



Crazy Jack Vanilla Pods stand up against unfair labour claims

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On 14 March 10, The Sunday Times Newspaper released a report about a country that is well known for producing some of the world's highest quality Vanilla in world, Madagascar. This report, entitled '*Bitter Plight of the Vanilla trade children*'¹ exposes a culture of forced and child labour, long working hours and poor wages.

The UK importers for Organic Fairtrade Vanilla, supplying Crazy Jack Organic² comment, "Unfortunately in part this is true, child labour is one of the big problems with vanilla in Madagascar and the developing world. It exists in pockets of Madagascar and tends to happen around harvest time on family farms."

These issues are being addressed by UK importers through a focus on (a) organic agriculture and (b) Fairtrade vanilla, but the fight must still go on to further improve the development and prospects of the Malagasy people.

Aware of these big problems facing this island, Community Foods made a conscious decision when sourcing for Crazy Jack to only buy Fair-trade Organic Vanilla pods. Therefore, we source all of our Crazy Jack vanilla from three Fairtrade projects in North Eastern Madagascar, which has about 1000 farmers structured into co-operatives. Employed staffing is low at 60 people, with a large amount of seasonal workers, reaching up to 400 people, and child labour is strictly prohibited. All workers are paid above the minimum Malagasy wage and lunch is provided for free - not deducted from wages. In addition, employees are also provided with work clothes. All employees work 8 hours a day from Monday to Friday and 4 hours on Saturday morning. If additional work is needed, overtime is paid at a higher rate. The working week is no more than 60 hours.

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.³ When buying Fairtrade, you're not only ensuring farmers are being paid a fair wage⁴ but also a Fairtrade premium⁵ is giving to farmers on top of their wage.

The Fairtrade premium from the Madagascan Vanilla has been used in the last year for the following:

- Purchase of land and construction of silos for storage of rice
- The repair of bridges and other small structures
- Improvement of school facilities

"Sometimes, even Fairtrade can seem like a drop in the ocean and more needs to be done," says our UK importers, "but the key is to start taking those small steps towards greater economic stability and social improvements and to halt environmental degradation (stop the slash and burn of the⁶ forests)."

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Notes to Editors

- For further information please contact Theresa Williams, Community Foods Ltd,
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- Community Foods are Britain's experts in the procurement, sale and distribution of organic and natural dried fruits, nuts, seeds, pulses, grains and branded health foods. For more information on Community Foods Ltd, visit www.communityfoods.co.uk

¹ Sunday Times www.timesonline.co.uk

² Community's No. 1 Brand Crazy Jack Organic www.crazyjack.co.uk

³ Fairtrade Foundation www.fairtrade.org.uk

⁴ The Fairtrade minimum price defines the lowest possible price that a buyer of Fairtrade products must pay the producer. The minimum price is set based on a consultative process with Fairtrade producers and traders and guarantees that producers receive a price which covers the cost of sustainable production. When the market price is higher than the Fairtrade minimum price, the market price is payable.

⁵ Money paid on top of the Fairtrade minimum price that is invested in social, environmental and economic developmental projects, decided upon democratically by a committee of producers within the organisation or of workers on a plantation.