

Behind Starbucks Coffee

**Brazil's seasonal harvest labourers
report routine of low wages,
cold food and even slave labour
on farms that supply the world's
most famous coffee shop chain**

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Are you down for a cup of coffee?

LAGOA AZUL FARM - GUAPE (MG)

On a farm in Ilícinea, southern Minas Gerais, a 16-year-old boy harvests coffee. That is not in compliance with the List of Worst Forms of Child Labour, which bans employing workers under 18 in activities that involve carrying heavy loads and unprotected exposure to sun or rain. The young man travelled 1,600 kilometres from his home in the state of Bahia to the farm. He says he paid for transportation, even though he had been previously hired for the service – another situation banned by Brazilian labour laws.

Not far away, in the town of Cabo Verde, the water that quenches the thirst of men and women temporarily hired for the harvest is stored in a container previously used for gasoline. At workers' lodgings, employees have to buy their own stoves to cook meals during harvest season. All of this happens despite their employer's legal obligation to provide a proper place for cooking

as well as clean, contamination-free drinking water.

On another property in Campos Altos, 17 workers are rescued from modern slavery. The group includes a 15-year-old girl who used to work alongside two boys aged 16 and 17. Basic tools for harvesting coffee, such as gloves, boots and clothes to throw the beans on, had to be bought by the workers themselves – one more item to be discounted from their wages.

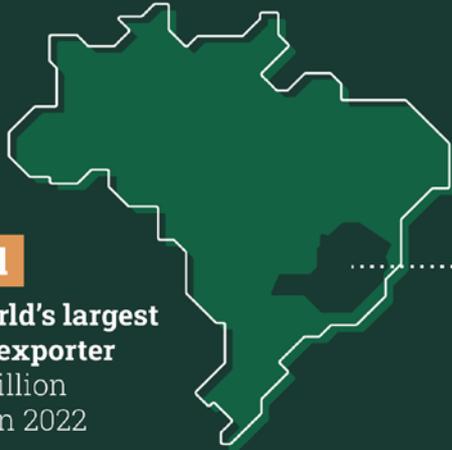
All these situations happened on farms that hold – or used to hold until recently – the C.A.F.E. Practices¹ seal (an acronym for *Coffee and Farmer Equity*), a certification programme of American multinational company Starbucks, the world's largest coffee shop chain, which lists 'a set of ethical standards' to be followed by their suppliers.

The coffee cultivated on these farms is shipped to local cooperatives and companies or subsidiaries of global commodity corporations. Its final destination may be have one of the 35,000-plus Starbucks stores spread across 83 countries².

FROM COFFEE PLANTATIONS TO STARBUCKS STORES

Brazil

the world's largest coffee exporter
– 35 million sacks in 2022



Minas Gerais

Brazil's largest producer state
– 23 million sacks in 2022



Cooxupé

Producers' cooperative Cooxupé accounted for 40% of Brazilian coffee exported to Starbucks in the US in the last two years



Starbucks Corporation

has 35,000 stores spread across 83 countries



C.A.F.E Practices

400,000 farms certified worldwide – 192,000 in Latin America



Source: PAM/IBGE, customs data and Starbucks promotional material



* Starbucks purchases originating in Brazil are mostly Arabica coffee

After months of investigation, this special report by **Repórter Brasil** describes situations that may constitute labour and human rights violations related to the American multinational's supply chain. Evidence shows that Starbucks, which promises

"endless possibilities for human connection"³ with every cup, still has a long way to go to ensure – starting at the source – that its coffee is produced and harvested on farms with fair working conditions and decent wages.

Produced in Brazil, consumed abroad

The top consumer of Brazilian coffee is the United States, followed by Germany, Italy, Belgium and Japan.



Those who visit the rural areas of municipalities in southern Minas Gerais or travel along the winding roads of northwest Espírito Santo will see that coffee plantations are a major feature of the landscape. The two states are Brazil's largest producers⁴ and place the country at the top of the world list⁵.

That coffee, grown on more than 264,000 properties in Brazil⁶, goes mostly to the foreign market. 52.8 million sacks were harvested in 2022⁷ (considering the most common measure, a 60-kg sack). In the same year, Brazilian coffee exports fell to 35.5 million sacks⁸, but the country still remained the world's largest exporter⁹, ahead of Vietnam and Colombia.

The top consumer of Brazilian coffee is the United States, followed by Germany, Italy, Belgium and Japan¹⁰. In 2022, Americans consumed 20.2% of total Brazilian coffee exports: 7.2 million sacks¹¹. The US is also the second largest coffee market in the world, behind the European Union and ahead of Brazil.

A simple coffee shop opened its doors in 1971¹² on the American west coast to serve customers of Pike Place, a public market selling fresh produce grown on farms around Seattle. From there, Starbucks Coffee, Tea and Spicy expanded to conquer consumers from all over the country. It is now the largest coffee shop chain in the world, with approximately 400,000 employees – 258,000 in the US alone¹³.



Starbucks today

CEDRO FARM _ CABO VERDE (MG)

Starbucks Corporation purchases approximately 3% of the coffee produced in the world¹⁴ from more than 400,000 properties. In Latin America alone, 192,300 farms¹⁵ are qualified to supply grain to the chain's stores.

Starbucks' main commercial partner in Brazil is Cooxupé (the Regional Cooperative of Coffee Growers of Guaxupé), headquartered in Minas Gerais state. Between March 2021 and March 2023, Cooxupé accounted for 40% of Brazilian coffee exports to Starbucks units in the US, according to customs data accessed by **Repórter Brasil**. The other two main coffee suppliers are Eisa Empresa Interagrícola, a subsidiary of Swiss group Ecom Agroindustrial¹⁶, and Atlântica Exportação & Importação, which belongs to coffee conglomerate Grupo Montesanto Tavares¹⁷, with 21% and 6.7% of total shipments in the period.

Starbucks claims it sources 94.8% of its coffee from farms that hold the C.A.F.E. Practices seal¹⁸. The programme assesses supplier properties on more than 200 indicators¹⁹ divided into four categories: economic transparency; social responsibility; environmental leadership; and

quality. Items to be complied with are listed on a scorecard²⁰, which is filled out after reviewing documents as well as phone and field interviews.

The properties included in C.A.F.E. Practices, which was developed with Conservation International in 2004, undergo periodic independent third-party audits conducted by companies or organizations with experience in important socio-environmental certification programmes, such as the Rainforest Alliance, Global Gap and FSC.

Starbucks does not publish the list of farms certified by C.A.F.E. Practices. But there are indications that they number in the tens of thousands in Brazil. In addition to being the largest coffee producer in Latin America, where almost 200,000 properties are qualified to supply Starbucks, customs data indicate that Starbucks did business with 14 different companies between 2021 and 2023. Within Cooxupé alone, there are at least three groups of suppliers. One of them, which gathers more than 2,000 small farmers with coffee plantations of up to 12 hectares, received a R\$ 6-million bonus from C.A.F.E. Practices in 2021.

In August 2021, the first Starbucks Farmer Support Centre was opened in Brazil²¹, in Varginha, Minas Gerais, to provide training in sustainable agricultural practices.

Problems and limitations of audits

In 2022, coffee growing was among the five top industries in number of reports of worker exploitation in Brazil. In all, 39 coffee properties were inspected, and 159 workers were rescued from modern slavery²².

Experts interviewed by **Repórter Brasil** point out that certification by Starbucks as well as by other multinationals in the sector contributes to – but does not guarantee – ending labour violations among coffee farms supplying the company. “Whenever we find manual harvesting on certified farms, we don’t see major differences from other [non-certified] farms in terms of compliance with labour regulations,” says labour inspector Humberto Casmamie.

Jorge Ferreira dos Santos Filho is ahead of the Coordination of Rural Employees of the State of Minas Gerais (ADERE). He sees shortcomings in the certification system. “Regardless of the certifier, the model is fragile and not very transparent. Every year we show cases of certified farms with unregistered workers who are not paid their vacations or benefits,” he notes.

