

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

Newsletter of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association

June/July 2009

PO Box 5436 Kailua Kona Hawaii 96745 USA

www.konacoffeefarmers.org

info@konacoffeefarmers.org

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Presidents Message..... | 1 |
| Kona Coffee Showcased In Seattle..... | 1 |
| Organic Matter is Queen..... | 1 |
| How to Assess Coffee Quality..... | 2 |
| New Brochure..... | 2 |
| Get Connected – by C. Smith..... | 2 |
| Letters to the Editor..... | 2 |
| Kona Coffee Buns?..... | 2 |
| Editor – Christine Sheppard | |

KCFA at Work for You

By your KCFA President Bruce Corker
KCFA is sending representatives to two important meetings that address the promotion and protection of specialty agricultural products.

KCFA member Harold Hoogasian will be our delegate to the General Assembly of **OriGIn**, June 24-26 in Teruel, Spain. OriGIn (Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network) is a worldwide organization of agricultural producer associations (Champagne, Colombia Coffee, Parma Ham, Idaho Potatoes, etc.) dedicated to the protection of regional product identities.

I will be the KCFA representative to the **Agile Ag Summit** at the University of Arkansas, June 30-July 2. Among the issues to be addressed at this conference will be US Place-of-Origin protections.

Both events address issues important to the protection of the name and reputation of Kona coffee. We look forward to reports from our delegates.

100% Kona goes to Washington State

The KCFA has been invited to give a tasting presentation at the Burke Museum in Seattle, on June 27th, as part of the Burke Museum's exhibit, "**Coffee - The World in Your Cup**". The KCFA event, hosted by three Kona growers—Dexter Washburn, Motter Snell, and Mary

Lou Moss--will include tastings of brewed coffee from Kona farms, as well as information on the history and cultivation of our unique coffee.

Dexter, a prize-winning Kona Coffee farmer, attended the exhibit in May and realized Kona Coffee was not represented. Following his discussions with the curator of the exhibit, the KCFA was invited to make the June 27 presentation.

Burke Museum's website page is washingt.on.edu/burkemuseum/coffee/tasting.php

Organic Matter is Queen!

This was the message from Dr. Jonathan Deenik at the recent KCFA soil workshop on May 28th. Whether you are an organic farmer or use chemical fertilizers, the addition and management of soil organic matter is essential for coffee quality and production.

And, contrary to popular opinion, we do have soil in Kona, maybe not what people generally think of as soil, but soil nonetheless. Our soils are relatively young histosols on pahoehoe. that are fertile if well managed in terms of fertilizer and moisture control. Histosols are lightly weathered soils evolved from basalt, with generally high organic content. Within the Kona histosols there are many sub-set variations in soil structures. "Rocky muck" is a type many are familiar with, so study the more detailed Kona soil maps to figure out what you have on your farm and how best you can manage it.**

Space limits the repetition of much of the wide ranging and very informative classroom session, but among many interesting highlights for me were: 1. Kona soil should not be acidic but fertilizer practices can make it so - liming to reduce acidity has a limited effect as it generally affects only the upper soil layer, but

again queen organic matter will help reduce overall acidity. Stable organic origin humus is essential for the cation exchange of nutrients from the soil to the roots.

2. To grow coffee well it needs essential plant nutrients, so it is important to know what naturally exists in the Kona soil type, what changes over time, and what needs to be added. Visual signs of nutrient deficiencies are useful, but soil and leaf analyses are essential to determine the exact conditions on your farm. There are well documented target soil and leaf test levels for coffee. These tests are available through the good offices of CTAHR, please contact Virginia Easton Smith at vsmith@hawaii.edu



Dr. Deenik addressing the group

After lunch the group decamped for a field discussion at Kona Mountain Coffee by farm manager Raven Bolas, where additional useful information was presented.

Mahalo to Dr. Deenik of UH Manoa, to Virginia Easton Smith of CTAHR for co-sponsoring the event, to Raven for the field workshop, and Robert Barnes for organizing the event. Remember "organic matter is Queen". Editors note: Mahalo to Ken Sheppard for this report.

** The NRCS website at soils.usda.gov contains a wealth of information, but it is not an easy site to navigate. The KCFA is working with Reese Libby from NRCS to establish on-line maps of the Kona area with the soil types specified. We appreciate the work NRCS are doing, and will keep our members informed of developments.

