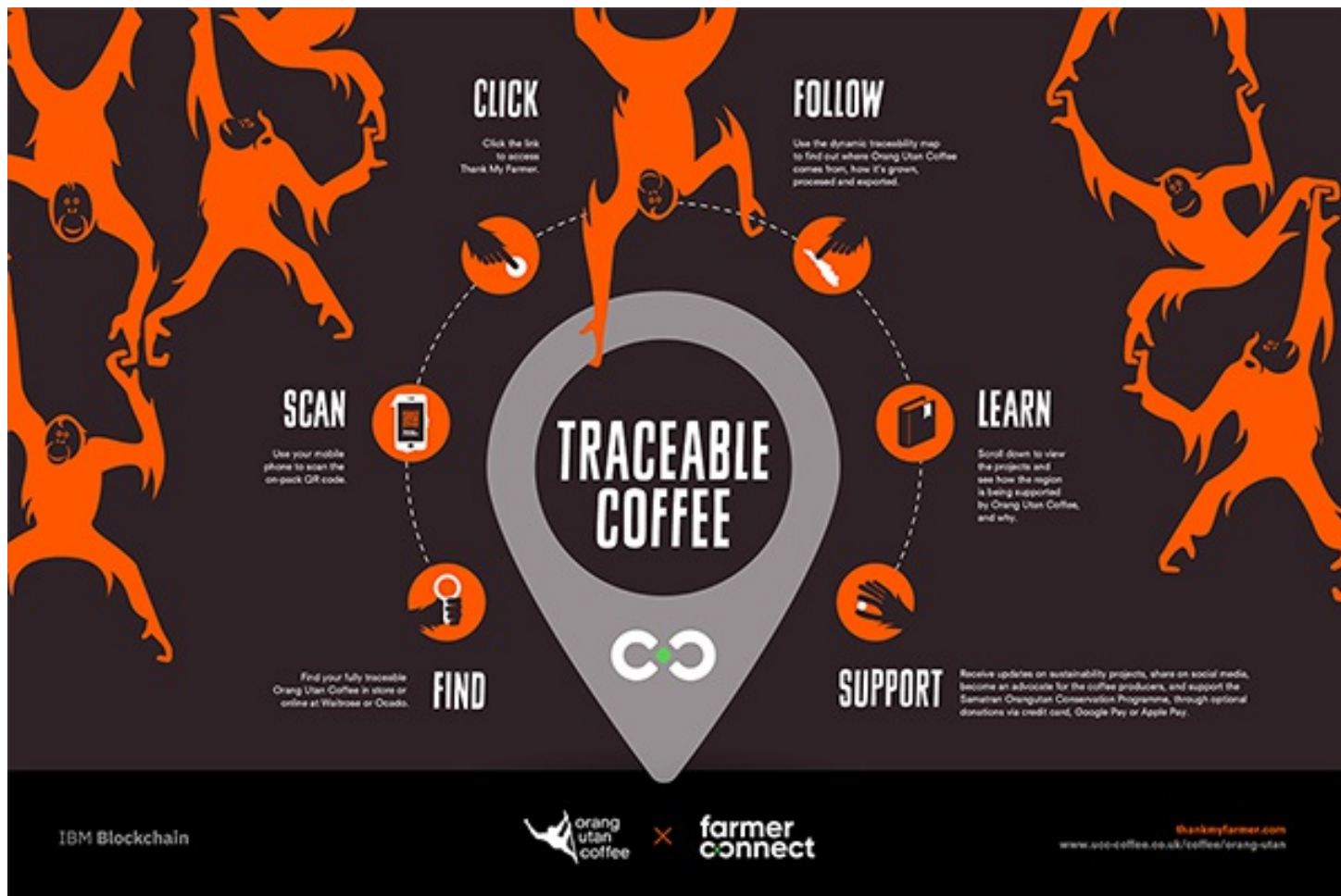


UCC Coffee Launches UK's First Farmer Connect Blockchain Partnership

Digital Traceability Tool Powered By IBM Blockchain Technology Strengthens UCC's Commitment To Sustainability



