



# UPDATE!

FAIR FOOD  
FROM ASIA



meet  
our  
farmers



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## FAIR FOOD FROM ASIA

Five years ago, our first (wok) sauces and curry pastes were introduced on Dutch shelves. A lot of work had been done beforehand, and after that new products and new developments in the country of origin, Thailand, came up. In this Update! we offer you a snapshot: where are we now, and where are we heading?

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## colophon

### FAIR FOOD FROM ASIA

#### Fair Trade Original

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‘Cooking and eating  
brings people closer  
together’



## TRAVEL STORY

# ‘The neighbour, the grandmother or the driver: whoever is visiting helps in the kitchen’

I started work at Fair Trade Original as Marketing Manager about a year ago. I soon felt at home in the team in Culemborg, where every day we work together with 22 colleagues to obtain even more fairtrade. But of course I really wanted to travel in order to meet the people who are the main reason of our work.

Then an opportunity came up: in order to build a bridge between the people who eat our products and the people who make them, we wanted to create portraits of the farmers in Thailand. So in 2016 I travelled with a photographer and a journalist to this country where many of our products come from. For me, it was the ultimate opportunity to meet the people we work with, to experience for myself how they live, and to find out what Fair Trade Original means to them.

### A SURPRISING MEETING

As well as visiting cooperatives, we stayed at the house of four farming families, and we talked, cooked and ate a lot with them. But we also ended up experiencing aerobics in the open air, all five of us got on a scooter before sunrise to bring food to the monks, and in bed at night we listened to Thai pop songs sung in honour of a novice monk. In short, it was a surprising and special way to get to know a country and a culture, and above all to experience daily life in the countryside.



### Do you want to cook with our farmers in Thailand too?

At [www.ontmoetonzeeboeren.nl](http://www.ontmoetonzeeboeren.nl) you can find recipes, cooking tips, videos and much, much more.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The urgency of our work at Fair Trade Original was made very clear to me: the life of a fairtrade farmer and her family involves hard work. They work long days both in the fields and at home to keep the family going, but it was great to hear from them in their own words that Fair Trade Original offers them continuity: for the Fair Trade Original products there are fixed quantities for crops to be harvested. They also receive a development premium. The farmers use all this to improve





their quality of life, to support their families and to be able to send their children to school. And you can see and feel that, despite the hard work, they carry out their work with great pleasure and dedication. They have deliberately chosen this life, and they are proud of their achievements. They think it's fantastic that, together with us, they can go further: their prospects for the future are growing and they have more space to enjoy the little things.

#### CONNECTING FACTOR

We laughed a lot, and there was an optimistic atmosphere. One thing is for sure: cooking and eating together brings people closer together. Despite our relatively short time together, we were soon part of the family. Saying goodbye to Nipalin, who grows pineapples for us, was special and emotional. We clicked straight away; Fair Trade Original is our connecting factor. It has brought her a great deal since the very beginning, and she is thankful for that. I was also thankful for the warm welcome and the precious moments with her at home. I'm really looking forward to seeing our fans in the Netherlands being introduced to people like Nipalin.

#### No packets or sachets

Cooking is an important part of daily life in Thailand; families can easily spend hours on it each day. Everything is prepared with fresh ingredients, most of them from their own land. A fun aspect is that whoever is visiting also helps in the kitchen, whether that is the neighbour, the grandmother or the driver. People also seem to know exactly what they are doing. They don't use recipes; they make dishes from their memory. Practically everything gets used, from the head of the fish to its tail and intestines. Our generation in the Netherlands is re-learning this, but here the skill of no-waste cooking has never been forgotten! The many dishes on the table are shared, although the family members cannot often sit down all together at the same time. People come and go as necessary, and anyone can join in. What amazing hospitality!

# ‘WHEN THE FIRST SHIPMENT ARRIVES THERE IS A BIG CELEBRATION’

‘Our product range from Thailand is so successful that we are now looking further afield. Our newest products from Sri Lanka have arrived, and Indonesia is high on the agenda’

Lisette Brouwers, Product Manager of the culinary range at Fair Trade Original, knows better than anyone what is needed for the development of this fairtrade range: ‘From start to finish, the products are produced under fair conditions in the country of origin. The process is almost always long and intensive, so when the first shipment arrives there’s a big celebration.’



