

Developing a Geographical Indication for Arabica Coffee in Bali: Description of the “Terroir” of Kintamani

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SUMMARY

Coffee is in the throes of a crisis caused by surplus production, which has led prices to drop to an all time low. Specialty coffees are weathering the crisis better, among them, the specified-origin coffees. Indeed, their flavour characteristics make them original products that fetch a higher price, as they are much sought-after by roasters and consumers. However, despite of the emergence of these new markets for the specified-origin coffees, there is no real guarantee on the origin at any level of the coffee sector.

The Geographical Indication (GI) is a sign that guarantees the origin of the product, the way it has been produced, and consequently its quality characteristics. We think that GI could be applied to coffee. The development of a GI is mainly based on the identification of the *terroir*. *Terroir* is a French word, which is difficult to translate to English. A *terroir* is a system of complex interactions between a set of operations and techniques practised by man, a cultivated plant and a physical environment to be exploited by a product on which it confers specific original features (Salette et al., 1998). That means that the physical environment is not the only element to be taken into account in defining a *terroir*. Man is another key-word: *terroir* is the expression of a culture and a social organisation.

Kintamani arabica coffee, from Bali, has a great potential for a GI. (1) All the activities of the Balinese from the Kintamani Arabica producing area derived from Hindu philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*. This philosophy led to a farming system in which chemical fertilisers and pesticides are not used. Kintamani Arabica coffee is produced by generalised organic practices. (2) People is organised according to a specific structure: the “Subak Abian”. The “Subak Abian” is in charge of social and religious life. It is also an economic entity which regroups the growers. The “Subak Abian” has the potential to be the basis of the organisation which will support the GI. (3) The Arabica coffee is situated in a well defined environment, the recent areas are 3637 ha located between 8, 17° and 8, 30° South latitude and between 115, 23° and 115, 34° East longitude. The Arabica coffee cultivation becomes very difficult outside that area because of the low altitude or because of the drought which is very long in the eastern side of the Kintamani region. The altitude ranges from 1000 m to 1500 m above sea level. The relief is generally flat, except in the North-West where a typical landscape of terraces can be seen. (4) The Balinese coffee had a very good reputation before the 1950's. Our cup tasting reveals that the Kintamani Arabica coffee has a distinctive characteristic of lemon taste which can explain, in part, this past reputation. We think the reputation of this quality coffee could be recovered through a GI. (5) A quality strategy is being developed in Kintamani region. The picking of only red cherries is strongly recommended and the governmental authorities encourage the wet process. (6) Finally, the Kintamani coffee

growers drink their own coffee. These growers will probably continue to be receptive to the recommendations for the improvement of the quality of a product they appreciate.