



## Mwika North AMCOS

## Kilimanjaro, Northern Tanzania, Tanzania

**Partner since:** 2015

**Traceable to:** 180 Members

**Altitude:** 1675 MASL

**Varietals:** Bourbon, Jackson  
Bourbon

**Processing:** Cherries are  
sorted, pulped, washed, wet  
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



Mwika is a town, referred to by locals as one of the 'gateways' to Kilimanjaro. Coffee was brought to Tanzania by Germans to a place called Kaleme Church in 1835. At this time a man named Zebadoya was rewarded for his service to the Church with a charter to plant coffee, which he brought back to his home in Mwika. While he was technically the only one 'allowed' to plant in this area, coffee started sprouting up in the gardens of his friends, family and neighbors. In the 1900's, the population increased, providing more labor to help with bigger harvests. These workers took cherry back to their

homes and planted as well, furthering the spread of coffee to Kilimanjaro.

Mwika was the first AMCOS to split from the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union (KNCU) during its fall. Payments were slow, transparency was lacking and farmers were mad – in 2012 those from Mwika petitioned the government to intervene, and were allowed to form their own group. Three groups, in fact; Mwika North is the highest altitude of the three, and due to the location of their storehouse, they consider themselves the original. They received training from the TNS-backed Kilicafe project, collected 40 tonnes parchment in their first year as independents, and even built their own CPU (washing station).

We're excited about Mwika North because it is their time to shine again. The past ten years have been tough. Support from Kilicafe ended, and with it, sales to specialty customers like Starbucks. Their CPU only operated one time – the cost of gas so high up mountain was simply too much. And so, despite all of their capacity and potential, Mwika North sits untouched like a diamond in the rough.

Until now. In January 2020 Mwika processed cherry through it's CPU, reopened against odds due to strong leadership and partnerships throughout the value-chain. The result was a sweeter, juicier cup with more controlled drying, and a whole new standard on what good can taste like in Tanzania.



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.