**The classic duo of Soy Sauce and Rice Vinegar forms the base for Asian dishes.**

They are all fairtrade and organic. The Soy Sauce is produced with rice instead of wheat, so it is gluten-free.



In 2011 we began very cautiously with six culinary products from Thailand, just to see how they would be received. We soon increased that number.





The Thai pineapple farmers, with whom we have been doing business since 2009, showed that they had more potential:

as well as the large pineapple rings in juice, they also produce soft, sweet mango and pineapple chunks in juice.



As an addition to our basic rice and Tibetan egg noodles, we introduced Thai rice noodles and varieties of rice with an extra bite and nicely colourful.



\* The rice is processed and packaged in Europe; the noodles are produced for us in Thailand and India.

Our current undisputed Number 1 comes from Sri Lanka: coconut milk of the tastiest, creamiest quality.

For a year now we also offer an organic version. Sri Lanka also produces our newest flavours: two aromatic curry pastes, created according to an Indian recipe.



# GREEN CURRY WITH PUMPKIN, CHICKEN AND GROUND RICE

To make a green curry for her Dutch guests, rice farmer Wilawan used all sorts of exotic leaves and a handful of roasted rice. We have adapted the recipe slightly to create a simpler version, and our recipe uses our own green curry paste. Tasty and simple!



SERVES 4



40 MINUTES

## INGREDIENTS

1 organic pumpkin (ca. 500 g)  
4 chicken thighs  
3 tbsp sunflower oil  
200 g haricots verts  
3 tbsp sticky rice or sushi rice  
½ bunch fresh coriander

## AND FROM FAIR TRADE ORIGINAL:

1 sachet Green Curry Spice Paste  
400 ml Coconut Milk  
Wholegrain Rice

## PREPARATION

1. Peel the pumpkin with a peeler, then halve it and remove the seeds. Cut the pumpkin into pieces. In Thailand they prepare the pumpkin complete with its skin, after cleaning it well.
2. Cut the chicken into pieces.
3. Heat 3 tbsp sunflower oil in a large pan and fry the chicken with the curry paste.
4. Add the coconut milk and pumpkin pieces and bring to the boil.
5. Add the haricots verts and simmer on a medium heat for 10-15 minutes, until the vegetables are al dente.
6. While that pan is simmering, pre-heat a frying pan and roast the sticky rice on a high heat until it is golden brown. Stir constantly to ensure that the rice does not burn.
7. Finely grind the rice in a mortar and add it to the curry.
8. Serve the curry with fresh coriander and rice.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- After a month of ripening in the field, a green pepper becomes a red pepper.
- There are many different varieties of chilli peppers, which all taste different and have different levels of spiciness.
- A substance called capsaicin is what causes the hot sensation.
- Hot peppers make you sweat, which cools your body down.
- You can add coconut milk to compensate for over-spicy flavours.
- You shouldn't try to quench hot peppers in your mouth with water (quite the contrary, in fact!), but with a bit of rice or a prawn cracker.





# OUR SPICY METHOD

The supply chain of Fair Trade Original

## SAMBAL OELEK

KOOKIE  
local consultant

MARTIN BOON  
Development manager



1.

In Thailand on the road.  
Martin and Kookie bridge the gap  
between the local processor and  
the farmers.



2.

The chilli farmers unite in a farmer group  
to meet Fairtrade standards. This is mainly  
about strengthening their organisation and  
sustainable agriculture. As an incentive,  
a development premium is payed already in  
the process.

KHUN ORAPIN  
Chilli farmer



3.

First a trader, nowadays a pepper farmer.  
Khun Orapin is fond of chilli peppers. 'They  
make you sweat nicely and they make you  
strong. Peppers are also rich in vitamin C',  
says Orapin.



### PEANUT SAUCE

Put to taste the next Fair  
Trade Original ingredients  
in a saucepan:

- Peanut butter
- Soy sauce
- sambal Badjak
- Cane sugar

stir well with a dash of milk  
and heat.

Enjoy!

4.

Once KRS Spicy Food, the local processing plant,  
is fairtrade certified, the production of sambal  
starts. The sambal travels from Thailand to the  
Netherlands in a jar. The first production of fair-  
trade sambal was a world scoop!