How to Assess Coffee Quality

Shawn Steiman is author of The Hawai'i Coffee Book: A Gourmet's Guide from Kona to Kaua'i and owner of Coffea Consulting. His company offers quality assessment services and education. coffeaconsulting.googlepages.com

By now, we've discovered that a cup of coffee can be pretty amazing and that it is important to understand that amazingness. But how do we assess the quality of coffee?

Many people will say that all you have to do is drink the coffee to know the coffee: brew the coffee using your standard method, pour it into your favorite cup and taste it (where *tasting* is drinking conscientiously). While this simple method sounds reasonable, it is actually inadequate. People are thinking, feeling, complex beings. While these traits may set us apart from the rest of the creatures on Earth, they get in the way of our objectivity and ability to be instruments. When you taste coffee, you bring a slew of emotional, intellectual and psychosocial baggage with you, even though you don't realize it. It is not just you and the coffee, but you and your world. You simply can't tease out the coffee and objectively evaluate the brew.

The best way to evaluate coffee quality is by cupping. Cupping is the formal method of experiencing coffee that requires minimal gear and little effort to learn. However, it takes a great deal of experience and thought to perfect the skill.

In cupping, we don't drink the coffee from a mug. Instead, we slurp it and spit it out. We use no fancy brewing equipment, just hot water, bowls, and a spoon. We don't try to memorize anything, rather, we record our discoveries on a score sheet. Cupping is designed to be different from our usual coffee experience.

By using a method of coffee ingestion that is so completely foreign to our regular experience, we create a space that is reserved only for analytical thinking. When we

cup, we aren't thinking about breakfast or a meeting or our friends. We are concentrating on the acts or slurping and spitting and the organoleptic experience wrought by the coffee.

Cupping isn't easy. People don't often dissect their organoleptic experiences. Thus, describing coffee by its characteristics and descriptors is challenging. It takes lots of practice to not only put words to those experiences but to understand the range of those experiences. Fortunately, anybody can become skilled at cupping. It just requires time, effort, patience, and passion for coffee.

Editors Note: Mahalo Shawn !

New Brochures



Photo by Karen Ellison

KCFA has GREAT new brochures! And we are offering them to our members to buy for only 5 cents each. A great information piece to send to your customers. Contact info@konacoffeefarmers.org.

Get Connected

By your KCFA webmistress
Random, only random. The "Buy Direct From Farmer" listings are now totally random to be extremely fair to all. Check out the [Classifieds](#) as we have some great new listings! eg. 1. Farm work exchange (90% you and 10% them) for the right person... 2. Person wants a steady supply of Kona coffee going to Korea... Don't miss these opportunities! We are compiling data for a Members Only page entitled **WhatIsKonaWorth** giving cherry, parchment, roasted, wholesale and retail prices to our members to encourage free market competition. Should be available before the month is out and we will need your help eventually, to make it the very best.

Site Stats: Most popular document read, was the May Newsletter - of course. During the last month, our KCFA website has gotten — take a breath — 12,044 "page views"! Yikes. The various Farm Searches get the most hits of all. Hope you are getting sales! Let us know how it's working for you by writing to info@KonaCoffeeFarmers.org. Send suggestions or questions. And make your "Buy Direct From Farmer" listing at its best for Tuesdays, because that is our site's favorite viewing day.

Mahalo, Ceia

Letters to the Editor

Ken Sheppard's article on "Pulper Kindness" in the April 2009 Independent Voice was the perfect time to remind us all to get the machinery in good working order for the next season. I used his article as a detailed checklist to overhaul a Denlab pulper thoroughly and get it running like a Swiss watch.

Mahalo, Ken (and to you other experienced KCFA members) for sharing your knowledge with those of us who are starting out. It is really appreciated.

Paul Uster, Mokulele Farms

We welcome your letters to info@KonaCoffeeFarmers.org, with Letter to the Editor as the subject.

Kona Coffee Buns?

BikiniKitchen.com has a tanning lotion containing Kona coffee. Booty Butter Tanning Lotion contains 100 percent, all-natural ingredients from the islands of Hawaii. It says its Kona coffee extract ingredient, which is grown exclusively in Kona, "speeds up the tanning process. Plus, Kona coffee is also renowned for its ability to mend broken skin, soothe irritation and revitalize skin cells." Booty Butter also includes Hawaiian Kukui Nut Oil, Macadamia Nut Oil and Aloe Vera. Amazing where you can find Kona coffee.....

Join or Renew Today!

Find information and join online at www.konacoffeefarmers.org