In 2018 and 2019, **Repórter Brasil** described the cases of two farms holding the C.A.F.E. Practices seal that had been fined and later included in the ‘dirty list’ of slave labour²³, a register maintained by Brazil’s Ministry of Labour and Employment (MTE) with employers involved in that illegal practice. In these two cases – the Cedro II farm²⁴, in Minas Gerais’s Triangle area, and Córrego das Almas²⁵, in southern Minas Gerais – 24 workers were rescued.

In the most recent case published by **Repórter Brasil**²⁶, a property certified by Starbucks did not provide free equipment for harvesting coffee, as mandated by Brazil’s labour legislation. The workers hired for the harvest had to pay R\$ 2,700 each for portable harvesters known as “*derriçadeiras*,” which are used to pull coffee beans from branches. “That’s almost two minimum wages spent by temporary workers who have no money to support themselves and their families for the rest of the year. That practice feeds this vicious cycle of poverty in rural areas,” ADERE’s coordinator Santos Filho explained.

Labour irregularities in the industry are not limited to Starbucks’ supply chain. **Repórter Brasil** has shown similar problems among suppliers of Nestlé²⁷, McDonald’s²⁸ and other large companies that buy grain.

One of the possible flaws pointed out in certifications is the fact that the ‘surprise audits’ conducted on farms to check compliance with all certification requirements are in fact previously announced²⁹. In the case of C.A.F.E. Practices, verification, re-verification or unannounced audits (which take

place in supply chains selected by semi-random sampling) are **communicated to producers 24 to 48 hours in advance**.

“I have no doubt that producers will wash [reality] if they are warned 24 or 48 hours in advance. If the farm has unregistered labour, for example, these workers will be told not to go to the property on the day when the certifier is there. Only permanent workers will appear. If the farm doesn’t have a toilet in the field, they’ll agree to say that the harvest hasn’t started yet,” says ADERE’s Santos Filho.

Lack of dialogue with representatives of workers in producing regions was also criticized. The materials publicly provided by Starbucks and SCS Global Services – the organization in charge of conducting C.A.F.E. Practices audits³⁰ – do not mention participation of or interviews with union members in the programme’s audit and verification processes. “They interview a few workers, but it happens inside the farm, where everyone is watching,” says Gustavo Ferroni, head of Oxfam Brasil’s Rural Justice and Development department. “There is no concern about gathering information independently, going to the union or the regional office of the Ministry of Labour to find out if there have been complaints, or going to the local church, which is the place where workers look for help. There’s no systemic approach.”

Santos Filho agrees: “When workers are heard, it’s in front of their supervisors. In that condition, they feel totally intimidated; they won’t speak out about what actually happens at the farm.”

Verification audits are conducted during harvest season and last no more than half a day per farm or up to three days per supply chain (when they include silos, warehouses and other facilities), depending on their size and complexity. According to documents from SCS Global Services, auditors must pre-select workers to conduct interviews³¹.



The methods these certifiers use to assess working conditions are not clear. We don’t have access to the methodologies used for granting or denying certification to a farm.

HUMBERTO CASMAMIE

Labour inspector



ALMAS FARM
_ CABO VERDE (MG)

Workers enticed by unreal promises



Every year during harvest season (May-August), migrant workers leave their hometowns, mostly in northern Minas Gerais and Bahia, and arrive at coffee plantations in the former state, enticed by promises of high wages that will not be kept. With these earnings in mind, they accept exhausting working hours and poor living conditions, even when they are legally entitled to decent, employer-provided accommodation.

For inspector Camasmie, this is a result of high demand for labour during about four months. “The industry ends up not investing in minimum facilities that are necessary for workers to do their jobs decently,” he says.

In practical terms, harvesters’ wages depend on several factors. Payment is proportional to individual production, but productivity in coffee plantations falls as the harvest progresses. Grains are heavier and larger early in the season, which creates a feeling of more productivity and higher earnings. However, as the months go by, workers are often paid less than the minimum wage because there is little coffee left to harvest, while expenses with food, housing and even work tools – which should be provided free of charge by employers according to Brazilian legislation – are the same, eating up workers’ earnings.

In July 2023, **Repórter Brasil** went to the field to take a closer look at working conditions on coffee farms that held – or had held until recently – the Starbucks certification seal. Almost 3,000 kilometres were covered in southern Minas Gerais and the so-called Triangle area, together with members of the

Coordination of Rural Employees of the State of Minas Gerais (ADERE/MG). The cases of four farms that hold the C.A.F.E. Practices seal and had labour irregularities pointed out by inspectors or workers denouncing bad working conditions are detailed below.

JOURNEY TO THE COFFEE PLANTATIONS

1 Mesas Farm: Campos Altos

Workers' hometowns:
municipalities in the state
of Alagoas



2 Bernardes Estate Coffee's farms: Patrocínio

Workers' hometowns:
Patrocínio and São João da Ponte (MG)



3 Pedreira Farm: Cabo Verde

Workers' hometowns:
Jequitinhonha Valley
(MG region)

4 Cedro-Chapadão Farm: Ilicínea

Workers' hometowns:
Irecê (BA)



Mesas farm: modern slavery found one month after C.A.F.E. practices certification

In August 2022, 17 workers were rescued from modern slavery at the Mesas Farm, in Campos Altos, Minas Gerais. They included a 15-year-old teenage girl and two boys aged 16 and 17. Outdoor work without protection from sun or rain and which requires handling heavy loads such as 60-kg sacks of coffee is included in the List of Worst Forms of Child Labor³² (known as the TIP List) and is forbidden for 16-18-year-old people. Teenagers under 16, in turn, cannot work under any circumstances – except for the apprentice category³³, with requirements such as school attendance and tutoring.

The Mesas Farm is managed by Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos, who farms 24 hectares of the property since 2018 under a lease agreement. He owns three other farms: Bom Jesus and Pedras, in Santa Rosa da Serra, and the Ourizona farm, in addition to roaster Café Ourizona³⁴, both located in the municipality of Córrego Danta, all in Minas Gerais state.

Café Ourizona proudly announces the certification seals obtained for its coffee plantations. One of them is Starbucks's C.A.F.E. PRACTICES. The company joined the American multinational's certification programme just one month before modern slave labour was found at the Mesas Farm, as can be seen on an *Instagram* post on July 12, 2022³⁵. The

Mesas, Ourizona and Pedras farms are also certified by the Rainforest Alliance³⁶ – the seal, celebrated on another *Instagram* post in June 2022³⁷, was renewed in March 2023, even after the slave labour case found last year.

Evidence shows that the Mesas and Ourizona farms in Córrego Danta and Campos Altos had the same management, headed by Lemos and one of his employees. For example, labourers who had been working informally at the Mesas farm had their contracts signed by the Ourizona farm during the inspection.

Repórter Brasil had access to the inspection report that shows that the employer failed to provide even the most basic tools for harvest work, such as bags, cloths where workers dump the beans removed from coffee trees and rakes used to gather scattered grains. According to Brazilian rural labour legislation, employers must provide free tools and accessories required for the job, replacing them whenever necessary. Providing personal protective equipment is also mandatory.

Despite this, one of the workers rescued said she needed to buy a new glove every four days. The item is essential to protect their hands when removing coffee beans stuck to trees. The R\$-5 gloves were paid for by workers themselves, as well as hats, boots, food and accommodation – all against labour laws.

For their work at Mesas Farm, the workers were paid R\$ 110 per day.

In the field, there was no place for the group to take their lunch breaks. They would eat in the bus that brought them to the field or on the ground, in the middle of the coffee plantation. The food was consumed cold or heated up over an improvised alcohol can. Without chemical toilets, they had

to relieve themselves in the bush or among the coffee trees. Ten of the 17 people rescued were women.