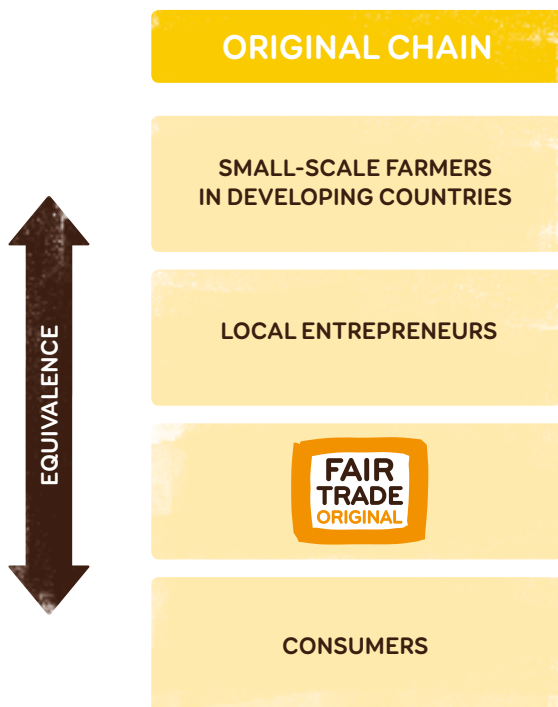
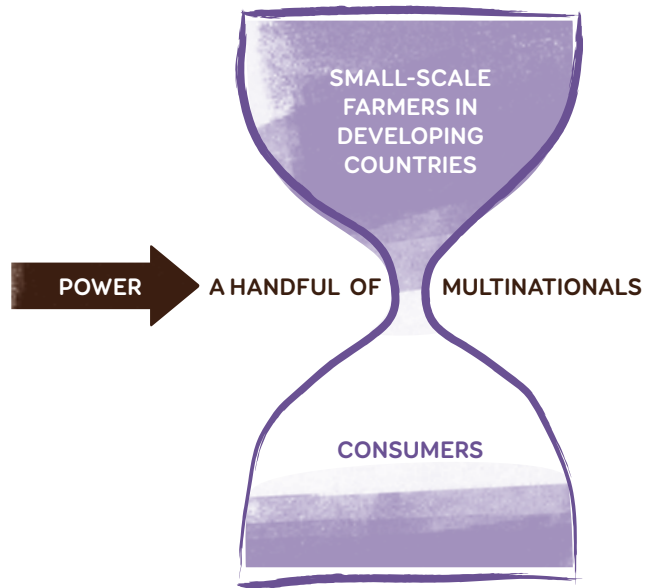


This is the very very first fairtrade sambal ever in the whole wide world!

# WHAT DOES THE WORD 'FAIRTRADE' MEAN IN OUR NAME FAIR TRADE ORIGINAL?

For us the goal of fairtrade is to set up a transparent and fair supply chain from the farmer to the consumer, and to realise a balanced distribution of added value to all parties concerned.

Today this is not the case in conventional supply chains, with all its consequences. A small number of very large multinationals control business. Small-scale farmers in developing countries are not equal partners in this. They have a poor bargaining position and often can barely survive. Their children prefer leaving to the big city rather than to do hard work for low income. They are not motivated to take over the farm.



## WHAT DO WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

Fair Trade Original improves the position of smallholder farmers by setting up radically different supply chains, according to the Original Chain method. We want to make rural life really worthwhile, also for future generations. We do this by establishing new supply chains whereat our products are made entirely in the country of origin. The local entrepreneurs we work with, buy ingredients directly from fairtrade farmers to produce our fair food. Ready for sale: that stimulates the local economy

And there is more. We help our local entrepreneurs to increase their export market. Because the more fairtrade products they sell, the more sales the fairtrade farmers are able to realise as well.

