

**A12.** Compare what the writers of **Text D** and **Text E** say about the effects of Fairtrade on the farmers and workers who work for Fairtrade groups. [10]

*You must make it clear from which text you get your information.*

*Text D is taken from The Guardian newspaper.*

### **The story of a coffee farmer**

*Gerardo Arias Camacho is a coffee farmer in Costa Rica. He is a board member on his village co-operative, which is a member of the Fairtrade consortium COOCAFE. He is married with three children.*

In the 1980s, the price of coffee was so low that it didn't cover the cost of production. Many farmers abandoned their land and some even left the country to find work. In the mid-90s, I went to America to make money and support my family. After eight years, I had earned enough to buy the family farm so that my parents could retire. But coffee prices were still so low that I was forced to return to

America for another two years.

Then the coffee business was unstable. We did not have a local school, good roads or bridges. Now that we are Fairtrade-certified, prices are stable and we receive a guaranteed amount for our coffee.

We spend the money on education, environmental protection, roads and bridges, and improving the processing plant. We have a scholarship programme so that our kids can stay in school. I believe that my farm would be out of business if it wasn't for Fairtrade. Free trade is not responsible trade.

When prices go down, farmers produce more and prices drop further. Fairtrade is the way trade should be: fair, responsible and sustainable.

My oldest son is in college, my ten-year-old has already had as much education as me, and my little girl is in her second year at school. With the help of Fairtrade, they might all be able to go to university and get a degree. They won't have to jump the border from Mexico to America, like me. They can decide what they want in life.

Since Fairtrade, our farms have become more environmentally-friendly. Our coffee is now produced in a sustainable way. We plant trees and have reduced the use of pesticides by 80% in 10 years. We used to cut 50 acres of forest down every year to fuel the ovens at our processing plant. Now we have a new oven which is fuelled by coffee waste products and the skins of macadamia nuts that we buy from farmers on the other side of Costa Rica. It is a win-win business.

Fairtrade is not a closed system. It is open to everyone but we need more and more people to buy

Fairtrade so other farmers can become certified. We already educate other producers around us about market prices so that buyers have to offer them a competitive rate and this benefits the wider community. When there was a hurricane, the main road became blocked and the bridge came down.

We could afford to open the road and fix the bridge.

When you are shopping, look for the Fairtrade label – you can be sure that the money is going straight to the producers. It will help us, and it will help people around the world, because the benefits of protecting the environment are for everyone. It is a matter of helping each other.

As a Fairtrade farmer, I finally feel competitive. It has given me knowledge so that I am more able to defend myself and my people. I feel there is a future in front of us because we can stay in our own country and make a living growing coffee. Fairtrade is not charity. Just by going shopping, you can make a difference.

*Text E explains why some people now choose to buy products that are not Fairtrade.*

### **Why are coffee lovers turning their backs on Fairtrade?**

At Workshop Coffee, customers savour their £4 Colombian coffees. It looks like caffeine heaven, but head of production Richard Shannon says some people think something is missing,

“If it doesn’t have a Fairtrade logo then we must be holding the farmer down and standing on his neck whilst we steal his coffee.” Workshop is one of a number of specialist coffee companies that says it is committed to fair trade, but doesn’t have the certificate to prove it. Companies like this, which boast about their ethical sourcing of coffee, are choosing not to join the Fairtrade labelling scheme.

This is bad news for Fairtrade, which saw UK sales fall for the first time ever last year, by 4%. This has largely been blamed on discount retailers such as Aldi and Lidl carrying far fewer Fairtrade lines than supermarkets like Sainsbury’s. But Fairtrade is also being affected at the top of the market by high-end companies like Workshop who complain that Fairtrade doesn’t pay enough for quality coffee. Many suppliers believe their trade is already fairer than Fairtrade. Last year, Workshop paid on average £6.50 per kilo, nearly twice as much for coffee as Fairtrade did. And, as they point out, Fairtrade doesn’t provide farmers with any greater guarantee of future income.

Growers for the speciality market are able to call the shots. As the premium coffee market expands, producers get more power to choose who they sell to and for how much. The growth of the market also creates opportunities for more producers to benefit. Each year new farmers join as they see their neighbours being highly rewarded for producing high quality coffee.

There are doubts about the effectiveness of Fairtrade in getting a good deal for workers. The system guarantees prices for producers and money for social projects, but it can’t ensure that those who receive these payments spread the benefits. Many Fairtrade co-operatives employ people whose wages are lower and who work in worse conditions than those non-Fairtrade areas. One poor use of the Fairtrade payment was in a tea farm where the modern toilets (funded with Fairtrade money) were only used by senior managers.

Some people are now beginning to question the fairness of Fairtrade and to ask, “Is it Fairtrade? Or is it fairly traded?”