



Rainforest Alliance

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Leaders in Sustainability Honored at Rainforest Alliance Gala

New York - The Rainforest Alliance, an international nonprofit organization focused on sustainable farming, forestry and tourism, names the 2010 honorees for its annual gala on May 12 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Companies continue to make bold commitments to sustainability, despite an uncertain economic landscape, and these commitments improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity on the ground. The annual gala recognizes companies and individuals for their work with the Rainforest Alliance on making sustainable supply chain decisions, or for their longtime support of conservation work.

“Twenty years ago, the Rainforest Alliance had only a handful of companies working with us on their supply chains, and now we have thousands,” said **Tensie Whelan, president of the Rainforest Alliance**. “The companies and individuals honored during our annual gala are those that show leadership in their efforts to make farms, forests and tourism operations more sustainable so that future generations may also enjoy them.”

The 2010 honorees are:

Sustainable Standard-Setters (recognizing businesses and individuals with strong commitments to sustainability that champion conservation, improve the environment and support local communities):

Pierrick Chouard of Vintage Plantations Chocolates

Columbia Forest Products

Côte d’Or Chocolate

Glenn Jampol and Teresa Osman of Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation & Inn

JD Wetherspoon

Kenya Tea Development Agency

Willamette Valley Vineyards

2010 Gala Co-chairs:

Luigi Lavazza S.p.A.

Suzano Pulp and Paper

The honorees and co-chairs will come together on May 12 with other business leaders and representatives from the Rainforest Alliance for a day-long workshop on marketing sustainability and certification at a location in downtown Manhattan. Following the workshop, they will join other Rainforest Alliance supporters for an awards dinner, dancing and a silent auction at the American Museum of Natural History. Gala proceeds benefit the Rainforest Alliance's work in sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism.

Achievements of the 2010 gala honorees:

Pierrick Chouard of Vintage Plantations Chocolates

In the late 1990s, Pierrick Chouard – at the time, manager of a French chocolate company – paid a visit to the Dominican Republic to research local cocoa farms. It was an eye-opening experience for Chouard, who was unaware of the depth and complexity of the social, environmental and economic challenges facing cocoa farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean. Following the trip, Chouard developed a class to introduce cocoa farmers to better farming practices and began contemplating launching his own line of sustainably grown specialty chocolate. Chouard approached the Rainforest Alliance with a generous donation to jump-start a development project in the Dominican Republic and a desire to identify a sustainable source for his new line of chocolate products. Together, we agreed to connect with potential suppliers in Ecuador, where the Rainforest Alliance was already engaged with a number of farmers. By 2004, Vintage Plantations Arriba chocolate had hit the shelves and become the first-ever cocoa product to bear the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ green frog seal. Today, 100 percent of the cocoa used in Vintage's delicious chocolates comes from farms that protect the environment and the rights and welfare of local communities.

Columbia Forest Products

In the late 1990's Columbia Forest Products -- North America's leading producer of hardwood plywood and hardwood veneer -- identified certification as an opportunity to

differentiate its products in the marketplace. Soon after, it became the first manufacturer of its kind to secure a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)/Rainforest Alliance Chain-of-Custody certificate, and more than a decade later it provides the industry's most comprehensive line of FSC-certified decorative hardwood panel products. Columbia has incorporated other game-changing practices into its operations, too -- for example, eliminating the use of urea formaldehyde from its manufacturing process. According to Columbia, working with the Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood program "positioned us to make substantial changes in the makeup of our product lines and helped our merchandise to resonate with increasingly sophisticated and environmentally-conscious consumers."

Côte d'Or Chocolate

Thanks to a momentous commitment and pioneering efforts from Kraft Foods, consumers across Europe and North America are experiencing the delicious taste of sustainably grown cocoa. With *Côte d'Or* premium line of chocolate products now containing at least 30 percent Rainforest Alliance Certified™ cocoa content, Kraft Foods is demonstrating its meaningful investment in sustainability and responsible agriculture. It's a commitment that will continue to deepen: by 2012, all of the cocoa in Kraft Foods *Côte d'Or* and *Marabou* chocolate products will be sourced from certified farms. For thousands of West African farmers and their families, this means access to health care, safety equipment and education services.

Glenn Jampol and Teresa Osman of Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation & Inn

For conservation-conscious tourists and eco-curious coffee lovers, Finca Rosa Blanca is an essential destination. A coffee plantation and inn, it has been awarded a prestigious five green leaves and a perfect 100 percent score from Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism program and Rainforest Alliance certification (plus wide recognition) for sustainable farm management. Finca Rosa Blanca has also demonstrated a real commitment to the betterment of its local community. For the past 20 years, the inn's owners have donated five percent of their annual bar and restaurant revenue to community projects, enabling the construction of a new library, dining room and computer center at their local school, developing a community-wide recycling center and providing continuous support to the Children's Food Bank and Kitchen.

JD Wetherspoon

With ongoing sustainability initiatives at its 757 pubs and 16 hotels located throughout the UK, JD Wetherspoon has been quietly demonstrating its commitment to ethical business for some time. In 2004, Wetherspoon launched a company-wide recycling initiative and began bringing all of its recycled waste to a national distribution center. In 2009 alone, nearly 5,500 tons of cardboard, used cooking oil, plastic packaging, paper and steel were recycled through the initiative. The company is also working to reduce its energy consumption by 15 percent by the end of 2010 and collaborating with suppliers to minimize packaging. In addition, Wetherspoon has begun adopting responsible sourcing practices and now purchases 100 percent Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee for all of its pub locations -- a real boon for coffee growing communities, wildlife and the environment.