London, 25th November 2020 - UCC Coffee has partnered with farmer connect, a coffee traceability platform powered by IBM Blockchain, to launch UCC's first ever blockchain traced coffee. Retailers and consumers can now trace Orang Utan Coffee - licensed and distributed in the UK by UCC - back to its Indonesian origin using farmer connect's 'Thank My Farmer'. This pioneering blockchain launch of Orang Utan Coffee^[1] also signifies two new firsts for 'Thank My Farmer' itself - the addition of the UK as a consumer market and Indonesia as an origin.

Powered by the same state-of-the-art blockchain technology as IBM Food Trust, the farmer connect platform is designed to help increase transparency, credibility and fairness across the whole coffee supply chain. It helps to build farm-to-consumer trust by providing detailed information about where the product has been sourced.

'Thank My Farmer' takes this transparency a step further by humanising the supply chain and connecting consumers more directly with the farmers that grow Orang Utan Coffee. They can learn more about the Indonesian origin of their favourite cup of coffee and the projects underway to support its coffee producing communities, simply by scanning an on-pack QR code with their mobile phone. 'Thank My Farmer' also gives consumers the opportunity to become advocates for the coffee producers with shareable social media content

and to support the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme, through optional donations via their credit card, Google Pay or Apple Pay.

Miguel Reguera, Senior Green Coffee Buyer at UCC Coffee and Blockchain Project Leader, says: “The launch of the blockchain traceable Orang Utan Coffee¹ with farmer connect is not only a first for UCC Coffee in the UK, but UCC globally. UCC is also the first ever coffee company to use farmer connect in the UK. We have integrated all elements of the supply chain, from crop to cup, thanks to a combined team effort from PT Orang Utan Lestari in Sumatra, Orang Utan Regenwald in Germany, farmer connect in Switzerland and the UCC Coffee teams in both the UK and Switzerland, who all collaborated to achieve this milestone for UCC. And we firmly believe that further change can happen if the coffee industry works together as a whole.

“The global coffee supply chain is complex, and many people don’t realise the different stages their coffee goes through before its final brewing. By using farmer connect’s products, UCC is simplifying this complexity; by providing accessible, understandable and validated data uploaded at every stage of the Orang Utan Coffee¹ journey - from the highlands of Sumatra until it reaches the coffee shelves of Waitrose and Ocado in the UK.

“And we can now also bring to life the story behind the coffee through ‘Thank My Farmer’. The consumer can view a dynamic traceability map to see where their coffee is grown, roasted and exported, help transform livelihoods and protect the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan; by promoting interaction at both ends of the supply chain, in a way that has the potential to revolutionise not just the coffee industry, but the retail industry too. The blockchain Orang Utan Coffee¹ launch also signifies the first time Waitrose and Ocado shoppers will be able to digitally engage with their coffee and its source in this way, and to this degree of transparency.”

Michael Chrisment, CEO of farmer connect, comments: “Our partnership with UCC, and the launch of Orang Utan Coffee¹ in ‘Thank My Farmer’, comes at a time when consumers are increasingly taking a purpose-driven approach to their shopping patterns and looking to buy products that align with their values. Research from the IBM Institute for Business Value has found that, for consumers who say sustainability is very important, 71% surveyed are willing to pay a premium for sustainable and environmentally responsible brands[2].

“But they also want more access to more information, and to feel part of positive change at the very start of the supply chain of the coffee they drink. They want to know their purchasing decisions can have an actual impact - on people, projects and the environment. ‘Thank My Farmer’ helps increase this total impact. If £1 from the supply chain is matched with £1 from the consumer, we have doubled our efforts to instigate real change on the ground.”

