

# TRUE ORIGIN<sup>®</sup>

## DIGNITY THROUGH TRADE

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A REVIEW OF 2024-25

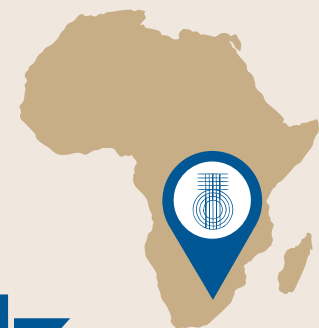


FOOD THAT HAS **TRUE** IMPACT AT **ORIGIN**



"A just world where fair trade unlocks the true potential of our producer partners and their communities, and inequalities are overcome."

Working directly with a network of economically marginalised smallholder farmers and producers primarily in the global south to source the finest ethical foods.



Supported by True Origin Partnerships, two staff attended the World Fair Trade Organisation summit in Cape Town and then went on to visit producer partners in Eswatini and South Africa.

TO SOURCE THE FINEST ETHICAL FOODS



Four of our products won Great Taste awards

70%

Over 70% of our sales revenue relates to purchases from our core overseas producer partners, all of whom we have been working with for more than 5 years.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Operating as a sustainable social enterprise, conducting our full business according to fair trade principles with a priority on people and planet.

fdf  
AWARDS

food and drink federation

2024

FINALIST

With great input from a volunteer, we worked with others in BAFTS to deliver a climate change workshop at the BAFTS conference with a strong focus on producer voices.

We were shortlisted in Net Zero Initiative and Brand Launch Of The Year categories of Food and Drink Federation Awards.



TRUE ORIGIN®

FAIR & FINE FOODS

## A REVIEW OF 2024/25

"Our mission is to have true impact at origin, building strong connections and selling wonderful food products through trading fairly with our producer partners, helping them achieve sustainable incomes."



We retained our WFTO, SEWF and BAFTS memberships, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to operating according to FT principles with focus on people and planet



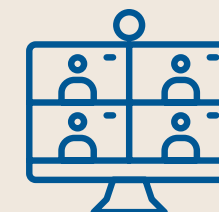
We held several sessions with Central Coop including a cookery demo and a store visit with the CEO as part of their pioneering "Our Malawi Partnership".



Promoting awareness and understanding of issues that affect our global partners.

Through True Origin Partnerships, in September we hosted a visit from Howard Msukwa, rice farmer from Malawi. Howard spent a busy three weeks visiting fair trade groups, businesses, community groups, churches and schools all around Scotland. His visit was an inspiration, emphasising to us all just how important a fair trade partnership can be in supporting not just the farmers but their whole community.

Two online sessions were held in conjunction with BAFTS to allow customers and supporters across the UK to hear from Howard particularly about the impacts of climate change



## PROMOTING AWARENESS



## COLLABORATION



Proud to work with Transform Trade to relaunch Traidcraft Tea on World Fair Trade Day in May.

Transform Trade

Collaborating with others to bring a wider range of ethical foods to market.

Our popular "and Friends" range – developed in collaboration with other fair trade businesses – saw a near threefold increase in sales and accounted for over 25% of total sales revenue.

DONATE

Checkout donations through our online shop have supported Transform Trade and True Origin Partnerships



Through the collaboration with Transform Trade on Traidcraft tea we welcomed numerous new fair trade customers to our online shop, encouraging them to purchase across the range



Growing our business through offering a market-leading range to UK consumers, enabling us to increase our producer purchases.

## GROWING OUR BUSINESS



We exhibited at two major trade shows, in London and Harrogate, and participated in a number of consumer-focused events.

Online sales grew by over 30% and now represent almost one-third of our total sales revenue. This reflects our strategic focus on strengthening direct-to-consumer (B2C) channels.





## Business Review – Tracy Mitchell, MD

2024/25 was another significant year for JTS, now trading as True Origin, amid ongoing challenges for ethical businesses in the UK and for producers around the world.