**Our cooperation with the company KRS Spicy Food and the farmers of Sisaket in Thailand is a good example of an Original Chain with social impact.**





# HOW DID WE PROCEED WITH OUR FOOD PRODUCTS FROM ASIA?

OUR METHOD	ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
BUILD A SUPPLY CHAIN	<p><b>2008: Fair Trade Original</b> &gt; starts developing fairtrade Asian food. Search for, cooperation with:</p> <p>Local company &gt; implementation fairtrade guidelines; agreed quality standards and ambitions</p> <p>Farmers &gt; follow training fairtrade guidelines; growing new crops</p>	<p>Total investment build-up supply chain until 2016: € 160,000</p> <p><b>KRS Spicy Food:</b> Fairtrade certified family business; produces curry pastes, (wok) sauces, sambal</p> <p>Foundation <b>Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group</b>; grows <b>9</b> Fairtrade certified ingredients in 2016</p>
DEVELOP PRODUCTS	<p>Development of recipes, having tests on taste and quality controls in the Netherlands and Thailand</p> <p>KRS Spicy Food and farmers increase % Fairtrade ingredients</p>	<p>Fair Trade Original introduces Asian product range, including world's first Fairtrade sambal.</p> <p><b>9</b> = all Fair Trade Original products carry Fairtrade label</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Farmers and processors fix their prices; farmers improve democratic decision-making and work on cooperation and farm management</p>	<p>Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group: grows from <b>20</b> to <b>35</b> Fairtrade farmers. Fairtrade premium development is well spent</p>
SELL	<p><b>2011:</b> introduction Asian product range in Dutch stores: AH is the first supermarket to put the products on their shelves</p> <p>Fair Trade Original together with retail: promotions with products &gt; <b>18</b> days on food markets with wok bike &gt; more people taste the products</p> <p>In collaboration with Fair Trade Original KRS Spicy Food presents itself on the food fair SIAL in Paris (2014 and 2016)</p>	<p><b>4.3 million</b> units of Fair Trade Original products are sold by KRS Spicy Food (2011-2016) in supermarkets, Fairtrade shops, online.</p> <p>Sales increase</p> <p>KRS Spicy Food sells to fairtrade buyers in Sweden, Switzerland, Hong Kong among others</p>
IMPACT	<p><b>2016:</b> Impact survey by Avance with all stakeholders in Thailand</p>	<p>KRS Spicy Food: Fairtrade sales: <b>8%</b> of total turnover &gt; investments pay back.</p> <p>Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sells <b>62 tons</b> of fairtrade vegetables and herbs.</li><li>• fairtrade premium: <b>15%</b> on top of purchase price</li></ul> <p>Fairtrade premium increases -&gt; farmers work with more environment awareness, strengthen their organization, have more confidence in the future.</p>

FOR MORE IMPACT, TURN TO THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO MEET OUR FARMERS IN THAILAND AND TO LEARN HOW THEY THINK THEIR WELFARE HAS INCREASED THROUGH FAIRTRADE.

# MEET OUR FARMERS

Here you can meet our farmers in Thailand who are at the heart of Fair Trade Original products. They are all entrepreneurial women, with a great deal of spirit!



## **KHUN ORAPIN** The red chilli lady

As a pepper farmer, Khun Orapin is part of the Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group, an entrepreneurial group of farmers who have been growing fairtrade green and red chilli peppers since 2012 - you can find their peppers in dishes such as our curry pastes. Orapin lives with her husband Sukon and their three grown-up sons in Sisaket, in north-eastern Thailand.

The secret to their successful marriage? 'Her rice wine', grins Sukon. He thinks she is the best cook in the village, and she also works as a cook for ceremonies. Cooking makes Orapin happy: tasting the food, enjoying the aromas. This creative cook follows her instincts. 'Thai people', she explains, 'always put mushrooms in soup, even though they are much tastier when fried. Then you get a crispy coating while the inside stays soft.'

### **ON A JOURNEY**

Now she also has a regular weekly income, which means that there is also some money for savings, or to invest in a new car. Orapin's dream is one day to be able to live entirely from the sale of chilli peppers. She would also love to travel, to sit in an airplane. It would be amazing if she could bring Thai culinary secrets to the Dutch. What she didn't know at the time of our visit was that her dream would come true as soon as April. That is when Orapin will visit the Netherlands, at the invitation of Fair Trade Original. In the past, Orapin worked mainly on her own; now she trades as part of a group and she feels that she is strengthened by trading collectively.



### **Contribution of Fair Trade Original Stronger together**

Partly thanks to her participation in a fairtrade group, Orapin has been able to reduce the amount of pesticide used in the cultivation of chillies dramatically (100% organic cultivation is not yet possible) and all her sons can now study, something that was impossible for the previous generation.