Paul Chang, Global Leader for Blockchain in the Distribution & Industrial Markets at IBM, adds: “A vast global supply chain like coffee makes it difficult for consumers to know where their products are coming from and whether the producers involved are making a living wage. farmer connect is partnering with pioneering brands like Orang Utan Coffee¹ who are at the foreground of solving this problem, bridging the gap between consumers and the farmers who grow their coffee using innovations like blockchain. By being able to easily trace coffee to its source, we can help consumers and brands around the world support coffee growing regions.”

Stocked in Waitrose and Ocado, Orang Utan Coffee¹ is a 100% Arabica, single origin coffee, rated highly for its quality and flavour due to the unique climate of the Gayo Highlands in Central Aceh, Northern Sumatra where the beans are grown.

The brand is on a mission to save the rapidly declining rainforest habitat of the Sumatran orangutan, where only 6,000 native primates remain in the wild today - which is why for every kilo of green bean coffee purchased, its coffee farmers receive €0.50 and a further €0.50 goes to the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme. To date, this independent programme has safely rehabilitated well over 200 orangutans and helped make ecological coffee farming a viable alternative for local farmers to protect the orangutans' natural habitat.

For more information about the programme visit: www.orang-utan-coffee.ch and www.ucc-coffee.co.uk/coffee/orang-utan/

To access Orang Utan Coffee¹ in 'Thank My Farmer', click [here](#).

[1] Orang Utan Coffee is licensed and distributed in the UK by UCC Coffee UK & Ireland

[2] <https://www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/EXK4XKX8>

About UCC Coffee

Orang Utan Coffee is licensed and distributed in the UK by UCC Coffee UK & Ireland. UCC Coffee UK & Ireland is part of UCC Europe, which was formed following the 2012 acquisition of United Coffee by UCC Holdings Ltd. The Japanese, independent coffee company is the fifth largest coffee roaster globally, responsible for over £2bn annual sales.

UCC Europe employs 1,500 people, across three regions and eight companies and operates 10 manufacturing sites including its roastery in Dartford, Kent and Centre of Excellence in Valence, France - Europe's largest producer of Nespresso-compatible capsules. It offers a total coffee solution to out of home and retail customers. It works across the entire value chain from seed to sip, delivering high-quality products and services at scale, consistently.

A research team at the London School of Economics (LSE) is currently undertaking a case study of the UCC Coffee blockchain project, with the aim of researching consumer behaviour through the application of new technologies, such as 'Thank My Farmer'. www.ucc-coffee.co.uk/ www.ucc-europe.com

About farmer connect

farmer connect is an industry-led initiative with the vision to humanise consumption through technology. Its

supply chain digitisation solutions are designed to support increased traceability, efficiency, and sustainability in coffee and cacao supply chains globally.

Leveraging data, farmer connect enables farmers and small businesses while reducing costs and inefficiencies for global enterprises. It does this through several emerging technologies, such as blockchain, self-sovereign identity, and artificial intelligence - keeping it simple.

The initiative is backed by industry leaders who recognise digitalisation and sustainability as powerful and meaningful trends in the food sector. For more information about farmer connect, visit: <https://www.farmerconnect.com>

About IBM Blockchain

IBM is recognised as the leading enterprise blockchain provider. The company's research, technical and business experts have broken barriers in transaction processing speeds, developed the most advanced cryptography to secure transactions, and are contributing millions of lines of open source code to advance blockchain for businesses. IBM is the leader in open-source blockchain solutions built for the enterprise. Since 2016, IBM has worked with hundreds of clients across financial services, supply chain, government, retail, digital rights management and healthcare to implement blockchain applications, and operates a number of networks running live and in production. The cloud-based IBM Blockchain Platform delivers the end-to-end capabilities that clients need to quickly activate and successfully develop, operate, govern and secure their own business networks. IBM is an early member of Hyperledger, an open-source collaborative effort created to advance cross-industry blockchain technologies. For more information about IBM Blockchain, visit <https://www.ibm.com/blockchain/> or follow us on Twitter at @ibmblockchain

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<https://uk.newsroom.ibm.com/2020-11-25-Ucc-Coffee-Launches-Uks-First-Farmer-Connect-Blockchain-Partnership>