Kenya Tea Development Agency

Producing some 60 percent of Kenya's tea, the Kenya Tea Development Agency (also known as KTDA) has been working with its farmers to make the case for socially and environmentally responsible agriculture for some time. In 2006, KTDA and one of its main buyers, Unilever -- supported by the UK's Department for International Development -- launched a pilot program to demonstrate the value of sustainable agriculture among its small-scale farmers. The project was a resounding success. By the close of 2009, KTDA had achieved Rainforest Alliance certification on more than 38,000 of its smallholder tea farms- a development that has truly benefited the agency, farmers and factory employees. Today, KTDA's Rainforest Alliance Certified tea is commanding a higher price, workers and farmers have critical safety equipment and employees and farmers now understand the very real value of soil, water and wildlife conservation.

Willamette Valley Vineyards

If Willamette Valley Vineyards wanted to save \$250,000 a year, it *could* stop using natural cork stoppers and transition to metal screw caps or plastic stoppers. Fortunately, the winemaker understands that that number does not reflect the true cost to the environment, which is why it pays a premium to seal its bottles with cork harvested

from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)/Rainforest Alliance Certified forestlands in the Mediterranean. An overriding commitment to social, environmental and economic sustainability is apparent throughout Willamette Valley Vineyards' business operations. All of the company's properties have been certified by LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) as well as Salmon-Safe. The vineyard also offers ten cents for every wine bottle returned to its tasting room (regardless of origin), uses recycled paper throughout its facilities and recycles all plastic, aluminum, paper and cardboard.

Achievements of the 2010 gala co-chairs:

Luigi Lavazza S.p.A.

One of Italy's oldest and most popular coffee roasters and sellers, Lavazza strives for quality and innovation while maintaining a respect for tradition. Since 2004, the Rainforest Alliance and Lavazza have collaborated on ¡Tierra!, a project to help small coffee growing communities in Honduras, Peru and Colombia improve their living and working conditions and become more competitive and self-sufficient. Through the initiative, farmers have learned to protect wildlife, waterways and forests by using eco-friendly techniques – for example, controlling pests without the use of dangerous agrochemicals and replacing inefficient coffee mills with modern machinery that conserves water and controls pollution. The project has borne fruit: Since 2005, Rainforest Alliance Certified ¡Tierra! Coffee, a 100 percent premium Arabica blend, has been sold in specialty and retail stores in many countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy. Soon, Lavazza plans to introduce ¡Tierra! to coffee-growing communities in Tanzania, India and Brazil, as well.

Suzano Pulp and Paper

Endangered species like the Juçara palm and the Bahia rosewood thrive on Suzano Pulp and Paper's responsibly managed forestlands in the states of São Paulo, Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Maranhão and Piauí. The 86-year-old pulp and paper company – which sells its products in more than 80 countries around the globe – has made environmental stewardship a central part of its business strategy. It's a commitment that has paid off. One of the ten largest pulp producers in the world, Suzano attributes much of its business success to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)/Rainforest Alliance certification on its well-managed forestlands. With approximately 40 percent of its 597,000 hectares set aside as reserves -- and the rest complying with the FSC's strict

standards for social, environmental and economic sustainability -- it's clear that Suzano's commitment has been profitable for the environment as well as the company's bottom line.

Gala sponsors: **Domtar, Gibson Foundation, Gloria Jean's Coffees, National Geographic Traveler and Nestlé Nespresso SA**

BACKGROUND

Established more than 22 years ago, the Rainforest Alliance seeks to conserve biodiversity through its programs in sustainable forestry, agriculture, tourism and climate in over 76 countries worldwide. Through third-party certification of forests and farm land and training on sustainable tourism practices, the organization helps promote sustainable livelihoods. It also works with companies of all sizes on improving the sustainability of their supply chains. During 2009, the organization saw continued growth in the number of companies buying from Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms or forests -- an increase of 26 percent from the previous year. In agriculture, the volume of Rainforest Alliance Certified coffee sold in 2009 grew 41 percent from the previous year to 87,583 metric tons. In forestry, the Rainforest Alliance's SmartWood program certified 22.2 million acres (9 million ha) of forestland, increasing the program's overall forest management area 18 percent to 145 million acres (59 million ha) worldwide. For its work in tourism, the Rainforest Alliance received a 2009 *Travel + Leisure* Global Vision Award for upping the ante for sustainability standards in the tourism industry. The climate initiative has also seen an upsurge in activity, to date validating or verifying 11 forest carbon projects representing 1,897,239 acres (768,113 ha).

*The **Rainforest Alliance** works with people whose livelihoods depend on the land, helping them transform the way they grow food, harvest wood and host travelers. From large multinational corporations to small, community-based cooperatives, businesses and consumers worldwide are involved in the Rainforest Alliance's efforts to bring responsibly produced goods and services to a global marketplace where the demand for sustainability is growing steadily. For more information, visit www.rainforest-alliance.org.*