



This year, we are pleased to highlight a collection of exquisite coffees from individual farmer members of the Yirgacheffe Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union, and offer them to our customers as microlots. This lot comes from a producer named Mesele Haile, whose 12-hectare farm comprises several different heirloom Ethiopian coffee varieties, including Wolisho, Kudhume, and Dega.

Along with several other farmer-members of YCFCU, Mesele Haile has invested in making improvements in his production by building a micromill, and learning advanced techniques to prune and maintain his plants. The addition of a mill has transformed Mesele's business: Where he formerly tendered his cherry to local cooperative mills, now he is able to better control the harvesting, processing, and fermentation of coffees from his land.

Mesele's coffee is picked ripe, depulped and sorted, and then dried on raised beds over two weeks, a longer drying period than usual, due to the fact that the coffees are only spread on the beds at certain times of the day. The slower drying, Mesele believes, contributes to the fruity, sweet complexity his coffee has.

ID# 7696

Origin	Ethiopia
Region	Adame (Suke), Yirgacheffe
Variety	Heirloom Ethiopian varieties
Altitude	1835-1839 masl
Proc. Method	Fully Washed

The YCFCU (Yirgacheffe Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union) was organized in 2002 in an effort to establish stability amid fluctuating coffee prices. Recognized under the national labor union, the YCFCU represents more than 43,700 farmers over six districts, including Yirgacheffe, Gedeb, Wanago, Dilla Zuria, Bule, and Kochere.

Shortly after the co-op's founding, the Ethiopian government, acting in support of small producers, added coffee into the Ethiopian Commodities Exchange (ECX), ostensibly to allow farmers to get paid for their coffee in a timely manner, among other things. The nature of a commodity exchange is to homogenize a product to sell it at a market price, which makes it impossible to allow for quality premiums to be paid to individual farmers. With this, we saw an overall decline in quality in coffee in Ethiopia.

Cooperatives like YCFCU are exempt from going through the ECX. We work alongside YCFCU to pay premiums for better cherry selection at the washing-station level, to bring back the classic Yirgacheffe profile that was obscured for some years.

From <http://www.yirgacheffeunion.com>: *The Yirgacheffe Coffee Farmers Cooperatives Union (YCFCU), currently represents over 43,794 farmers belonging to more than 300,000 families, and was established in June 2002. Its currently 23 member cooperatives are all located in Gedeo, southern Ethiopia. This area is in a region that is famous for coffee growing in the country. The 62,004 hectares gardens that are dedicated to coffee alone, on average produce 9,000 tons of Yirgacheffe and 3,000 tons of Sidama washed coffee each year. The area also produces 24,000 tons of sun-dried coffee annually.*

The Ethiopian traditional coffee growing method is mainly manifested among the Yirgacheffe coffee growing farmers. While the protection and handling of the coffee is carried out on a manual basis, the development is being done with the use of organic natural fertilizers. Pests are controlled by using the Biological natural means. In this manner, the development work is done through the application of the age-old cultural traditional means rather than the artificial modern pest, insect and weeds control by chemical and fertilizers.

Gallery Mesele Haile - (CBC ET-BIO-140) (GrainPro)

