



ASOCACE – Paraguay

Association of sugar cane producers

The association of sugar cane smallholders ASOCACE (Asociación de Cañicultores Orgánicos de la Zona Central) was established in 2002 with the support of PRONATEC to improve the livelihoods of small-scale sugar producers in Guarambaré, Paraguay. Today, ASOCACE represents the interests of about 240 farmers and their families. Together with some 500 harvesters, they benefit from the cooperative's strong position and from community projects financed by Fair-trade premiums.

Before the foundation of ASOCACE, the farmers of the Central Department region in Paraguay were not organised and delivered their sugar cane individually at disadvantageous prices to the sugar mills in the region. With the goal to secure income for smallholders, support the poorest families and help them develop their own agricultural department, PRONATEC assisted the farmers in setting up their own association ASOCACE, located in Guarambaré, Paraguay, about 22 miles outside of the capital city of Asunción.

The overall goal of ASOCACE is the production of high-quality organic and Fairtrade certified sugar cane to generate safe incomes for smallholders. Their business focuses on long-term partnerships based on mutual respect and fair terms to the benefit of all parties involved – business partners, local communities and the environment alike. Sustainable projects are part of their long-term investment in the region.

The Departamento Central in Paraguay offers ideal conditions for growing sugar cane. It rains often, so no artificial irrigation is necessary. Sugar cane is a perennial plant and is usually harvested five times within a period of 5 years before the yields decline. After a year of recovery for the field, the plant is replaced (newly planted). It takes about 12 months after the harvest to reach full maturity. Sugar cane is generally harvested from May to November. The stalks are filled with a soft, fibrous, sugar-storing pulp. The juice pressed from the sugar cane forms the basis for a series of natural products.



LATEST FAIRTRADE PROJECTS

- **Financial support** – 1,000,000 PYG (approx. 150 US dollars) paid out to each member to support smallholders suffering from the consequences of a drought
- **Technical support** – 1 ha of free tractor works per member (ploughing, harrowing)
- **Community building** – enabling meetings of the cooperative
- **Purchase of school material** – supporting schools in the area

Here's how ASOCACE supports local smallholder families

- **Higher incomes** thanks to the organic/Fairtrade premium and Fairtrade minimum price
- **Higher yields** thanks to production support (ploughing, harrowing), organic fertiliser, training and harvest support
- **The entire region benefits** from valuable community projects

ASOCACE at a glance

- Founded in 2002
 - Fairtrade certified since 2005
 - 240 members, 500 seasonal workers
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"The people from ASOCACE visit us nearly every week and help us in all kinds of ways, be that buying fertilisers or providing a tractor to prepare the ground for sowing or for weeding in the narrow furrows in the fields. It helps us to earn considerably more."

Ignacio Arrua, 62, member of ASOCACE since 2018



ASOCACE works closely with the family-owned sugar mill LA FELSINA. While the sugar mill takes care of processing, refining and exporting the cane sugar, the cooperative itself covers all aspects relating to harvest, certifications, deciding how organic/Fairtrade premiums are used, providing training on good agricultural practice and organic farming, georeferencing plots of land and hiring out tractors. The cooperative also gives farmers access to organic fertilisers and high-quality seeds which would otherwise be almost unobtainable for the farmers.

The long-term partnership between ASOCACE, LA FELSINA und PRONATEC creates trust among consumers and producers alike and ensures continuity. PRONATEC is not only close to the farmers but also to the sugar factory and can therefore pass on information to the customers first-hand.

Our products

SYRAMENA® raw cane sugar:

- Special Light
- Golden Light

The crystalline raw cane sugar SYRAMENA® is an ideal substitute for beet sugar.

