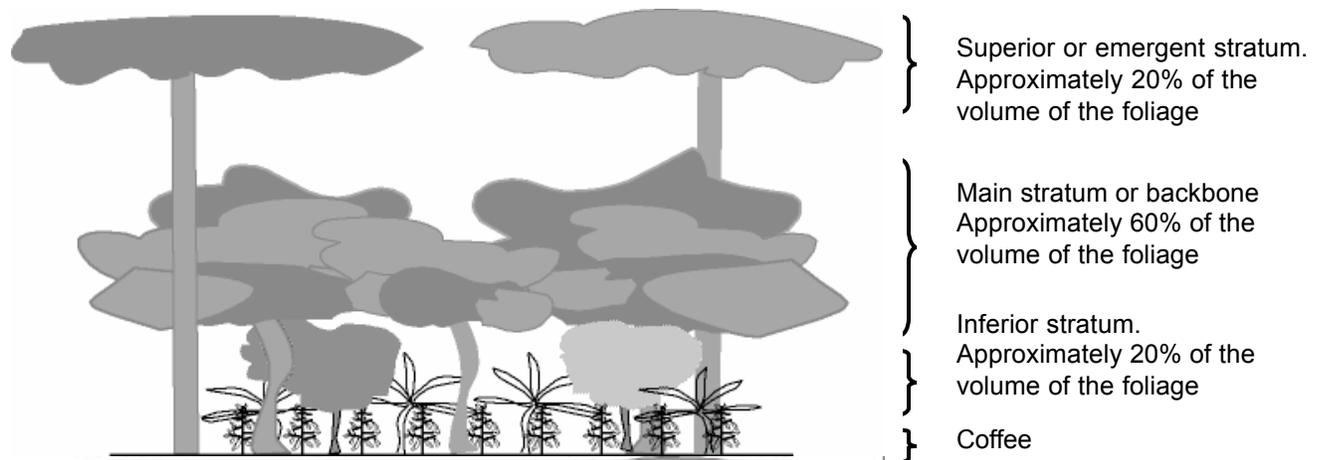
The name “Smithsonian” or the term “Bird Friendly®” can only be used by those operators able to show written proof of contract agreements with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

2. Terminology

- **Arboreal cover or canopy:** Foliage above the coffee bushes
- **Stratum (plural is “strata”):** Layer, or series of layers, arranged horizontally and most easily seen from a distance, formed by the difference in the height of the trees that compose the arboreal canopy. (See Figure 1.)
- **Structural diversity:** Distribution and ordering of the strata in profile. The varied “architecture” of the arboreal canopy that displays differing heights of two or more strata. Ecologically, a more diverse system, with various layers, and vegetation types (trees, epiphytes, vines, old snags, etc.), provides a greater number of physical niches for organisms.
- **Floristic diversity:** Mix of species or the number of shade tree and other plant species.
- **Backbone species:** The most common or predominant species (sometimes a single genus represented by several species), forming the principle stratum of shade in the canopy and often a large fraction of all individual trees present.
- **Native species:** Species found within the area of its natural geographical distribution.
- **Bird friendly® coffee:** Certified organic shade grown coffee, whose bio-physical characteristics of the shade component meet or exceed the criteria laid out below.
- **Rustic shade:** shade composed of natural forest trees, an uncommon situation in which coffee plants have been inserted beneath an existing natural forest cover. Often found in conjunction with

indigenous communities (and certainly certifiable as Bird Friendly® in most cases), the creation of (new) rustic coffee systems is not allowed, and such systems will not be certified.

Figure 1: Ideallized profile of a structurally diverse shade coffee system:



3. Criteria to be fulfilled by the production unit using planted, managed shade

3.1. Biophysical criteria

3.1.1 Vegetation cover

- The coffee plantation must have at least 40 percent canopy cover, even after pruning.
- The plant coverage should include different strata: the lower stratum, that is, the one that is located under the main canopy, must constitute 20 percent of the total volume of the shade foliage. The same applies for the emergent species stratum (see Figure 1 above and Sec. 3.1.2 below)
- The shade must be composed of various tree species, including some that are useful in other ways (providing other kinds of shade and biological richness). See Sec. 3.1.3 below.
- There must be sufficient arboreal foliage cover all year round to create a microclimate that protects the coffee plantation soil base from rain, as well as the drying effects of wind and sun.
- Species like *Gliricidia sepium*, *Grevillea robusta*, *Erythrina spp*, *Albizia spp*. and *Pinus spp*. are unacceptable as backbone species.



3.1.2. Structural diversity

- The main canopy—usually composed of the backbone species—must be a minimum of 12 meters high. Pruning should be practiced in such a way so to allow the trees to attain that height.
- The shade must have some clearly visible strata: a lower stratum that occupies the space below the main canopy, and an upper stratum made of trees that are at least 15 meters high. The upper stratum must be composed of native trees.