The workers rescued came from the state of Alagoas and they all reported to a 'cat,' as the middlemen who illegally recruit temporary workers are known. "The respondent should have hired workers without illegal intermediation, signed formal work contracts and provided them with decent working conditions. As it turned out, he did not do that," says the inspection report. The workers had been informally picking coffee at the Mesas farm for a week without formal contracts.

Repórter Brasil contacted coffee producer Guilherme Lemos. Through his lawyer, he stated that he would not answer the questions and would only speak during the legal procedures related to the slave labour charge. He has not been included on the register of employers caught using modern slave labour³⁸ – the so-called 'dirty list' – because employers can appeal to two administrative jurisdictions at the Ministry of Labour after they are given violation notifications from inspectors. Names are only included on the list after all appeals have been decided.

Starbucks Corporation did not inform **Repórter Brasil** about the date when Lemos's properties were certified by C.A.F.E. Practices and if the certification will be suspended after slave labour was found. The company stated that "Fazenda Mesas has an active status in our C.A.F.E. Practices program. Our records show no active labor complaints, litigation or open claims against Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos".

Both Starbucks and the Rainforest Alliance say they check the 'dirty list of slave labour' before certifying farms or doing business with them. The Rainforest Alliance even created a special, more rigorous methodology for assessing the risk of forced labour in Brazil³⁹, given the number of cases in rural areas.

In response to **Repórter Brasil**, the Rainforest Alliance confirmed the certification of Mesas farm and that the first audit of the farm took place in May 2022 and the second in May 2023. "According to the Certification Body's reports sent to the Rainforest Alliance for the May 2023 audit, there was no information on these inspections in August 2022".

[Read the full responses at the end of this report.](#)

Cedro and Conquista farms: child labour as a Human Resources 'mistake'

The Cedro-Chapadão and Conquista farms have more than 500 hectares of coffee plantations in Ilícinea, southern Minas Gerais, and are managed by Sebastião Aluísio de Sales, together with his wife Karla and their three sons Rodrigo, Gabriel and Gustavo. On the social media profiles of the agricultural enterprise, a publication from May 2021 features the Starbucks logo⁴⁰, celebrating the certification of the Cedro Farm by C.A.F.E. Practices.

A little over a year after the seal was granted, in July 2022, a 17-year-old boy was rescued from modern slavery in the Sales family's coffee plantations. The activity is prohibited for minors (under 18). He and 25 other workers left Irecê, Bahia, 1,500 km away from Ilícinea, to harvest coffee at the Cedro-Chapadão and Conquista farms. Inspectors found another 11 labour violations.

According to Rodrigo Sales, one of the family entrepreneurs, the young man aged "17 years and 9 months" was hired due to "a mistake made by our HR [Human Resources department] accounting department." However, testimonies and documents handed out to labour inspectors by the farm's management indicate that another 16-year-old teenager had been hired to harvest coffee that year.

The operations that rescued the young man from modern slavery did not take place not at the Cedro farm, which holds the C.A.F.E Practices seal, but rather at Conquista. However, evidence indicates that the practices were similar in all the properties of the group and that the workers were also hired to harvest coffee at Cedro – which is confirmed by the employer himself in his reply to **Repórter Brasil**: "The Cedro-Chapadão United Farms are a group and therefore are jointly managed, harvest workers are aware of the work schedule for the season that starts at Conquista and goes on to the other farms as coffee matures," informed Rodrigo Sales, the owner's son and manager of the properties.



According to the inspection report accessed by **Repórter Brasil**, the employer did not provide workers in the field with drinking water and protective equipment such as gloves, hats and boots.

The accommodation lacked bedding, closets or a proper place for meals. The workers also split the payment of a woman who cleaned and cooked for them with the employer – which the inspection report also pointed out as a violation. The group still had to pay for bus tickets from Irecê to the farms, which should have been provided by the Sales family, according to inspectors. After all these discounts, their wages disappeared.

In testimony to the tax auditors, the young man rescued stated that he had R\$ 400 deducted from his wages in the first month of work to pay for his ticket from Irecê, Bahia, to Ilícinea, Minas Geras, in addition to food during the journey. Since he also had to split with his colleagues and employers the monthly payment of the woman who cleaned the accommodation and cooked for them, at the end of the first month of work, instead of receiving money, he had accumulated a debt of R\$ 300.

For the 17-year-old illegal worker, producer Sebastião Sales paid around R\$ 6,000 in termination fees and moral damages. The coffee farmer is not on the 'dirty list' of slave labour because the administrative process is still underway. Rodrigo Sales defends himself: "The Cedro-Chapadão United Farms have never subjected any worker to degrading conditions, forced labour or slavery-like conditions," he said in response to questions from **Repórter Brasil**.

According to him, Cedro farm was certified by C.A.F.E. Practices in 2022 – the same year in which the worker rescue operation took place – and that no coffee was sold to Starbucks. However, a post on Instagram shows that the certification was granted the year before the inspection. Sales also informed that the property underwent a new audit in June 2023 and the certification was not renewed 'for agronomic reasons.'

Starbucks only stated that the property is no longer active in the programme, without informing when and why it lost its certification seal.

Read the full responses at the end of this report.

New old problems

About a year later, **Repórter Brasil** visited the farm. Most workers still come from the region around Irecê, Bahia. However, this time they did not have to pay for tickets – one of the irregularities found by labour inspectors in the previous year. But they still had to pay for food during the journey, even though the producer had been informed during the previous year's labour inspection that he should cover all costs of migrant workers' travel, including food expenses.

LABOUR IRREGULARITIES ON FARMS HOLDING C.A.F.E. PRACTICES SEALS

- **Not providing free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and work tools or failing to replace them whenever necessary**
- **Not hiring seasonal workers in their hometowns, with transport and food to the farm paid for by the employer**
- **Not formalizing workers' contracts and allowing informal labour without access to legal rights**
- **Not providing bedding suitable for local climate conditions in temporary worker accommodation**
- **Not providing drinking water and toilets at work fronts**

Source: obligations set forth in Law 5889 of 1973⁴⁶ and articles in Regulation (NR) 31⁴⁷



Another problem reported in 2023 by workers that repeats a violation from the previous year is the use of their own *derriçadeiras* – an individual machine that speeds up coffee harvest. Since this is work equipment, employers must provide it according to Brazilian regulations, but workers told **Repórter Brasil** that two of them were using their own equipment to help with the work. The worst problem was the price paid by the farm per sack of coffee. In June, the employers offered R\$ 14 per 60-kilo sack, which meant that 12 of the 22 harvesters earned less than R\$ 1,900. In addition, the workers claim that they had been called to work at the Conquista farm, where production was large, but they had been accommodated and were harvesting coffee at Cedro.

According to the workers, they were taken there by a middleman, which is also against Brazilian labour legislation. “We came because we trusted the guy who brought us. He said that we would stay here [Cedro Farm], but the plantations were at Conquista. We started working there and this week we moved here, but here we don’t earn anything,” says a worker harvesting coffee on the property for the first time. Rodrigo Sales denies hiding this information from employees and says that everyone “is aware of the work schedule for the harvest that starts at Conquista and goes on to the other farms as the coffee matures.”

To make more money, employees say that they worked from Sunday to Sunday and that the farm does not pay proportional

wages on their days off, which is their right under Brazilian law. “Some people work on Sunday evenings, they even wear flashlights on their heads to increase their production,” says one of them. Sales disputes that. He guarantees that the property provides all equipment, that work on Sundays is not authorized and that workers’ weekly rest is paid.

Repórter Brasil found that the accommodation at the Conquista farm underwent renovation. Wires were no longer bare, there was a place for meals and cabinets to store food and objects. Even so, the place was still dirty, making workers uncomfortable – they kept apologizing for the mess.

