



# A fair deal

Kate Holt talks to Kenyan coffee grower **Rose Gathoni**

## ROSE GATHONI

**Age:** 55

**Nationality:** Kenyan

**Location:** Central Province, Kenya

**Profession:** Coffee Farmer for Gikanda

**Most rewarding aspect of my work:** I like knowing that the coffee I am growing is being sold in Marks & Spencer's stores in Great Britain - it makes me proud of my farm.

**Special achievement:** I am now earning a lot from my coffee because we are getting a much better price due to our Fair Trade Status. As a result, all my children have been able to go to college; I am proud that I have been able to send them with money I have earned.

### A day in my life

**MORNING** In the morning I will start work at about 6am, when the sun comes up. I begin the day by milking my cow and will then prepare a cup of coffee and drink it with some cake or porridge. To boil the water I will have to collect some wood for the fire.

I will then go into the coffee fields to see what needs to be done. I have around 120 active coffee bushes and they are all

six years old. They grow on land - which I inherited from my father - that is next to my house. My father was with Gikanda before me and he taught me a lot about running a successful coffee farm.

Depending on the season I will normally weed around the coffee bushes and remove any dead growth to make sure the bushes are healthy. If the coffee is ripe I will pick the coffee cherries. Coffee in its raw state is called 'cherry' because it is a bright red berry. When the coffee isn't ripe I will spray the bushes with insecticide to ensure that they stay healthy. I will sometimes prune some of the branches and also put fertilizer on the soil.

**AFTERNOON** After lunch I will normally do household chores. I have a garden where I grow maize and other vegetables such as tomatoes and sukuma wiki (a local green-leafed vegetable). These plants are for me to eat - if I have

surplus I will sell it, but this isn't often. I am not married but have three children. They are all away at college, but they will often come home for a holiday. When they do there is never enough left to sell!

**EVENING** I like the evening time when my work is over I will sit and listen to the radio, or neighbours may come and visit me.

There are 2700 coffee farmers in the Gikanda Coffee Growing Association (GCCGA), which was awarded Fairtrade status in 2006. Almost 50 per cent of the coffee that the co-operative grows is now Fairtrade.

World Coffee Prices have nearly doubled over the last year and we have been told that Fairtrade is selling much better than normal coffee. So now our co-operative is doing very well, and I am no longer worried about having enough money to support my children.

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### About Marks and Spencer's coffee & Fair Trade in Kenya

Marks & Spencer (M&S) has supported coffee and tea co-operatives, like GCCGA to achieve Fair Trade Status, helping women to achieve much higher prices for their coffee. A new dispensary has been built near Gikanda, partially funded by money donated by the GCCGA and M&S.