Despite a small overall reduction in sales, we made notable progress in expanding our product offering. Our “and Friends” range – developed in collaboration with other fair trade businesses – saw a near threefold increase in sales and accounted for over 25% of total sales revenue. This initiative continues to provide vital market access for our fair trade partners while offering our customers greater choice. We were particularly proud to work with Transform Trade to relaunch Traidcraft Tea on World Fair Trade Day. Overall, our online sales grew by over 30% and now represent almost one-third of our total sales revenue, reflecting our strategic focus on strengthening direct-to-consumer (B2C) channels.

Governance remains robust, with new Board members recruited during the year to broaden the range of skills and experience. With Mary Popple standing down as Chair in March 2025 after six years of strong leadership, the year included a transition plan for Alistair Menzies to take on this role. Our small but dedicated staff team continued to develop their roles with a restructuring of the team focussing order fulfilment activities within an expanded Operations team.

We remain deeply committed to our mission as a fair trade business, putting producers at the heart of all we do. Closer collaboration with our parent charity, The Balmore Trust (now operating as True Origin Partnerships), continues to strengthen outcomes for producers and a report on their activities follows this report.

The ongoing loan support from Social Investment Scotland’s Recovery & Resilience Fund has been vital, enabling us to provide pre-finance to producers well in advance of receiving and selling goods. In addition, generous donations from supporters and continued assistance from our parent charity were instrumental in helping us navigate the financial challenges caused by a product recall that led to an exceptional cost in the year of £60k. Including this product recall cost, we ended the year with a net loss of £90k.

Our focus for 2025/26 is on recovery following the recall, with key priorities being seeking new producer partners, growth of online sales and expansion of our customer base. We will continue to work closely with our parent charity to ensure our activities remain aligned with our core mission—placing our producer partners at the centre of everything we do.

## True Origin Partnerships (The Balmore Trust) – Joyce Davidson, Chair

2024/25 was a year of strengthening partnerships: with our producer partners, with other organisations working to support them and with our retail partner True Origin. Visits to build personal contacts were a highlight.

In September we hosted a visit from Howard Msukwa, rice farmer from Malawi. Howard spent a busy three weeks visiting fair trade groups, businesses, community groups, churches and schools all around Scotland. His visit was an inspiration, emphasising to us all just how important a fair trade partnership can be in supporting not just the farmers but their whole community.

We were delighted to be able support Nicola and Jade from True Origin, to attend the World Fair Trade Organisation summit in Cape Town and then on to visit producer partners in Eswatini and South Africa. They were joined at the summit by Masangwi Mangandale, a member of our project group based in Malawi.

Our project group continues to support projects with our producer partners and their communities. Training for the briquette project women’s groups enabled them to register as cooperatives. A grant from Unicorn Grocery in Manchester supported 10 young farmers in Eswatini through training in climate smart techniques. Support for Meru Herbs in Kenya has supported them with equipment to maintain their organic certification and work towards food standards audits.

We have been pleased to be able to offer financial support to True Origin as it navigates the challenging time resulting from the Eswatini Kitchen product recall.

At the end of the year, we said goodbye to our longstanding board member Ros Jarvis, who supported the trust for 47 years—an amazing record. Ros, we wish you well in your well-earned retirement.

[info@trueorigin.org.uk](mailto:info@trueorigin.org.uk) | [www.trueorigin.org.uk](http://www.trueorigin.org.uk) | 0141 255 0901

Unit 3/4 Greenlaw Industrial Estate, Wallneuk Road, Paisley, PA3 4BT

True Origin is a JTS brand. JTS is a social enterprise (SC357178) wholly owned by The Balmore Trust, a charitable trust registered in Scotland (Scottish Charity SC008930)

All product images thanks to Edinburgh Photographic

Front cover producer images – top-left: Traidcraft Tea Producer, photo by Brian Otieno, top-right: Khoisan Natural Salt Farmer, photo by Martin Boon, Fair Trade Original 2008.