Bernardes Estate Coffee: Farm owner profits from coffee, rent and sales at his market

The municipality of Patrocínio is located in Minas Gerais’s Triangle area, and it is Brazil’s top coffee producer⁴¹. Since the 1970s, the area has attracted farmers who want to grow special grains, such as the Bernardes family, who acquired Campo Alegre in 1978 and established a coffee farm six years later. Today, the family-owned business Bernardes Estate Coffee has two properties with more than 178 hectares of coffee plantations⁴², in addition to certificates such as Starbucks’s C.A.F.E. Practices.

In 2022, José Eduardo Bernardes was charged with 16 labour violations, including lack of receipts for employees’ wages, failing to provide training required by law – for example, on procedures to be adopted in the event of extreme weather conditions or toilets at work fronts – and storing pesticides in violation of the legislation. In 2019, Bernardes was fined another nine times for failing to provide personal protective equipment or free first aid material, toilet paper or showers in sufficient numbers, an adequate place for meals or a water tank protected from contamination at workers’ accommodation.

In 2023, **Repórter Brasil** visited the farm and witnessed the same problems pointed out by inspections in previous years. For example, not all workers in the fields wore personal protective equipment, although some said that the employer provided the items – there were even people drying grains and breathing in the dust resulting from the activity without wearing masks.

The workers reported that for years now, they have been recruited in their hometowns to work on José Eduardo Bernardes’s two farms, but contracts are signed only when they arrive at the properties, contrary to Brazilian labour law. Since



providing transportation and decent accommodation is the hirer's obligations only when recruitment takes place in another city, this strategy of formalizing the employment relationship upon arrival at the farms allows the Bernardes family to treat their workers as if they had come to the property on their own – employees say the employers do not pay for transportation or provide free accommodation when they arrive.

The workers also say that the bosses even charge for rent in an accommodation that belongs to the family – R\$ 1,000 a month, which must be divided among the temporary residents. This year, there were six people living in the house.

Inspector Camasmie sees an increase in the practice of evading the rules by hiring employees as if they had come to the farm on their own instead of acknowledging that they were recruited in other cities. "This situation tends to make accommodation conditions even more precarious," he says. For him, since workers from other areas are not familiar with the town and have not received any payment yet, they will not be able to find suitable accommodation and will end up being hostages to the farmer's offer. The risk is to create informal 'loans' to pay for rent, which may result in debt bondage – one of the forms of modern slavery under Brazilian law.

In addition, Camasmie explains, "from the moment the employer transfers the responsibility for the furniture and structure of the accommodation to workers who came from another area to work for a short period of time, people tend to invest as little as possible in the property so that they can go back home with some money."

In the case of Bernardes Estate Coffee, the workers pointed out that the place rented to them by the employer is located in the back of the Bernardão Supermarket, also owned by José Eduardo Bernardes. Convenience ends up driving employees to do their monthly shopping there, and the employer has yet another opportunity for profit.

Bernardes Estate Coffee did not respond to questions sent by email by **Repórter Brasil**. Starbucks, in turn, confirmed that the farm is certified by C.A.F.E. Practices. The multinational said that Bernardes is under investigation after recent allegations but refused to share the nature of the procedures and when they started.

Read the full responses at the end of this report.



The Pedreira Farm: water stored in an old fuel tank

Carlos Augusto Rodrigues de Melo is the president of Brazil's largest coffee cooperative supplying Starbucks – Cooxupé. In addition to being in the spotlight due to his position, his name is also known to labour inspectors: both in 2021 and in 2022, Melo's family properties were fined for failing to comply with labour laws.

Repórter Brasil showed that in 2021 migrant workers from the Jequitinhonha Valley – one of the poorest regions of Minas Gerais state – had illegal discounts made to their wages⁴³ related to purchases of *derriçadeiras* and fuel used to harvest coffee at the Pedreira Farm, located in Cabo Verde, Minas Gerais, now registered to Augusto Cezar de Paula e Melo, the son of the cooperative's president.

In the following year, another property of the family – the Palmital farm, also in Cabo Verde – received 16 notices of violation for not paying workers' benefits such as the Time of Service Fund (FGTS), unfair dismissal that resulted in a fine of 40%, and failing to pay wages by the 5th working day of the month, among other irregularities.



PEDREIRA FARM_CABO VERDE

In 2023, many of the situations that led to fines in previous years are still mentioned by workers as part of their routine in farms belonging to the family of Cooxupé's president.

On a visit to the Pedreira Farm, **Repórter Brasil** found that most of the 14 workers came from the Jequitinhonha Valley. They say they work at coffee plantations because they have no other opportunities to earn some money. "We don't really like it, but need makes the job wonderful," explains a 24-year-old man who had already lost 10 kg in a month of work at the site. It was his first year in coffee harvest.

The accommodation provided by the employer consists of 'flats,' each with three small rooms: a bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom that are shared by two workers. The place has two windows and two doors that help with ventilation and light. There are earth and dirt marks. On the day **Repórter Brasil** was there, for example, the bathroom walls were grimy from floor to ceiling. The impression is that there is also lack of proper lighting.

There is no adequate place for meals, i.e. a table with chairs. Meals are prepared on a two-burner stove that they bought themselves – which is against the norms mandating employers to provide a suitable place for preparing meals. Employees say that they also pay for cooking gas and even blankets, pillows and bedding, when Brazilian law says that bedding suitable for the climatic conditions in the place must be provided. The water they consume and bathe with is stored in an old fuel tank located a few metres from the accommodation.

Since the farm is far from the urban centre, a bus takes them to the market every 15 days. They report that if they do not have cash, they can write the amount down in a notebook as a debt to Cooxupé's president Carlos Melo. "The market has an arrangement with the farm," says one of the workers. The problem is that whoever fails to harvest the heaviest grains will not earn enough to pay the extra bills that appear, which may result in debt to the farm.

When someone gets sick, harvest workers told the report that the farm only pays for transport to the hospital if the case is very serious. "Only if you're really dying," says one of the employees.

In a note, the Pedreira farm's management only said that "it complies with labour legislation" and that it follows "requirements for obtaining international certifications." They did not deny their relationship with Starbucks, but neither did they answer **Repórter Brasil's** questions about when the property was certified by C.A.F.E. Practices. Starbucks, in turn, said that the Pedreira farm's certification is in now 'expired,' without informing when that happened.

Cooxupé only said that it guarantees the traceability of all its products and respects environmental, social and legal standards in all procedures. In addition, it stated that it monitors the 'dirty list' of slave labour and that, "if any cooperative member is included in that list, appropriate measures are taken."

Read the full responses at the end of this report.

How to improve



CAMPO ALEGRE FARM
_ PATRIMÔNIO (MG)



**We demand to be heard.
We want to take part in
the auditing process
of coffee farms.**

JORGE FERREIRA DOS SANTOS FILHO

Coordination of Rural Employees
of the State of Minas Gerais (ADERE)

Human and labour rights violations described in this report take place in a sector that ranks fourth in Brazil's trade balance⁴⁴. In 2022, the average price of a 60-kg sack of coffee exported by Brazil was US\$ 234 – the highest value in the last five years. At the end of the trade chain, Starbucks Corporation reported net profits of \$3.2 billion. The multinational's stores in the US accounted for 72% of sales in 2022.

In this scenario, there are no 'excuses' for failing to sign formal contracts that respect workers' labour rights during coffee harvest seasons, says Gustavo Ferroni from Oxfam Brasil. "This doesn't depend on coordinating public policies, but rather on the industry itself formalizing work contracts, including seasonal workers, and paying living wages, which already happens with other crops."

In 2020, Oxfam Brasil published the Coffee Stain report⁴⁵, which estimated the gap between the average wage paid on coffee plantations in Minas Gerais and what would allow for a basically decent life to be 41%. A living wage must cover elements such as food, water, housing, education, health, transportation, clothing, other essential needs and provisions for unexpected events, as defined by the Global Living Wage Coalition.

