
‘Denomination of Origin for Matas de Rondônia Coffee: Unique Pioneering’

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Résumé

The recognition in 2021 in Brazil of the designation of origin "Matas de Rondônia" for coffee of the robustas amazônicos variety represents a global milestone. This is because, traditionally, only coffee of the *Coffea arabica* species had received such a distinction. However, Matas de Rondônia is a coffee that deserves to be highlighted for being the first denomination of origin of the species *Coffea canephora*. And not just because it is intended for a different species, but also because it is located in the Western Amazon. Historically, coffee production in this biome has had a negative connotation. However, over the years, local producers have empirically selected plants with superior genetic materials, the basis of research developed by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) that is changing this scenario. Currently, the cultivation is adapted to conditions of medium and low slope, hot climate and with precipitation and humidity divided into two well-defined seasons. Practices such as harvesting and storing the fruit for a maximum of 6hrs and only during the dry season, from June to August, have been adopted to prevent the higher local humidity from stimulating unwanted fermentation, among others. At the same time, although 95% of production is in small family farms, which includes indigenous, family, organic and business producers with a focus on sustainable production, productivity per acre has increased almost 500% reducing approximately 80% of the area under cultivation compared to the 1980s as a result of the application of Embrapa's technologies. A Embrapa study has shown that a large part of the coffee-growing zone is in compliance with the European Union's new anti-deforestation legislation. Between 2020 and 2023 deforestation rates were reduced by 0% and 1% in the total area occupied by coffee growing. This successful adaptation of the crop could even serve to occupy current pasture areas in a more sustainable way. Respectful management of natural environmental cycles in a non-predatory way generates the sensory profile with the presence of the descriptors sweet, chocolate, woody, fruity and spicy. The new sensory perception is generating a specific and characteristic palette of *canephora* coffees, with its own identity, distinct from other producing regions. As the designation of origin can value the coffee from the region, there is an incentive for producers to maintain sustainable practices, since cultivation becomes an economically rewarding and respected activity. Aware that agricultural products from the Amazon face greater pressure to prove the sustainability of the process, Matas de Rondônia joined the "Traceability Platform for Coffees with Geographical Indications of Brazil". On the Platform, each registered coffee will receive a traceability code that will allow it to be identified from plantation to retail point. With this tool, exports tend to grow. Thus, the pioneering spirit of Matas de Rondônia is based on the union of productive innovations based on respect for local conditions, configuring itself as a case to be further studied in Brazilian agriculture.

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