### **Polite**

Khun is a polite form of address that is always used in front of someone's name in Thailand, to show respect for that person. If you know the person well or if you are a member of the family, you do not need to use Khun.





## **KHUN ORACHAN**

### **The spice lady**

**Khun Orachan studied agricultural sciences and grows spices such as galangal, ginger and turmeric. She also used to work as a teacher in a school, but since she became a member and the secretary of the Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group in 2012, this was difficult to combine. She still teaches, but now she does it in her own learning centre, where she teaches other farmers about cultivation, planning and - not least - how to sell their products.**

#### **GREEN OASIS**

We walk from the fishpond to the organic mushroom nursery, and take a look at the greenhouse where the spices grow. From time to time Orachan disappears into the forest, to reappear from the foliage with all sorts of edible things, from the most beautiful galangal tubers with the longest stems to all sorts of plants unknown to us in the Netherlands. Her most important products are galangal, ginger, garlic, shallots and turmeric. Here they all grow abundantly together, and there is a good reason for that: 'It's about keeping everything in balance', Orachan says. That is the message she conveys in her learning centre, and she is also going to teach it to her daughters. Will they follow in her footsteps? 'I hope so, but it's more important that they find their own way.'

#### **Contribution of Fair Trade Original Environmentally friendly**

Orachan tells us that Fair Trade Original has supported her group from the start. 'Without you, we could never have existed.' Fairtrade is a good alternative for small farmers who can come together in an association. That enables them to plan collectively, and to avoid growing the same crops as their fellow farmers, which puts a lot of pressure on the price. Their working conditions have improved enormously, they work in a more environmentally friendly way and the agreed prices are clearer. Part of the fairtrade premium they receive is spent on training and making organic fertilisers.





## **KHUN WILAWAN**

### **Rice friend**

**Together with her husband and her son Aon, Khun Wilawan grows rice in north-eastern Thailand. They live in Surin province, on the border with Cambodia. Wilawan began cultivating organic rice in 2001, when she also joined the fairtrade cooperative Ricefund Surin. She grows several different varieties of rice.**

We visit the organic rice cooperative where Wilawan is a member. A young and enthusiastic team works there, and they teach us about processes such as how to make white rice from wholegrain rice (which is actually fairly simple: you grind the rice in a special mill) and how a nutritious rice bran oil is pressed out of the leftover shells and sprouts. Later in the day, when we sit down at the table with the whole group (that is to say, we sit on mats with countless bowls in front of us filled with pumpkin curry, spiced fish paste with coconut, laab and other tasty dishes), Wilawan and her son tie friendship bracelets around our wrists. 'Welcome!'

#### **GEN MARKET**

Early the next day, we arrive at the Green market, which is almost unique for this part of Thailand: they only sell organic products. There is such a great atmosphere here! There is a lot of space, the stalls are set up on the grass and a Thai musician does a reasonable Bob Dylan impersonation. The visitors clearly have more to spend.

Wilawan's son Aon is selling fried bananas, while Wilawan sits on an crate and cuts fruit: 'This market has brought me a lot of good things, including an average extra weekly income of 3,000 baht (around € 80).'



### **Contribution of Fair Trade Original Independent investment**

Now that Wilawan is a member of the rice cooperative, she receives her money sooner and profits from the fairtrade premium. She no longer has to borrow money, and she can invest independently in a tractor or make financial contributions to community projects. Wilawan doesn't have much free time, but whenever she can she enjoys gardening, and she is planning to plant banana trees soon.





## KHUN NIPALIN

### Our pineapple queen

Khun Nipalin is so much associated with pineapples that she almost has a pineapple crown growing out of her head. As a thirteen-year-old girl she proudly brought in her first harvest, which she had watched grow over 12 months from something tiny into large, golden yellow fruit. Now the 34-year-old is on the Board of Directors of the Fairtrade Pineapple Growers Group, a group of local pineapple farmers.

Nipalin is a self-made woman, entrepreneurial, ambitious and socially committed. She lives with her husband, two sons of 10 and 13 and her mother in the Samroi yod district, a few hours' drive from Bangkok and a little way south into the peninsular part of Thailand. As well as pineapples, Nipalin and her husband also grow mangos there – in 2014 this was also canned and added to the Fair Trade Original range. When we arrive, in addition to the family, the welcome committee consists of many dogs and cats of all shapes and sizes.