According to Ferroni, C.A.F.E. Practices – as well as other good practice seals – would be more effective if certification took place during harvest season, involving truly surprise audits and guaranteeing dialogue with local actors. "It can't just be done inside the farm. The audit needs to talk to the community," he adds.

"Previous communication of surprise audits weakens the certification process. If the producers are informed that their farms will be audited, there is no surprise audit," notes Jorge Ferreira dos Santos Filho from ADERE.

Including other actors into the certification process would be an opportunity to "break the isolation of coffee harvest workers," Ferroni argues. "Many farms are closed, so the union, which is supposed to have access to workers inside them, can't do that. Workers are isolated. This is one of the great problems of coffee, which is why there is so much slave labour. Workers are isolated inside the farm, totally helpless, in a completely asymmetrical relationship. Audits should also play a role in breaking this isolation, in bringing other actors to monitor some audits, such as authorities or the union."

The multinational itself also seems to be isolated. Questioned by the report, Starbucks did not answer whether it has a communication channel to receive complaints from workers about misconduct at supplier farms. Its corporate communication also takes place primarily in English, which makes it even more difficult for Brazilian press and civil society actors to report cases of violations in its supply chain. ■

APPENDIX

Full statements

STARBUCKS

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil em 11 de abril de 2023 com as seguintes questões sobre o programa C.A.F.E. Practices:

1 - According to the [company's sustainability report](#), released in 2022, 94.86% of the coffee purchased by Starbucks came from farms verified by the C.A.F.E. Practices program; in Latin America alone there are [227,718 verified farms](#), out of a total of approximately 400,000 supplying properties. How many farms are certified by C.A.F.E. Practices only in Brazil? Is it possible to have access to the complete list of farms verified by C.A.F.E. Practices in Brazil with active status?

2 - How often are audits carried out in C.A.F.E. Practices verified farms in Brazil? Are C.A.F.E. Practices verification visits pre-announced? Do the verifiers work with local unions when carrying out the verifications?

3 - Where do the verification visits take place? What do the verification visits consist of (observation, interviews, other forms of assessment?) and how long are they?

4 - What happens if a producer/farm is reprovved in the verification of the Starbucks C.A.F.E. Practices standard? Do the C.A.F.E. Practices verifiers follow up to ensure any required action steps are taken?

5 - In the last five years, how many farms were disqualified from the C.A.F.E. Practices program for not meeting a core-criteria in Brazil? Which criteria are usually the most not complied with by the disqualified farms?

6 - What is Starbucks' assessment of the transparency of its coffee purchases? How do you plan to move forward on this issue? Is the disclosure of the coffee supplying farms an expected step in this process?

Resposta da Starbucks:

Thank you for contacting us. Here is what we can share with you:

At Starbucks we take pride in conducting business responsibly and supporting communities where we do business, from bean to cup. Because today's coffee farmers face numerous challenges to their long-term future, we believe that it is Starbucks responsibility to work alongside coffee farmers to improve their livelihoods – whether they sell to us or not.

The cornerstone of our ethical sourcing approach to buying coffee is Coffee Farmer and Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices, which was one of the coffee industry's first set of ethical sourcing standards when it launched in 2004. Developed in collaboration with Conservation International, C.A.F.E. Practices is a verification program that focuses on continuous improvement. Each supplier is required to undergo reverification regularly, with frequency dictated by their performance and size of farm- that measures farms against economic, social and environmental criteria, designed to promote transparent, profitable and sustainable coffee growing practices while protecting the well-being of coffee farmers and workers, their families and their communities.

The program includes a third-party verification process that is overseen by SCS Global Services, responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the audits. You can learn more about the program and evaluation criteria [here](#).

Evidence shows that farmers participating in the program have higher productivity than country averages, which has helped Starbucks create a long-term supply of high-quality coffee while positively impacting the lives of coffee farmers and their communities.

We are committed to sourcing coffee responsibly, for the betterment of people and planet, while we also work to empower farmers, improve their livelihoods, and positively impact their communities.

You can read about Starbucks ethical sourcing process and the role of SCS [here](#) and please note that Starbucks 2022 Global Environmental and Social Impact Report will be released this spring for more information.

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil em 01 de agosto de 2023 com as seguintes questões sobre o programa C.A.F.E. Practices:

Durante o mês de julho, estivemos nas seguintes fazendas que integram o programa de verificação da marca:

- Bernardes Estate Coffee, do José Eduardo Bernardes e que fica em Patrocínio (MG)
- MC Miaki Coffee, do Marcos Cezar Miaki e que fica em Patrocínio (MG)
- Fazenda Lago Azul (Fazenda Lagoa e Cava), do Paulo Cesar Cau e que fica em Guapé (MG)
- Fazenda Cedro, do Sebastião Aloísio de Sales e que fica em Illicínea (MG)
- Fazenda Santa Clara, do José Rogerio Franco Siqueira e que fica em Campestre (MG)
- Fazenda Pedreira, do Carlos Augusto Rodrigues de Melo (presidente da Cooxupé) e que fica em Cabo Verde (MG)
- Fazenda Ponto Alegre, do Renato de Lima Sousa e que fica em Cabo Verde (MG)

A partir das visitas e conversas com trabalhadores, pudemos verificar uma série de infrações nas fazendas acima citadas, como alojamentos com infraestruturas precárias, falta de pagamento do descanso de domingo e de passagens de ônibus para os trabalhadores que vêm de outros municípios e até produtos químicos abertos e jogados em área de fácil acesso de crianças e animais.

A partir desse panorama, gostaríamos de esclarecer algumas questões com a Starbucks. Meu prazo é 04 de agosto às 13h.

1. Quais são os requisitos que as fazendas devem cumprir para fazer parte do programa de certificação C.A.F.E. Practices?
2. A Starbucks sistematiza indicadores próprios sobre as condições trabalhistas em fazendas certificadas?
3. As fazendas visitadas pela reportagem têm, ao todo, 121 autos de infração lavrados pelo Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego (MTE) em 2022 e 2023, inclusive há casos de trabalho escravo. A empresa tem conhecimento do teor desses autos?
4. As fiscalizações feitas pelo MTE têm algum impacto na forma como o programa de certificação C.A.F.E. Practices é estabelecido no Brasil?
5. Como é o processo de due diligence em casos de empresas com infrações trabalhistas que possuem o certificado da Starbucks? Há casos concretos, no Brasil, em que o certificado foi retirado da fazenda?
6. O Brasil é o principal fornecedor global de café certificado. Garantir o respeito às relações trabalhistas num universo crescente de fazendas traz dificuldades adicionais?
7. Ouvimos alguns trabalhadores dizendo que ao chegar nas cooperativas os café são misturados, não importando muito se é uma fazenda com o certificado. Isso é possível? Como a empresa garante que o café comprado por vocês vem apenas de locais que também recebem o selo?
8. Muitas fazendas que visitamos não possuem em suas placas de entrada o selo C.A.F.E. Practices e muitos trabalhadores também não tinham conhecimento, apesar de sabermos e confirmarmos de outras maneiras que eram certificadas. A Starbucks exige que haja um selo nas placas das certificadas?
9. Saber das certificações faria com que os trabalhadores contratados tivessem mais um apoio em caso de infrações?
10. Os trabalhadores contratados têm um canal direto com a Starbucks de denúncia de violações que presenciam nas fazendas?
11. Um trabalhador nos relatou que era instruído por funcionários da MC Miaki Coffee a mentir sobre as horas extras trabalhadas quando acontecia a auditoria das certificadoras. Como a Starbucks vê esse caso? Há meios de garantir que não haja uma burla nas auditorias?
12. A Starbucks poderia nos fornecer informações de quando e de que forma (virtual ou presencial) foram realizadas as auditorias nas fazendas citadas? Além disso, caso tenham solicitadas adequações, poderiam nos dizer quais foram?

