



cacao CO-OP PROFILE

ORO VERDE CO-OP

SMALL FARMER
Grown



The Satalaya Tuanama family are members of Oro Verde and cacao producers. They are pictured here with Cristina Liberati and Earnie Bruce of Equal Exchange, and George Brown of First Alternative Co-op in Oregon.

What makes this co-op special?

Oro Verde's central offices are located in the beautiful town of Lamas. More than two-thirds of the cooperative's membership is from the Chanca Lamista indigenous group. This group's native language is Quechua. The town of Lamas has been designated as the folkloric capital of the San Martin region of Peru. Until coffee leaf rust devastated co-op members' crops in 2016, they were mainly a coffee business. Since that time, many of the farmers have turned to cacao and wood for timber trees as their primary sources of income. The investments in timber trees are part of a project they call "Secure Retirement," and in addition to the sales of the wood, they earn carbon capture credits.

Oro Verde has several different varieties of cacao, and they have focused on promoting high-quality varieties, what they call Elite Trees, to offer specialty lots to their customers. They also have tasting panels for coffee and cacao that regularly monitor the quality of their product for export. Two staff members of Oro Verde also participate as judges in the national cacao contest.



One of the varieties of fine flavor cacao at Oro Verde. The pulp around the beans is called 'baba' in Spanish, and it's delicious!

Co-op Data

CO-OP NAME:	ORO VERDE LTDA.
LOCATION:	Perú
FOUNDED IN:	1999
CURRENT GENERAL MANAGER:	Hildebrando Cardenas Salazar
CO-OP PRODUCTS:	Cocoa beans, Chocolate, Coffee, Panela, Honey
PRODUCT VOLUMES:	2,000 MT Cocoa Beans annually, 31,000 qq coffee annually
CERTIFICATIONS:	Fair Trade, Organic, UTZ, Rainforest Alliance, SPP, Gender, Bio Suisse
WEBSITE:	www.oroverde.com.pe
FACEBOOK:	facebook.com/OROVERDELTD/

Farmer Data

NUMBER OF MEMBERS:	1350
AVERAGE PRODUCER AGE:	45
GENDER:	1106 male members, 244 female members
AVERAGE FARM SIZE:	2.5 hectares
AVERAGE FARM PRODUCTIVITY:	1000 kilos of dry cacao per hectare, 1120 kilos of dry coffee per hectare
AVERAGE ANNUAL (NET) INCOME:	\$3900
PERU MINIMUM WAGE (ANNUAL)	\$3036

Relationship between Equal Exchange and Co-op

Commercial Collaboration:

YEARS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EE AND CO-OP: 5 years

EE PRODUCTS:

- Organic Bittersweet Chocolate Chips
- Organic Semisweet Chocolate Chips

VOLUMES

PURCHASED: approximately 75MT annually

Non-Commercial Collaboration:

- USAID Co-operative Development Program 2011-2017
- VISITS TO PERU: annual visits since 2012, Equal Exchange delegation in August 2018.
- VISITS TO UNITED STATES: General Manager Hildebrando Cárdenas Salazar, West Bridgewater Headquarter visit in 2013

» FARMER PROFILES/STORIES «



Pastor Sangama Guerra

Pastor Sangama is a cocoa producer from the town of Mishkiyakillo, a Quechua word which translates to “Sweet Waters”. Pastor is on the education committee of the co-op, which meets once a month. His

message to consumers is to “eat more! Everything we grow is organic and we both need each other.”



Leopoldo Dante Valle Chanahuana & Orfith Satalaya Tapullima

This farming couple hopes that their children will also become farmers but “better farmers.” When Dante and Orfith entered Oro Verde, they were at ground zero. With help from

micro financing, they were able to purchase their own plot of land and begin cocoa production. Dante serves as a “promoter” for Oro Verde meaning he receives technical training from the cooperative which he then shares with neighbors and local cooperative members.



Deciderio Lozano Rios

Deciderio is leader of the technical services team at Oro Verde and an entrepreneurial farmer. He attended both of the Equal Exchange USAID project productivity exchanges and took the learning back to his own farm.

He produces mountain microorganisms, organic fertilizers, and uses his farm as a model to teach his community these techniques. He is also a pastor in the local church.



Hildebrando Cárdenas Salazar

Oro Verde is focusing on education and technical assistance under the guidance of General Manager Hildebrando Cardenas Salazar. Hildebrando returned to his hometown of Lamas after finishing his studies

in industrial engineering. According to Hildebrando, “you can give a producer 10 kilos of compost, but you need to teach him why it’s important, to take it to the next level,” Hildebrando said. “Like Equal Exchange, we want to improve the lives of our small farmer members.”

What makes the relationship between EE and this co-op special?

Equal Exchange started working with Oro Verde in 2012 with the USAID Co-operative Development Program. Grant Projects Manager Cristina Liberati installed a cocoa Flavor Laboratory at Oro Verde that the co-op eventually transformed into a small chocolate making facility. Another positive outcome of building this relationship is that Equal Exchange began purchasing cacao from Oro Verde for our chocolate chip product line made in Peru. Co-op Manager Hildebrando Cardenas Salazar wants consumers to know that, “there are the feelings, emotions, and hard work of each farmer in every chocolate chip.” By purchasing these products grown by small-scale producers, he said consumers are doing more than just eating high-quality chocolate; they’re helping improve lives.

Through the project, Equal Exchange also supported the development of a Promoter Program for agricultural extension services. Oro Verde observed that it was often difficult to find the funding to hire and maintain a large staff of agricultural technicians. They believed that if they trained some farmer leaders in many of the skills that the technicians have, they would build expertise within the communities of the co-op that would be more available and more sustainable. As a result of this program, many of the farmers who participated eventually came to hold staff positions or co-op leadership positions that they had not aspired to before.



The first graduating class of Oro Verde Promoters. Promoters are farmers trained to support organic productivity improvements in their communities.



Equal Exchange products with cacao from ORO VERDE:



Bittersweet
Chocolate Chips



Semi-Sweet
Chocolate Chips