### ONTO THE SCOOTER

Nipalin and her mother spend a lot of time cooking; it can keep them busy for hours. When you consider that, in order to make the coconut milk for the curry, the coconuts are first cut from the tree and then cleaned, grated and pressed, you can understand how quickly time can pass here. The funny thing is that eating the end product takes no time at all! Nipalin puts all the ingredients for noodle soup on the table for us, and then everyone puts their own dish together. Ten minutes or so later, everyone has left the table. The housework calls, and Grandma is off to teach aerobics in a nearby open-air school, then at around 9 pm the lights go out. At 4 am they flicker back on and the cooking begins for the monks. Mango with sticky coconut rice and curry with pineapple and roast pork are put into plastic bags. 'Right, onto the scooter', grins Nipalin, and we all take the road to visit the monks while the sun has barely risen.

### Contribution of Fair Trade Original Going to school

Nipalin's parents had to choose which of their two daughters could study, and in the end they chose Nipalin's sister. But Nipalin doesn't regret it: she's proud of what she's achieved and she wants to work towards sustainable agriculture, both for herself and for future generations. She has worked for seven years as a fairtrade fruit farmer. Fair Trade Original played an important role in establishing her farm, which built up a good relationship. Both of her sons can go to school. Thanks to the fairtrade premium, the school has been able to buy new musical instruments, and now Nipalin's younger son plays the Kong Wong, a collection of gongs formed into a circle.

# MARTIN BOON:

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**'I see myself as a drop on the hotplate, which causes a lot of sizzles.'**

**'I'm a drop on the hotplate, but I'm a drop that makes a lot of sizzles.'** Martin Boon has been committed to fairtrade for 25 years now. The agricultural engineer, who has his teaching certificate, still sees his work as Development Manager at Fair Trade Original as a real challenge. **'Setting up a supply chain for fairtrade coconut milk in Sri Lanka, getting production going in Thailand, coping with drought in pineapple cultivation... The work is never dull. I play the role of a bridge; I want to bring farmers and producers together.'**

Farmers are praised for achieving fairtrade certification, but 'How are they going to keep it up? I always want to see development plans – the farmers have to keep moving forward.' He wants to emphasise that fairtrade is not an easy ride. 'Farming communities have to meet the fairtrade requirements, but within three to six years they also have to achieve results in sustainable production processes such as combating erosion.'

## **GOLDEN GIRL OF THAILAND**

How does Fair Trade Original take the first step in the development of a new product? It always begins with the search for a good processor, someone who is interested in fairtrade. Manasnan Pongjayavanij ('Call me Kookie'), Martin's permanent partner in the fairtrade business in Thailand, soon gets involved in the process. For example, she makes contact with a pineapple producer and will get in touch with the pineapple farmers. 'I call her the golden girl of Thailand. We keep each other going. Value chains are made stronger step by step and you have to keep believing in the process 'Kookie is often saying "We need more tissues!" when process gets stuck.'



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## **EVERYONE WAS IN TEARS!**

There are always bumps along the way. 'To get the chilli peppers to Bangkok the first time, a pick-up truck was loaded up for a journey of eight hours in the burning sun. On the way, the golden fly ate the chillies, with the result that half of the peppers was rejected by the processor. Everyone was in tears! That's when we step in to improve the transport, putting the peppers in crates, packed in sacks with ventilation holes. The golden fly has to be countered, but only according to strict rules. You see the quality improving in step by step, due to the personal development of the farmers and the professionalisation of the chain.'

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## **ESSENCE**

In Martin's eyes, the essence of fairtrade is to bring the world between the farmer on the land and the consumer at the table into a better balance. But he emphasises that setting up fairtrade trading supply chains is no easy feat. 'Take the chilli peppers in Thailand, for example. We only succeeded with the fourth farmers' group we approached, Sisaket. Fairtrade exists to strengthen small farmers and cooperatives. The management within the farmers' cooperative has to be sound, and the total production should generate sufficient fairtrade development premium in order to make the set-up sustainable.' There were more meetings with Sisaket, training was given and projections on sales and related production were discussed. 'It's good to see trust grow.' Transparency about the supply chain is another condition to do fairtrade business, and traceability is essential. For the pineapples, only one of the seven companies that were approached was prepared to be





transparent in the chain, and to indicate which farmers produce the pineapples.