Resposta em 07.08

Starbucks takes very seriously our responsibility to ethical sourcing and transparency within our supply chain. When Starbucks is notified of a supply chain concern, we investigate the farms and concerns raised until we can verify that they are in full compliance with our stringent ethical sourcing requirements, C.A.F.E. Practices.

C.A.F.E. Practices is a verification program that measures farms against economic, social and environmental criteria, all designed to promote transparent, profitable and sustainable coffee growing practices while also protecting the well-being of coffee farmers and workers their families and their communities. The open-sourced program consists of more than 200 indicators – from financial reporting to protecting workers' rights and conserving water and biodiversity.

Coffee farmers need to protect the rights of people working on their farms and must have measures in place that promote

a safe, fair and humane work environment. This includes criteria around wages and benefits, hiring practices, hours of work, use of protective equipment, access to medical care and education. There are several areas in this section that are considered zero tolerances in the program.

The program also includes criteria to ensure traceability systems and segregation of coffee that is C.A.F.E. Practices from Non-C.A.F.E. Practices coffee.

We believe that our continuous improvement approach is the right approach to promote positive change amongst these suppliers and farms to ensure a positive future for everyone involved in coffee. C.A.F.E. Practices is a verification program, not a one-time certification system, because we believe there is always more work to do to ensure the long-term supply of high-quality coffee and to positively impact farming communities.

Specific to these farms, a few details to know:

- In order for a farm to maintain C.A.F.E Practices verification, it must be re-verified regularly through third-party inspections to ensure ongoing compliance. This means some farms you have visited may have previously held verification but are not associated with the program.
- **Only one farm in question holds an active status and supply relationship within the program.** This is Bernardes Estate Coffee, and we are thoroughly investigating recent claims raised and will ensure an appropriate corrective action is identified and acted on.
- **Five of the farms mentioned belong to supply chains with expired status in the program.** To obtain active status in the program, these supply chains will need to undergo re-verification and satisfactorily complete all program requirements. These farms are MC Miaki, Cedro Farm, Ponte Alegre, Santa Clara, and Pedreira. We will thoroughly investigate these claims as part of any renewal procedures and decisions.
- The other farm referenced **has not held an active C.A.F.E. Practices recently or could not be identified in the program with the information provided thus do not currently supply to Starbucks.** Nonetheless, we are deeply concerned about the wellbeing of workers across the region and will continue to work with our local partners and NGOs to improve conditions for all.

As additional background on our process of corrective action and evolving labor practices:

It is standard for us to suspend purchases from the farms in question until we can ensure through our auditing procedures that the supplier adheres to our ethical sourcing standards. You can read more about our stringent ethical sourcing requirements here: <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2020/cafe-practices-starbucks-approach-to-ethically-sourcing-coffee/>. Also visit <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2020/global-human-rights-statement/>

As stated before, we remain committed to working with our suppliers to advance labor practices. In Brazil specifically, we recently expanded our Farmer Support Center to help provide additional resources to farmers. Our Brazil Farmer Support Center team offers regular workshops focused on Social Responsibility to coffee producers and suppliers about Brazilian Labor Legislation. You can read more about the Farmer Support Centers here: <https://stories.starbucks.com/emea/stories/2022/starbucks-farmer-support-centers-free-education-and-resources/> and here <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2021/starbucks-opens-farmer-support-center-in-brazil-for-coffee-growing/>.

Email enviado em 07 de agosto de 2023

1. Which recent complaints regarding Bernardes Estate Coffee are currently under investigation?
2. Specifically, can you provide the month and year when the Cedro, Ponto Alegre, and Pedreira farms had their status in the program not renewed, and what was the reason for this?

Resposta em 09.08

Thank you for your follow up. Unfortunately, I am not able to share that level of detail. However, I do want to reinforce that any allegation – including those brought forward by Repórter Brasil – are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Beyond detection of issues, we are focused on appropriate resolution and driving meaningful industry change through our standards. If you have any other questions on our C.A.F.E. Practices, please let me know.

Email enviado em 11 de agosto

1. Is the company Café Ourizona, owned by Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos, still a part of the Starbucks C.A.F.E. Practices program? What is its current status within the program?
2. If the company is no longer a participant, what was the nature of the relationship between the Brazilian company and Starbucks? When did Café Ourizona cease its participation in the program?
3. Was Starbucks aware of this worker rescue incident?

Resposta em 15.08

As stated in our previous interaction, we take these matters very seriously, as responsible sourcing and ethical business practices are of utmost importance to Starbucks. After carefully reviewing the information you provided, we have determined that the tax ID included in your inquiry is associated with one roastery and grinder, not a farm legal entity. If the situation you shared occurred at a farm, we would need to know the tax ID/Inscrição Estadual of the farm or the social security number of the producer in order to cross reference with our information. We are deeply concerned by the allegations raised and want to ensure our investigation is thorough and complete. As we shared with you previously, Starbucks is dedicated to responsible and ethical sourcing and upholding the highest standards in our business relationships.

Resposta em 22/08/2023

We are looking into the matter you raised however are unable to match the information you shared with any documentation. With the information provided, we can confirm that 003049538.00-91 /Fazenda Mesas has an active status in our C.A.F.E. Practices program. Our records show no active labor complaints, litigation or open claims against Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos. Our [C.A.F.E. Practices](#) program is industry leading, and in the event any non-compliance is identified, we will collaborate with the farm to develop an appropriate remediation plan, which may involve suspending purchases from the farm until we are confident that it can meet and uphold our standards.

Rainforest Alliance

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil em 17/08/2023

Escrevo porque estamos fazendo uma reportagem sobre violações trabalhistas em fazendas de café. O foco dessa investigação é o sistema de verificação da Starbucks, o C.A.F.E. Practices. No entanto, como vamos mencionar o caso de uma propriedade que também é certificada Rainforest Alliance, gostaria de abrir espaço para que vocês possam responder também. O caso é o seguinte:

Em agosto de 2022, um flagrante de trabalho em condições análogas à escravidão ocorreu na Fazenda Mesas (Inscrição Estadual: 30495380091), em Campos Altos (MG). A propriedade é gerida pelo produtor Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos (CPF: 009.287.721-44), que também é dono da Fazenda Pedras e Fazenda Ourizona, localizada em Córrego Danta (MG). As [três propriedades mencionadas são certificadas pela Rainforest Alliance](#), segundo consta no site da organização. Ali, a certificação aparece como ativa desde maio de 2023. No entanto, [postagens no Instagram da propriedade](#) indicam a obtenção da certificação já em junho de 2022, um mês antes do flagrante de trabalho escravo.

Na fiscalização trabalhista ocorrida em agosto do ano passado, 17 trabalhadores foram resgatados de condições análogas à escravidão, entre eles uma adolescente de 15 anos e dois jovens de 16 e 17 anos. Segundo informações obtidas pela reportagem, a administração da Fazenda Mesas/Ourizona não forneceu ferramentas, equipamentos de proteção individual e não formalizou o contrato de trabalho do grupo de safristas, que trabalhavam na informalidade. Não havia banheiro químico no campo nem local adequado para fazer as refeições. Por conta dessa situação, o produtor foi autuado pelo Ministério do Trabalho.

Diante disso, gostaríamos de realizar as [seguintes perguntas](#):

- 1) A Rainforest Alliance tinha conhecimento sobre essa fiscalização quando certificou a Fazenda Mesas em maio deste ano?
- 2) A orientação da Rainforest Alliance, nesses casos, é aguardar que o produtor tenha oportunidade de se defender administrativamente junto ao Ministério do Trabalho e só excluí-lo da certificação caso o cafeicultor passe a integrar o cadastro conhecido como "lista suja" do trabalho escravo?
- 3) Quando ocorreu a primeira certificação na Fazenda Mesas e em outras propriedades de Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos? Houve alguma auditoria durante a safra de café nas propriedades do cafeicultor? Não foi identificado nenhum problema em relação aos trabalhadores safristas contratados para a colheita?

