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## One Planet Culture

### *Black Gold* Film Review

Coffee is clearly a passionate business. Ethiopian farmers, the head of the Illy coffee company and competitors at the international barista championship all wax lyrical about the joy of this perfect drink.

But behind the passion lies the pernicious inequality of a deeply unfair international trade. The price of coffee has plummeted to a 30 year low, and it's not the big coffee brands that are suffering. A kilo of coffee makes 80 cups with a retail value of \$230. But growers sell a kilo for less than 50 cents.

*Black Gold* puts a human face on the economics of commodity trading, following Tadesse Meskela as he travels the world in an effort to get a better deal for the 74,000 coffee farmers supplying his Ethiopian cooperative.

Interspersing interviews with headline facts and figures, the film allows the case for fair trade to emerge through quietly compelling cinematography. With 7 million Ethiopians dependent on emergency supplies, haunting images include women picking out substandard coffee beans for 12 hour shifts, and a hungry child turned away from a therapeutic feeding centre for not being quite malnourished enough.

But in our interconnected world, the argument for fairer trade isn't just a moral one. Without the coffee growers, we'd have no daily lattes. And as the film shows, impoverished farmers are already turning their backs on coffee in favour of chat, a popular narcotic which commands a higher price. So paying farmers a fair price to keep growing their coffee is clearly in everyone's best interests.

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