#### THE FAIRTRADE CERTIFICATE ON THE STALL

The next step is Fairtrade certification, which is especially complicated for composite products such as the curry pastes. 'We began work in Thailand despite the fact that at first not all the ingredients carried the fairtrade certificate. The farmers and the processor are all aware of the value of the fairtrade label to their business, so they are prepared to invest in it. They receive the fairtrade price and the development premium and the independent label makes them even more attractive to other clients from Europe. I always say: you shouldn't just do it for us but for yourselves. When producers go to the international food fair in Paris, they can demonstrate the fairtrade certificate on their stall.'

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#### SUCCESS STORY

Pineapples are one of Martin's success stories. 'After we helped in the pioneering phase in 2007, the factory significantly expanded its client base. Today, its fairtrade canned pineapple is exported to Germany, Switzerland, Italy and even Mexico. The farmer group has grown from 20 farmers in 2007 to 55 farmers in 2015. They learn a lot from each other and have grown stronger as a group. And - also very important - the development premium has shot up!'

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# GOOD QUESTION!

Where does the money I pay in the shop for a packet of Green Curry Spice Paste actually go?



\* 8 of the 14 ingredients are fairtrade = 70% of the total volume





**This edition of Update! focuses on the results we have realised through our trade efforts with the farmers and processors in Thailand. We call this 'impact', and there are many good questions to ask about it:**

### **How does Fair Trade Original measure the fairtrade benefits to the farmers?**

Our ambition is to realise a positive impact for farmers, their families and the local community, with the ultimate goal of increasing their prosperity. To gain more insight into how successful we are in this ambition, we brought in Avance, an agency that specialises in impact measurement, to carry out research in Thailand.

### **Have the pepper farmers seen any progress?**

Among other results, the research shows that fairtrade sales by the farmers in the Sisaket Fairtrade Farmer Group has increased. In 2016, we purchased 62 tons of vegetables and spices from them. The group, which consists of 35 farmers (almost half of whom are women), has grown into a good and reliable first link of the international supply chain. The fixed price agreements and the purchase security provide them with a stable income. On top of that, as a group they also receive a 15% development premium on top of their prices, which they use to make important investments in their operational management. They feel more connected to each other and to their partners in the value chain.

### **So it's all going great for the farmers?**

No, not everything is going as well as expected. The study also taught us some important lessons. In the first year, farmers who had only been members of the cooperative for a short time had to cope with disappointing harvests of crops that were new to them, and this caused their income to fall short of expectations. The influx of new farmers clearly demands more guidance than there has been in the past, something we will focus on more in the future.

### **Are the farmers satisfied with the price they receive?**

Every year the farmers negotiate a price agreement with the processor regarding the price for their peppers and other vegetables and spices. This price is stable, but the farmers have indicated that for certain crops it is too low. Disappointing harvests caused by drought, as well as high costs for all the farm activities that have to be undertaken before the products go to the processor, bring about a situation where some farmers mentioned their revenue of growing the crops is too low. That is why Fair Trade Original, together with all the parties concerned and the University of Ubon, has begun an investigation into the costs and benefits of sustainable production. Initial results show that some members of the cooperative farm noticeably better than other farmers who are new in the system. The good thing here is that farmers have shown that they are prepared to learn from one another.

### **What are the next steps?**

Five years after its introduction, Fair Trade Original's Asian range is a success. A great deal has been set in motion within the production chains and the range is expanding fast. But there is still a lot to be done. Now we have the impact research results, we can work together with all parties – both in Thailand and in other regions – towards even better results. From here, together with the various links in the chain, we are going to formulate new goals in our development plans and decide what tools we need to achieve them. With everything we know now, we are really keen to enter the next phase.

**HAVE A QUESTION?  
SEND IT TO  
INFO@FAIRTRADE.NL**





**FAIR  
TRADE  
ORIGINAL**

‘By developing  
international supply chains,  
we are making fair food and drink  
available to everyone’

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