RESPOSTA

As auditorias são realizadas por empresas chamadas de Entidades Certificadoras, terceiras partes responsáveis pelos certificados. Elas que verificam a conformidade com a Norma de Agricultura Sustentável para as propriedades e avaliam que situações de trabalho forçado e trabalho infantil não ocorram em propriedades certificadas. Com base em seus relatórios, a Rainforest Alliance faz sua revisão e emite ou não uma licença de certificação.

1) A Rainforest Alliance tinha conhecimento sobre essa fiscalização quando certificou a Fazenda Mesas em maio deste ano?

De acordo com os relatórios da Entidade certificadora enviados à Rainforest Alliance para a auditoria de maio de 2023, não havia informações dessas inspeções em agosto de 2022. As Entidades certificadoras realizam uma consulta pré-auditoria para verificar se o produtor a ser auditado possui processos legais publicadas pelo Ministério do Trabalho.

2) A orientação da Rainforest Alliance, nesses casos, é aguardar que o produtor tenha oportunidade de se defender administrativamente junto ao Ministério do Trabalho e só excluí-lo da certificação caso o cafeicultor passe a integrar o cadastro conhecido como “lista suja” do trabalho escravo?

A Rainforest Alliance tem como princípio apoiar o processo de melhoria contínua para que os produtores possam melhorar suas práticas para assegurar o bem-estar dos trabalhadores, inclusive quando incorrem determinadas não conformidades com os critérios da Norma.

A Rainforest Alliance considera outros parâmetros que vão além do Cadastro de empregadores que submeteram trabalhadores a condições análogas à de escravo. O Cadastro é um critério que complementa a análise de todos os requisitos durante a auditoria. Com base no relatório de auditoria, as Entidades Certificadoras tomam sua decisão, enquanto a Rainforest Alliance analisa e revisa o relatório da auditoria e decide se a certificação será ou não concedida a propriedade.

Se forem encontradas não conformidades significativas nos requisitos de alto risco aos trabalhadores, a Rainforest Alliance se reserva o direito de não conceder ou pode até cancelar a certificação.

Vale ressaltar que propriedades incluídas pelo Ministério do Trabalho no Cadastro de empregadores que submeteram trabalhadores a condições análogas à de escravo não poderão ser certificadas ou terão seu certificado cancelado.

3) Quando ocorreu a primeira certificação na Fazenda Mesas e em outras propriedades de Guilherme de Oliveira Lemos? Houve alguma auditoria durante a safra de café nas propriedades do cafeicultor? Não foi identificado nenhum problema em relação aos trabalhadores safristas contratados para a colheita?

A primeira auditoria na fazenda ocorreu em maio de 2022 e a segunda ocorreu em maio de 2023.

Tanto a primeira quanto a segunda auditoria foram realizadas durante o período de colheita. Conforme estipulado em nossa [“Política: Auditorias para Titulares de Certificados baseados no Brasil”](#), todas as auditorias de propriedades devem ser realizadas durante a colheita. Na última auditoria de certificação, não foram encontradas denúncias ou reclamações trabalhistas relacionadas a investigação ocorrida em 2022 pelo Ministério do Trabalho.

RESPOSTAS NA ÍNTEGRA - pesquisa Starbucks

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil a Fazenda Pedreira e Cooxupé em 01 de agosto de 2023

1. Quais são os requisitos que as fazendas devem cumprir para fazer parte do programa de certificação C.A.F.E. Practices?
2. A fazenda segue todas as normas trabalhistas estabelecidas para fazendas de café?
3. Há 16 autos de infração de 2022 lavrados pelo Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego em nome de Carlos Augusto Rodrigues de Melo. Quais foram as infrações cometidas? Carlos Augusto já realizou os ajustes?
4. Por que a fazenda não fornece fogão para os funcionários que moram nos alojamentos?
5. Como a fazenda garante que a água utilizada tanto para banho quanto para consumo, e que vem de um antigo contêiner de combustível, é limpa e não fará mal à saúde dos trabalhadores?
6. Por que não é disponibilizado máquina de lavar roupas aos trabalhadores?
7. Como é feito o pagamento do descanso de domingo?
8. A Cooxupé, da qual o dono da fazenda é presidente, também é certificada pela C.A.F.E. Practices. Ouvimos alguns trabalhadores dizendo que ao chegar nas cooperativas os café são misturados, não importando muito se é uma fazenda com o certificado. Isso é possível? Como a empresa garante que o café comprado pela Starbucks vem apenas de locais que também recebem o selo?
9. Quando e de que forma (online ou presencial) aconteceu a última fiscalização da C.A.F.E. Practices tanto na Fazenda Pedreira quanto na Cooxupé?

Respostas em 02.08

FAZENDA PEDREIRA

A Fazenda Pedreira informa que cumpre a legislação trabalhista de acordo com as normas que regem as relações individuais e coletivas de trabalho estabelecidas na Constituição Federal e, também, as determinações exigidas para obtenção de certificações internacionais, que atestam qualidade, boas práticas de produção e sustentabilidade.

COOXUPÉ

A Cooxupé é uma das principais cooperativas de café do mundo, reconhecida pela sua reputação em oferecer qualidade e seriedade em todos processos, de forma idônea e auditada interna e externamente, respeitando as normas ambientais, sociais e legais.

Todos os cafés recebidos pela cooperativa são devidamente identificados, armazenados e analisados pelo laboratório de Classificação e Controle de Qualidade, de acordo com suas origens.

Após detectado o padrão de qualidade do café, os lotes são separados conforme os resultados estabelecidos nas avaliações, e, posteriormente, comercializados junto aos mercados interno e externos, atendendo 50 países.

Esse mesmo padrão é adotado pelos lotes recebidos de propriedades certificadas e verificadas, mantendo toda a rastreabilidade.

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil a Cooxupé em 15 de agosto de 2023

1. O que a Cooxupé irá fazer diante dessas denúncias de infrações cometidas por um de seus cooperados, sendo ele presidente da cooperativa?
2. Haverá alguma investigação?
3. Como a Cooxupé age diante de denúncias de infrações trabalhistas?

Resposta em 15.08

COOXUPÉ

“A Cooxupé monitora o CADASTRO DE EMPREGADORES PREVISTO NO ARTIGO 2º, CAPUT, DA PORTARIA INTERMINISTERIAL MTPS/MMIRDH Nº 4, DE 11 DE MAIO DE 2016. Caso algum cooperado seja inserido no referido cadastro, são tomadas medidas cabíveis.”

Email enviado pela Repórter Brasil a Fazenda Cedro em 02 de agosto de 2023

1. Quais são os requisitos que as fazendas devem cumprir para fazer parte do programa de certificação C.A.F.E. Practices?
2. A fazenda segue todas as normas trabalhistas estabelecidas para fazendas de café?
3. Em 2022, a fazenda foi autuada e multada por submeter os trabalhadores a condições degradantes laborais e de alojamento, além de ter sido encontrado um trabalhador menor de idade em condições análogas à de escravo. A fazenda chegou a assinar um Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta com o Ministério Público. Contudo, durante a nossa visita verificamos que os alojamentos ainda tinham apenas um banheiro para 10 pessoas, pagamento de passagem de ida e volta pelos próprios trabalhadores (mediante a reembolso), falta de roupas de cama, a maquininha de colheita e custos de uso eram dos trabalhadores, sem EPIs, além de outras infrações. Vocês gostariam de comentar sobre essas infrações verificadas pela reportagem?
4. Conversamos com os trabalhadores que nos garantiram que é permitido o trabalho de domingo e até durante a noite. Além disso, nos disseram que o descanso semanal, caso queiram fazer, não é pago. Gostariam de comentar sobre essas afirmações dos trabalhadores?
5. Os trabalhadores nos relataram que a conta no mercado sempre é feita em nome do dono da fazenda, Sebastião Aloísio de Sales, e que depois é descontado do salário. Como isso funciona?
6. A fazenda é composta por duas propriedades, a Cedro e a Conquista, sendo que a produção entre as duas é muito distinta. Quando os contratos são assinados, os trabalhadores já sabem em qual fazenda irão realizar a colheita ou isso depende muito de como está a produção?
7. Quando e de que forma (online ou presencial) aconteceu a última fiscalização da C.A.F.E. Practices?

