

Tambaya Coffee

Season: 2017/2018

Background: Tambaya is one of 8 wet mills which form Rumukia Farmers Cooperative Society. The wet mill is located in Gakindu Location, Ruthanji Sublocation in Mukurweni Subcounty of Nyeri County in Kenya. Tambaya derives its name from an indigenous tree called Mutambaya which was common in the area during pre-colonial times. The wet mill is nestled between the tributary of Gathanji stream and Gura River, which is the fastest flowing River in Africa. Located in the fertile foothills of Aberdare ranges and Mt. Kenya and at an elevation of 1550m above sea level, Tambaya has consistently produced high quality coffees that have been a delight to many consumers worldwide.

Membership: The wet mill serves 5 villages namely Karega, Mbiuni, Migombeine, Murimo and Gathuuri and has a total membership of 957 active members (239 female and 718 male) and 150 dormant members. Being small holder farmers, majority of the members produce coffee in their family farms usually less than 2 Acres with an average of 175 coffee trees per member. The coffee available is from 920 of these members.

Leadership: The members elect a 5-member management committee through a democratic process every year to manage the affairs of the wet mill and represent them at the co-operative level. This team is currently under the leadership of Mr. Paul Chiira Kariuki. To support the team, a wet mill manager is hired by the members to head the operations of the wet mill. The current manager is Mr. Charles Njue. A team of 6 employees support the factory manager in the wet mill operations.

Production/Yields: In 2017/18, the wet mill produced 325,000kgs of cherries. There has been fluctuation in production year after year which can be attributed to climate change as rain fall patterns have greatly changed. The average production per tree is 3kgs of red ripe coffee cherries per season although there is potential to increase yields with improved agronomic practices.

Variety Grown: Many of the members grow the SL-28 and SL-34 varieties with majority of the trees being SL-28.

Crop and Production Management

Preharvest: The coffee is carefully pruned, fertilized, manured, agronomy services provided for best practices in crop management.

Harvesting: At harvest, the cherries are selectively and individually picked by hand ensuring only the red ripe cherries are harvested. This is a tedious process with pickers rotating among the trees every eight to ten days choosing only those cherries that are at the peak of their ripeness.

Wet Processing: Once the day's harvest has been collected, it is brought to the wet mill. At intake, the quality of the cherry is visually inspected and floaters are removed. A trained team separates the cherries based on color and degree of ripeness. The uniformity in ripeness allows a finer adjustment of the pulping discs and greatly reduces the amount of damaged beans.

The cherries are then pulped and fermented overnight. After fermentation, the parchment coffee goes through the washing channels at least 3 times. The channels grade the parchment quality based on density. The heaviest parchment sinks and is graded as P1. The lighter parchment is graded as P2 and so forth. After washing, the parchment is soaked in tanks for another 24 hours to clean off any remaining mucilage. The parchment is then dried in the sun on raised tables. Depending on weather conditions, this process can take 2-3 weeks and the moisture content is reduced to between 10%-12%. Shade nets are used to cover the parchment during hot periods to allow gentle and consistent drying. In the evening, the wet mill staff cover the coffee with water resistant covers to protect against humidity at night.

Dry Milling: After the parchment has dried, the coffee is then delivered for milling and grading at Rumukia Coffee Mill operated by Rumukia Farmers Cooperative Society. Dry Milling involves hulling (the removal of husk and remaining fruit residue), Polishing (the removal of silver skin that remains on the beans after hulling) and finally cleaning and sorting where the coffee beans go through machines that sort the coffee based on bean density and size. Impurities such sticks, rocks and miscellaneous debris that may have become mixed with the coffee during drying are also removed. The coffee is then screen graded into AA/AB/PB/C/E/T/TT.



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Certifications: Rain Forest Certified. This means that the wet mill has been audited to meet standards that require environmental, social, and economic sustainability (<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/business/agriculture>).

Traceability: Jamii Coffee uses Kenya's unique Out-turn number system for traceability.

Tambaya Coffee Out-turn number: 11RF0001

11 – Received at the Mill in Week 11

RF – The Miller is Rumukia FCS

001 – The coffee was delivery number 1

Available Bags:

AA – 66

AB – 85

PB - 18



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Tambaya Leadership Team