

**PRESS RELEASE
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Grounds for Growth Initiative Gives Small Coffee Farmers Boost

Kingston, Jamaica: Salada Foods Jamaica Limited and the Jamaica Coffee Growers Association (JCGA) joined forces to launch a coffee sustainability initiative - **Grounds for Growth**. The initiative focuses on repurposing Salada’s manufacturing bi-products into optimal organic fertilizing material to cost-effectively improve the yield of local coffee farmers.

The **Grounds for Growth** initiative launched with a hands-on workshop on a coffee farm in Cedar Valley, St Thomas on Friday, March 10, 2023. The group of local small farmers participated in interactive demonstrations on sustainable farming practices, including composting using spent coffee grounds for improved yields.

“We learned a lot of things like how to test soil and how to make organic fertilizer using coffee grounds and other organic material,” explained a local small farmer Kemar O’Connor.

Organic Farmer and Jamaica Coffee Growers Association (JCGA) Vice President Dorianne Rowan-Campbell emphasised that, “our innovation activity provides training for younger farmers in what we call our **Generation Next** project. This is important because, if we don’t reach the younger farmers, we won't have any coffee.”

“This workshop is the beginning of something great to come in partnership with Salada,” asserted JCGA President Donald Salmon. The collaboration of Salada and JCGA on **Grounds for Growth** was a natural one given their shared commitment to the development of the local coffee industry.

Salmon outlined that farmers faced several challenges including access to education on best practices. “Farmers need to understand that it is not how much land you have, but how efficiently you use that land,” he added. “We are experimenting: Salada, the University of the West Indies, the University of Technology. We are exploring how we can use spent grounds to reduce the cost of fertilizer; reduce the cost of input to the farmers, and show them new ways of doing things.”

Salada Foods Jamaica, General Manager, Tamii Brown is optimistic about the partnership and the impact it may have on the viability of the local coffee industry.

“Salada Foods is one of Jamaica's largest coffee processing plants, and we are acutely aware of the challenges coffee farmers face in cultivating this beloved agricultural product. The viability of the industry requires innovation, collaboration and action. We have joined forces with the JCGA to explore innovative ways the coffee bean can offer growth from the farm to the processing plant and then back to the farm. Through this collaboration, we will support a cleaner, greener Jamaica where coffee farmers, in particular, spend less to nourish their farms and enhance the quality and quantity of production,” Brown confirmed.

Local supply permitting, Salada processes instant coffee three to four times each year. At each process run, the Salada plant generates, as a bi-product, 240,000 pounds of spent grounds on average. Of note, Salada is the only local entity able to produce spent coffee grounds at scale for the farming community.

Prior to the **Grounds for Growth** Initiative, Salada spent well over \$1 million per process run on disposal for spent coffee grounds - from plant removal, to gathering, to transportation and discarding.

To facilitate the **Grounds for Growth** initiative, Salada engages in additional activities including drying, bagging and delivery. Though more costly, using the grounds for compost fertilizer brings remarkable benefits for all concerned.

Farmers can ethically and cost effectively substitute imported chemical fertilizers with locally sourced, organic spent grounds in compost for fertilizer. With immediate effect, through the JCGA, the farmers can purchase a 100lb bag of spent grounds for \$850.00 while stocks last.

The delegation at the free, all-day workshop also included representatives from the University of Technology, Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority, the Tourism Enhancement Fund, and the St Thomas Jamaica Agricultural Society.

Salada Foods Jamaica has been a proud Jamaican coffee processing industry member since 1958. The Kingston-based manufacturer is the only soluble coffee processing plant in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Under its flagship brand Jamaica Mountain Peak, Salada Foods continues to provide tasty, convenient coffee products at an affordable price for consumers on the go. The recently launched Jamaica Mountain Peak 3in1 flavoured coffee trio; Cinnameg, Caramel and Coconut Cappuccino are now available in stores islandwide.

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