



ETHIOPIA YIRGACHEFFE 1 NATURAL ORGANIC KONGA GRAINPRO

Notes: BLUEBERRY, RASPBERRY, STRAWBERRY, CAMEL

ORIGIN INFORMATION

Grower	Takele Mammo Denbi
Variety	Indigenous heirloom cultivars
Region	Konga, Yirga Chefe, Gedeb District, Gedeo Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, Ethiopia
Harvest	October-January
Altitude	1800 – 2100 masl
Soil	vertisol
Process	Full natural and dried on raised beds
Certifications	Organic

BACKGROUND DETAILS

The creation of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) in 2008 significantly limited farm-level traceability. In a noble effort to reduce nepotism and fraudulent marketing by bad actors in the chain (both of which directly hurt farmers' chances in the market), the Exchange instituted a nationalized system of purely empirical quality analysis. This was achieved by anonymizing coffee deliveries to government-run sensory analysis hubs throughout the country. In these labs, samples would be cupped and the entire lot would then be profiled by region and grade only, for internal auction to exporters. Where all of this backfired was in relationship markets: longtime microlot buyers, like Royal, could risk losing access to very established producer partnerships as their coffees were blinded in the Exchange; and, enterprising coops, unable to show their coffees directly to buyers, found it more difficult to find their coffees a consistent home for the highest value. In response, Royal, with support from select cooperatives,



led the formation of the Single Farmer Lots Program, in order to break off single farmer lots from the larger cooperative blends sold through the ECX, taking custody of these precious coffees through a direct sale. The program is a unique micro-channel of almost unprecedented specificity in coffee supply from Ethiopia. Farmers with the drive and means to sell direct are supported by Royal, and, in turn, our most enthusiastic buyers of Ethiopia coffee have access to a portfolio of single-farm lots, un-diluted by the typical cooperative- and exporter-level consolidations. The Single Farmer Lots Program represents a very sweet end to a chaotic recent chapter in Ethiopia's coffee history, and we think it's a model for what ought to be a generation of start-up relationship farming in Ethiopia's world-famous southern zones. Annual farm visits from Royal CEO Max Nicholas-Fulmer and regular communication with farmers through Haile Andualem, Royal's representative on the ground in Ethiopia, has been an essential component for ensuring that farmers and washing stations are following strict farm management and post-harvest protocols. The results have been increasing cup quality and higher returns for the individual producers that Royal has come to count on for great coffee year after year. Takele Mammo Denbi, at 47 years, is a brand-new participant in the Single Farmer Lots Program this year, but not at all new to the direct export process. Takele is currently stepping down after many years as the Managing Director of the Yirgacheffe Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union, of which his own farm has been a member. Takele has worked closely with Royal over the years helping this program succeed, but to avoid any conflict of interest excluded his personal coffee from the program. Takele cultivated this single farmer lot on his 8-hectare farm in the Konga district, located in the heart of the coveted Gedeo Zone—the narrow section of plateau dense with savvy farmers whose coffee is known as "Yirgacheffe". The Konga cooperative is well-known for its quality, and it's a distinct pleasure having individual farmers from this perennially impressive community to celebrate, not to mention one as dedicated to farmer opportunity as Takele.