3.1.3. Floristic diversity

- The predominant species—or the backbone species (*Inga* and others)—must occupy no more than 60 percent of all shade trees. The remaining 40 percent of the shade trees must belong to a minimum of 10 different species, of which each species must constitute at least 1 percent of the total shade trees present.
- The backbone species must be a native species.
- The canopy's different tree species must be well distributed throughout the entire coffee plantation.
- The growth of epiphytic plants, such as bromeliads, orchids, and ferns, as well as that of parasitic plants and some mistletoes should be encouraged.
- Some dead limbs and trunks should be left within the coffee plantation to provide habitats for certain insects and birds.
- The selection of shade tree species and pruning practices must have a minimum impact on the epiphytes, mosses and lichens. Pruning in such a way as to produce a thin, laminar appearance of the canopy is not permitted.

3.1.4. Soil management

- Soil must be covered year round, with either mulch or living cover.
- Soil conservation practices must be carried out on sloping terrains, especially those that are broken and/or subject to intense rains.
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3.1.5. Vegetational buffer zones

- Vegetational buffer zones must be maintained and protected next to rivers, streams and lakes, as well as zones exposed to erosion.



- A living fence or border strip of trees and shrubs along roadways and other borders must be maintained.
- The buffer strips must be at least 5 meters wide on each side of streams and 10 meters wide along rivers, and be composed of natural vegetation in order to provide habitat to certain animal species.

3.2. Processing

- The processing of Bird Friendly® coffee - whether done as a "natural" (dry process) or as a "mild" (washed) - must be separated from all other coffees, including those that are certified organic."
- The depulping machine must be cleaned before depulping "Bird Friendly®" coffee.

3.3. Drying

- "Bird Friendly®" coffee must be dried in lots separate from those of any other kind of coffee to thus guarantee its integrity and prevent any mixing.

3.4. Packaging

- Only natural fibre packaging that has not been previously used to keep synthetic chemical products may be employed.

3.5. Storage

- "Bird Friendly®" coffee must be stored in clean bags on wooden platforms, properly separated from any kind of coffee that is not "Bird Friendly®".

3.6. Labeling

- The bags of coffee must be marked with the acronym "BF" to be able to identify them on sight as "Bird Friendly®".

3.7. Transportation

- During the transport one must guarantee that the vehicle is clean and has not transported synthetic chemical products or other products that would affect physical and organoleptic integrity of the "Bird Friendly®" coffee.
- If "Bird Friendly®" coffee is transported along with any other coffee, physical separation of lots must be guaranteed.



3.8. Records

- Registers for “Bird Friendly®” coffee must be kept separate. These must include information about the quantity of shade-grown coffee harvested and sold.

3.9. Access

- The operator must allow the certification body sub-contracted by the SMBC in order to carry out the inspection of the unit to have access to the unit, facilities and accounting records, and provide all the information needed to carry out an inspection.

3.10. Obligation to provide information

- The operator must inform the certification body sub-contracted by the SMBC about any change made to the production unit.

4. Criteria to be fulfilled by the processing unit (mill, roaster) and marketing unit (importer, exporter)

4.1. Storage

- The physical separation and proper identification of the lots of “Bird Friendly®” coffee from any other type of coffee handled in the unit must be guaranteed.

4.2. Processing

- No synthetic chemical product shall be used for processing
- Processing of “Bird Friendly®” coffee must be carried out in complete runs, separated physically or in time from similar operations carried out on non-“Bird Friendly®” coffee.
- If the operations to process “Bird Friendly®” coffee are not carried out frequently, the SMBC or, failing that, the certification body hired for the inspection, must be informed in advance.

4.3. Packaging

- Only clean packaging that has not previously been used to keep synthetic chemicals and that does not compromise the organic, physical or organoleptic quality of the product can be used.
- Roasted coffee must only be packaged in packages destined for food products.
- Packaging must be properly sealed in order to prevent the substitution of its content.

4.4. Labeling

- Labeling must allow an immediate identification of the nature of the coffee, that is to say, its “Bird Friendly®” quality. Millers must mark the bags of “Bird Friendly®” coffee with the acronym “BF®”.

4.5. Transportation

- During transport one must guarantee that the vehicle is clean and has not transported synthetic chemical products that put at risk the organic, physical and organoleptic quality of the product
- If “Bird Friendly®” coffee is transported together with any other kind of coffee, the physical separation of the lots must be guaranteed.

4.6. Records

- Registers providing information about the origin, nature and quantity/ lot of “Bird Friendly®” coffee that enters the processing unit, and about those receiving the “Bird Friendly®” coffee that leaves the unit must be kept.
- A copy of the certificate of “Bird Friendly®” coffee must be kept.
- Copy of the Bill of Lading must be kept (applies only to marketing agents)

4.7. Access

- The operator must allow the inspection and/or certification body to have access to the unit, facilities and accounting records, and provide all the information needed to carry out an inspection.

4.8. Obligation to provide information

- The operator must inform the inspection body about any change made to the production unit.

5. Use of the logo

The SMBC allows operators who have been certified to use licenses, certificates and marks of conformity in the advertising and/or labelling of the “Bird Friendly®” coffee. Attention must be paid to all situations in which expiration dates are involved.

The SMBC exercises control over the ownership, use and exhibition of licences, certificates and marks of conformity. It also takes the pertinent corrective measures in the case of incorrect references to the certification system or improper use of licences, certificates or marks of conformity found in any advertising material (catalogues, brochures, web-based advertising, etc.)