

Fat Content: a Quality Indicator for Central America Coffees?

E ALPIZAR¹, P VAAST², B BERTRAND¹

¹Team IRD/CIRAD ‘Genomics and coffee breeding for sustainable production’, Genetrop,
IRD, 911 Av. de Agropolis, BP 5045, 34032 Montpellier, France

²CIRAD, 2477, Av. de Agropolis, BP 5035, 34032 Montpellier, France

SUMMARY

In most major agricultural commodities (i.e. wheat, corn, sugarcane) chemical content analysis is widely used in order to efficiently describe the quality of product on trade between producers and buyers. In several studies in Central America involving different edapho-climatic conditions, crop management practices and varieties, fat content from green coffee beans samples was assessed. Then fat content was correlated with beverage quality by expert judging panels. Results showed that fat content is highly affected by the plant physiological condition. Green coffee from highlands, shade conditions or harvested on plants exhibiting good fruit: leave ratio had higher fat content. Beans with higher fat content showed a reduction on volume increase during roasting and more homogeneous color. In the studies, fat content was higher in samples that showed better beverage quality. In Central America, quality is commonly assessed by cupping or defects classification system of green coffee samples. In future, systematic determination of fat content could complement actual quality appreciation systems and help the roaster to minimize its variation on final blend offer to costumer.