



## **ETHIOPIA SIDAMA 3 NATURAL FT ORGANIC MOKANISSA - GRAINPRO**

Notes: PLUM, RED APPLE, WALNUT, BROWN SUGAR, COCOA

### **ORIGIN INFORMATION**

Grower	1492 smallholder farmers organized around the Mokonissa Primary Cooperative
Variety	Local indigenous landraces and heirloom cultivars
Region	Bensa district, Sidama Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, Ethiopia
Harvest	October – December
Altitude	1,700 – 2,000 masl
Soil	Vertisol
Process	Full natural and dried on elevated tables
Certifications	Fair Trade, Organic

### **BACKGROUND DETAILS**

Mokonissa is one of the primary cooperatives belonging to the Sidama Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (SCFCU), one of Ethiopia's largest and best-known exporting organizations. SCFCU is robust; there are 53 member cooperatives in the union and over 80,000 member households throughout the Sidama Zone. Harvest in Sidama occurs slightly earlier than in the more southern zones of Gedeo and Guji, and as a result the coffees from here are usually the year's very first top-quality arrivals from anywhere in Ethiopia.

Mokonissa carries out activities that often go unnoticed but are crucial for small producers, including training producers in best organic practices and investing in basic infrastructure needs like road improvements and local warehouses. SCFCU focuses on establishing a certification process for local cooperatives, creating micro-credit for producers and investing in social programs on a larger scale.



Environmental training programs, healthcare initiatives, life insurance, and educational opportunities are just some of the ways SCFCU strives to improve the quality of life for coffee producers and their families.

There are 1492 active (contributing) farmer members belonging to the Mokonissa cooperative. Farmers in this area are truly smallholders, averaging less than one hectare of coffee cultivation each, in which they also produce vegetables for the household and local sale. The coop processes coffee at 2 different sites, in the Bensa district communities of Sadeware and Bensaware.

In processing, unlike in most of Sidama, Mokonissa willingly invests in the necessary resources to produce clean and high-quality naturals. One of these resources is drying space: full coffee cherries are greater in volume than the seeds alone, not to mention naturals need to dry slowly in a single layer, which, when combined, necessitate many more raised beds for an equal output of coffee. The other is labor: Mokonissa employs up to 100 people at the station to oversee the constant maintenance of large-scale parchment and cherry drying. Once fully dried and cured, final milling for export is completed at the Union mill in Addis Ababa.

Mokonissa was founded in 1976 and functioned independently, as did many coops and processing groups back then, for lack of a greater export network. This lasted until the late 90s and relied largely on a system of local collectors and buyers, who would then deliver consolidated cherry to processors or export auctions. The formation of cooperative unions in Ethiopia allowed for voting power and higher farm returns from the direct exportation that unions would be capable of. Certifications, as well, easily earned through the traditionally organic methods of Ethiopia's smallholders and a conscious business plan, could be secured for price protection and marketing purposes, helping vast populations of smallholders gain small but meaningful leverage in the global marketplace that remains to this day.