

Dominican Republic Coffee Industry

By Jack

The coffee industry in the Dominican Republic hasn't exactly been a picnic. Introduced as early as 1715, coffee continued to be a leading crop among small hillside farmers in the late 1980s; it covered 152,000 hectares throughout various mountain ranges. Coffee farming, like sugar growing, was seasonal, and it entailed a labor-intensive harvest involving as many as 250,000 workers, some of whom were Haitians. The preponderance of small holdings among Dominican coffee farmers, however, caused the coffee industry to be inefficient, and yields fell far below the island's potential. Output of coffee fluctuated with world prices, which reached an eight-year low in 1989. Another problem was the coffee bushes' vulnerability to the hurricanes that periodically ravaged the island.

From this, we can draw the conclusion that, although coffee is second only to sugar cane as a cash crop in the Dominican Republic, it has been held back by several factors: the inefficiency of the farmers, the economies in western nations, who they are very reliant on to buy their goods, and the weather on the island. Differences between the coffee industry on Guatemala and that on the Dominican Republic is that the government of the Dominican Republic has realized that it cannot completely rely on the coffee, sugarcane and cocoa (it's top exports) industries and has begun to diversify the country's portfolio of exports.