

Effectiveness of premium programs in increasing the income of Mexican coffee growers

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In Mexico, Arabica coffee is a crop of environmental and social sustainability, but economically it is not. The environmental needs of coffee cultivation place it on surfaces where the prosperity of other cultivated species is put to the test, generally in areas characterized by semi-warm climates of mountainous relief, with steep slopes, which prevents the use of the machinery available in the market, resulting in that the cultivation work is done manually. The slope makes the construction of roads unfeasible, so that the inputs and harvests have to be transported using animals as a means of transport. The aforementioned characteristics imply that the coffee production is from the agricultural activities that generate the greatest number of jobs per unit of harvested area, but given the scarce use of machinery, these jobs are of low economic productivity.

Arabica coffee in Mexico is grown in small plots, below the shade provided by trees of other species in such a way that the alteration of natural vegetation to establish a coffee agroecosystem is minimal, so a coffee plantation reproduces the biodiversity of the natural ecosystem, in Consequently, it is environmentally sustainable.

From the last decade of the last century to the present, coffee prices in the international market tend to decrease, the main cause of this phenomenon is the oversupply, in this condition, the scarcely technified small producers can not subsist on this crop, propitiating emigration or change or change to the cultivation of less sustainable species, but more profitable.

A measure that seeks to alleviate the effect of the fall in coffee prices was the payment of surcharges to producers for environmental care and quality, both measures require certification whose cost is not accessible to most producers.

In the present study an evaluation of the effect of the overpricing processes on the income of smallholder coffee producers is made by building coffee flow networks from producers to consumers, considering environmental, technological, social, economic and public policy factors. to the rural sector, with the assumption that all producers can opt for some process of overpricing and that all consumers can purchase all types of coffee.

The results point to the fact that the producers benefited from the overpricing processes constitute a proportion far below the projections planned both in their number and in the magnitude of the increase in income and under that plan, there is no feasibility of the strategy to ensure compliance. of the objectives of the program. When tracking the production costs to obtain the certificates to aspire to overpricing by the producer, it was detected that the main beneficiaries of the premiums are the certifiers of both environmental care and quality.

The conclusion is that overpricing does not guarantee an increase in the income of the majority of smallholder producers, a modification of the strategy is necessary.