

Study on the quality in fair trade products -The case of vanilla beans-

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Japan, a "fair trade", aiming at what the producer and workers in south who was alienated again can develop sustainability and realization of fairer international trade, is spreading. Now, about half of Japanese has heard the word "fair trade". Companies, such as STARBUCKS and AEON, have entered into the fair trade market. However, it can be said that the fair trade market in Japan is small and not progressing in the world. As a reason, it is guessed that the quality of a fair trade product has not reached for which Japanese people demand of the quality. The purpose of this study was to consider spreading fair trade in Japan by analysis of quality of a fair trade product about the vanilla beans which is affinity with the conventional ecosystem and can be grown by few production costs because of labor-intensive products.

2. ANALYSIS OF VANILLA AROMA, MEASUREMENT MOISTURE, AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY ON FAIRTRADE ASSOCIATION

Analysis of vanilla aroma compounds, which is a big element influencing the quality of vanilla bean was conducted. Analysis target was 18 kinds of vanilla beans, which was including the fair trade products and non-fair trade products, produced by six nations, the concentration of four kind compounds (vanillin, vanillic acid, p-hydroxybenzaldehyde, p-hydroxybenzoic acid) which were included much content was measured. from 500 or more kinds of compounds which form vanilla fragrance. About the content of each aroma compound, there are not much difference between the fair trade product and the non-fair trade product. Moreover, about the concentration ratio of each aroma compounds used as index of evaluating the quality of vanilla fragrance in France or the United States, many values on fair trade products was measured within the definition range than non-fair trade products.

However, about moisture, non-fair trade products included much amount than fair trade products including few moisture. Because of this results, it was guessed that the person (an exporter, an import trader, a wholesale , and a retailer) treating a fair trade product after a production process did not put into practice quality control. Questionnaire survey was conducted for 5 organization engaging in the fair trade of vanilla bean in Japan. As a result, some made a point of production instruction for producer, but the organization which answered was made a point of quality control in Japan existed only one.

3. CONCLUSION

In the quality of a fair trade product, it is important that all the middlemen engaged in dealings of fair trade products conduct quality management as well as production instruction for producer which they have conducted too. Great difference was not seen between fair trade products and non-fair trade products about the quality which originates in the process of operation which a producer performs in vanilla bean (ex; aroma compounds). However, about the quality originating after selling to the exporter, import trader, a wholesaler, and a retailer (ex; the amount of moisture), the clear difference was observed between both. It was possible it have been insufficient about selection of package material and the merchandise management conditions (ex; temperature, humidity, condition of sunlight, condition of oxygen).

It is recommended that same investigation conduct about other fair trade products, at the same time, it is effective to spread fair-trade in Japan that the network organizations of a fair trade are considered creating the guideline on the product quality of each fair trade product.