Resposta em 02.08

FAZENDA CEDRO

Quais são os requisitos que as fazendas devem cumprir para fazer parte do programa de certificação C.A.F.E. Practices?

Inicialmente, é relevante esclarecer que as Fazendas Reunidas Cedro-Chapadão (Cedro e Conquista) foram de fato participantes da certificação CAFE Practices em 2022. Contudo, a certificação não foi renovada em 2023 e, importante ressaltar, nunca houve comercialização de café certificado pelo CAFE Practices.

A fazenda segue todas as normas trabalhistas estabelecidas para fazendas de café?

Desde 2019, nossa fazenda tem se esforçado para implementar uma série de medidas visando cumprir todas as legislações aplicáveis, com foco na NR31 e na CLT. Em 2023, inclusive, contratamos um engenheiro especialista para adequar toda a propriedade às normas NR12 e NR10, com conclusão prevista para ocorrer dentro de seis meses (Laudo do Engenheiro - anexo 1).

Em 2022, a fazenda foi autuada e multada por submeter os trabalhadores a condições degradantes laborais e de alojamento, além de ter sido encontrado um trabalhador menor de idade em condições análogas à de escravo. A fazenda chegou a assinar um Termo de Ajustamento de Conduta com o Ministério Público.

Em relação à fiscalização realizada em nossas fazendas em Illicínea/MG no ano de 2022, esclarecemos que não houve qualquer reação adversa de nossa parte. Devido a um erro do nosso departamento contábil de RH, um jovem de 17 anos e 9 meses foi contratado e registrado por engano. Imediatamente, ao identificar o erro e em conformidade com a determinação dos auditores fiscais do MTE, o empregado foi desligado e seus direitos trabalhistas foram devidamente pagos. A partir desse incidente, firmamos um Termo de Ajuste de Conduta (TAC) com o Ministério Público, que estamos cumprindo rigorosamente (TAC- anexo 2) (Comprovante de Acerto com o menor- anexo 3).

Destacamos que as Fazendas Reunidas Cedro-Chapadão jamais submeteram qualquer trabalhador a condições degradantes, trabalho forçado ou condições análogas à escravidão. Seguem algumas medidas adotadas em nossa propriedade:

Temos uma funcionária dedicada à limpeza das moradias dos funcionários. Todas atendem à NR 31 e estão equipadas com armários individuais, banheiro, cozinha, internet wifi, televisão a cabo, camas com colchões certificados pelo INMETRO e roupa de cama nova fornecida pela fazenda (Moradias - Anexo 4).

Contudo, durante a nossa visita verificamos que os alojamentos ainda tinham apenas um banheiro para 10 pessoas,

Na maior casa ficam alojados 10 funcionários. Quanto a disponibilidade de banheiros no alojamento maior, o qual acomoda no máximo 10 pessoas atende a NR31 no item "31.17.3.1 As instalações sanitárias fixas devem ser constituídas de: a) lavatório, na proporção de 1 (uma) unidade para cada grupo de 20 (vinte) trabalhadores ou fração)" Além do mesmo ponto referente ao sanitário não ser escopo da TAC; (Moradias - Anexo 4).

pagamento de passagem de ida e volta pelos próprios trabalhadores (mediante a reembolso),

Custeamos as passagens e a alimentação de todos os trabalhadores que viajam para trabalhar na fazenda (Comprovante da compra das passagens – anexo 5).

falta de roupas de cama,

Todos os trabalhadores recebem roupas de cama conforme a NR 31 e todos os colchões fornecidos possuem certificação do INMETRO (Nota fiscal de compra de materiais – anexo 6).

a maquininha de colheita e custos de uso eram dos trabalhadores,

Durante a visita das repórteres, não havia colheita manual de derrigadeira ou qualquer outra atividade com equipamentos portáteis nas fazendas. Todos os trabalhadores que utilizam a derrigadeira manual possuem certificados de treinamento e fazem uso de equipamentos fornecidos pela propriedade.

sem EPIs, além de outras infrações. Vocês gostariam de comentar sobre essas infrações verificadas pela reportagem?

Todos os trabalhadores recebem EPIs, conforme o PGRTR das propriedades (Ficha de entrega de EPI – anexo 7).

Conversamos com os trabalhadores que nos garantiram que é permitido o trabalho de domingo e até durante a noite. Além disso, nos disseram que o descanso semanal, caso queiram fazer, não é pago. Gostariam de comentar sobre essas afirmações dos trabalhadores?

Seguimos rigorosamente os horários de trabalho estabelecidos na CLT, não realizando trabalho aos finais de semana, feriados ou horários noturnos (Folha de ponto – anexo 8).

Todos os trabalhadores têm garantido o seu descanso semanal remunerado e devidamente pago, registrado em seus holerites (Holerites – anexo 9).

Os trabalhadores nos relataram que a conta no mercado sempre é feita em nome do dono da fazenda, Sebastião Aloísio de Sales, e que depois é descontado do salário. Como isso funciona?

Disponibilizamos um ônibus quinzenalmente para que os funcionários possam fazer suas compras na cidade e um carro para compras menores quando necessário. Os pagamentos são feitos diretamente pelos trabalhadores no comércio local, sem qualquer desconto por parte da fazenda. Vale ressaltar que Ilhéus é uma cidade pequena, sendo comum os trabalhadores vindos de outras localidades usarem o nome do proprietário como referência para compras (Holerites sem descontos – anexo 9).

A fazenda é composta por duas propriedades, a Cedro e a Conquista, sendo que a produção entre as duas é muito distinta. Quando os contratos são assinados, os trabalhadores já sabem em qual fazenda irão realizar a colheita ou isso depende muito de como está a produção?

As Fazendas Reunidas Cedro-Chapadão são um grupo, portanto a administração das fazendas é feita de forma conjunta, os trabalhadores safristas estão cientes do cronograma de trabalho para colheita que se inicia na Fazenda Conquista e segue para as demais fazendas conforme a maturação do café, fator um tanto quanto imprevisível na cafeicultura de montanha uma vez que não há incidência solar uniforme portanto o café não chega a ponto de colheita ao mesmo tempo em todos os talhões. Vale ressaltar que os funcionários são transportados por um ônibus licenciado e as fazendas são vizinhas entre si, fazendo divisa. (licença do ônibus – anexo 10).

Quando e de que forma (online ou presencial) aconteceu a última fiscalização da C.A.F.E. Practices?

A fazenda passou por auditoria presencial da CAFE Practices dia 15/06/2023, no entanto a fazenda não foi aprovada por uma questão agrônômica, não participando do processo para 2023.

Gostaria de aproveitar para enfatizar nosso compromisso em agir com boa fé e trabalhar constantemente para melhorar a qualidade de vida dos trabalhadores que empregamos. Valorizamos o trabalho jornalístico investigativo na garantia de direitos humanos e trabalhistas e reconhecemos a importância de nossa responsabilidade nesse sentido.

Entendemos que, enquanto humanos, sempre estamos sujeitos a erros, mas esses incidentes não nos desanimam na busca contínua pela sustentabilidade e bem-estar coletivo.

Agradecemos mais uma vez a oportunidade de esclarecimento e admiramos a atitude do repórter em saber a outra parte uma vez que é comum atualmente que sejam publicados fatos sob apenas um ponto de vista, sem a devida investigação e compromisso com a verdade.

[Pasta com documentos da Cedro](#)

NOTES

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