



Mwalyego AMCOS Mbeya, Southern Tanzania, Tanzania

Partner since: 2013

Traceable to: 150 Members

Altitude: 1615 MASL

Varietals: Kent, Bourbon, N39

Processing: Cherries are pulped, washed, fermented for 48 hours, washed again and soaked for 18 hours before dried on raised beds

Harvest: July August September November December January

Booking: October November December February March April

Arrivals: February March April May June



This group is named after their washing station in Mwalyego, a small town in Tanzania's southern Mbeya district. AMCOS explains the rest – Agricultural Marketing and Cooperative Society'. We just call them Mwalyego (mwah-lee-ego). This is a 150 farmer strong group you can find by looking for a town called 'Iwala' on the map, about 10 miles west of Mbeya City, on the southern slopes of Mt. Mbeya. You can say that they are in the heart of Mbeya. That's what the judges seem to say – Mwalyego has led the way in the country's Taste of Harvest competition, some years sweeping the

country's top spots. They are struggling with their success; the better they do the more they pay members. The more they pay, the more members deliver, and the more who want to join. The more they receive, the more drying beds they need. The more drying beds they build, the better their coffee gets, and the more premiums they have to pay out. It's a vicious, virtuous cycle.



Tanzania is a country rich in history, culture and resources. In East Africa, only Kenya has more wealth. But these numbers hide the incredible disparity you see between rich and poor, north and south, estates and smallholders.

Only 7% of Tanzania's harvest makes to the US – compared to 37% which go to Japan – and most of what arrives is in the form of block lot 'Tanzania AA' or 'PB'.

Block lots are bought from auction and blended to customer specification; 75% of Tanzania's coffee is sold through auction in this way. The alternative to the auction is the Direct Export Channel, which came under fire from recent (2018) governmental reforms.

The reforms were aimed at eliminating the grey area between three parties: farmers – organized into Agricultural Marketing Co-Operative Societies (AMCOS), mills, and exporters who are confined to operate at the auction level. In practice this cut off investment, cut short agricultural extension programs, cut out the direct export channel – reducing options for farmers and buyers alike.

So, after 9 months these reforms were reversed, and the direct export channel is open again. But this is just the most recent in a decade-long roller-coaster that's hampered Tanzania's ability to compete for larger parts of the US specialty coffee menu.

Lower production, aging plants, lack of irrigation, dwindling markets all sparked the TechnoServe-backed KiliCafe organization; an association of northern smallholder groups founded in 2001. The KiliCafe effort is credited with turning around coffee in this area, and it has successfully reinvigorated quality. But political forces, including corruption, caused this to collapse right around the time Crop to Cup started sourcing in the area.

In the South we are looking primarily at Mbeya and Mbinga. Both are two-days drive from the capital

and port city of Dar es Salaam. Both are large, rugged areas dominated by smallholding coffee farmers. And both are in a fluorescence.

In the early 2000's cuppers started noticing the variety of flavors coming out of the South. Compared to the North, where volumes are dominated by large estates, the South is home to diverse terroirs and profiles. Over the next two decades this interest has encouraged AMCOSs and exporters alike to get more involved, increasing both quality and production.