

# The Grocer

**Focus On: Fairtrade by Hannah Stodell ([hannahstodell1@gmail.com](mailto:hannahstodell1@gmail.com))**

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**Submissions deadline:** 7 January

## The Story

**Fairtrade sales and volumes are down and although this represents a slowdown in value decline, the Foundation was adamant last year that it was volumes that mattered to its farmers not value. So, what does this year's downturn mean for the Foundation? Are consumers losing their consciences? And why are some sectors, such as alcohol, biscuits and hot beverages, bucking this trend? What can Fairtrade do to return to growth?**

### Key themes:

**Rival schemes:** Schemes such as Rainforest Alliance and UTZ are gaining ground in the UK as a growing number of brands and retailers become certified by them. What impact is this having on the Fairtrade movement? Has anyone left Fairtrade in favour of a rival scheme? How is the growth of rival schemes impacting public perceptions of Fairtrade?

**Prices/promotions:** Fairtrade products tend to carry a premium but the average price of them has risen by 10% over the past year. Why? Is this added premium putting consumers off? How much has this contributed to the drop in volumes? Why have prices fallen in some areas, such as fruit & veg, but not sweet home cooking? With prices going up, is this proof that Fairtrade is unaffected by the price war?

**Suppliers:** Last year Fairtrade launched Fairtrade Sourcing Programs in the UK, covering cocoa, sugar and cotton which allows companies to bulk buy Fairtrade commodities and display its logo on the pack. What's the story one year on? Have any major manufacturers signed up to the deal? Has this done anything to alleviate the concerns raised by some suppliers about the demands placed on them by the Foundation?

**Innovations, new listings, de-listings, certifications and de-certifications:** This feature will pay close attention to any new arrivals on the Fairtrade scene over the past year, in terms of brands, new product types and retailers

**Retail share:** Sales of Fairtrade products are up massively in Aldi, M&S and Ocado. How come? Have they put more emphasis on ethical products? Or are their shoppers buying more? What about the likes of The Co-op – which overtrades significantly in this category?

**Advertising and marketing:** This feature will also investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest players have evolved over the past year and how they will develop in the coming year to sustain growth or return brands to growth.

**Innovations:** Four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before including launch date and RSP, manufacturer and a picture of each.

**Key questions the feature is likely to address:**

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What's next for the category?