

# TRUE ORIGIN<sup>®</sup>

## DIGNITY THROUGH TRADE

A REVIEW OF 2025-26



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.



After many months of hard work across the team, January 2026 marked an exciting milestone with the launch of **18 new True Origin branded products**.



We developed **new producer partnerships** with Black Mamba in Eswatini and Sunshine Nuts in Mozambique to bring these fantastic products to market



An online tasting event brought together a record number of supporters hearing directly from producer partners sharing the journey behind the products.



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



Following an “ethical health” review of our business, we were thrilled when Ethical Consumer extended its prestigious Best Buy status to the entire True Origin product range and Traidcraft Tea.



We are proud to have retained our People and Planet First verification and our status as a Social Enterprise World Forum Verified Social Enterprise. We completed the WFTO self-assessment report in line with the ongoing monitoring cycle for our WFTO Guaranteed Status.

We were thrilled with the response to our series of **True Origin Live events**, where supporters joined us on zoom to hear from key producer partners including Meru Herbs and Barretts Ridge and from guest speakers including from Transform Trade, Fairtrade Foundation, The Leprosy Mission and Scottish Fair Trade. We hosted two Christmas True Origin Live events and launched our new products with a special True Origin Live tasting event.



Our True Origin Live events brought together producer partners, campaigners, customers and ethical business leaders for conversations about food, fairness, climate and trade.



PROMOTING AWARENESS

Over recent years, True Origin has evolved not only as a food brand, but as a community of people who care deeply about justice, sustainability and global connection.

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



**TRUE ORIGIN**  
FAIR & FINE FOODS

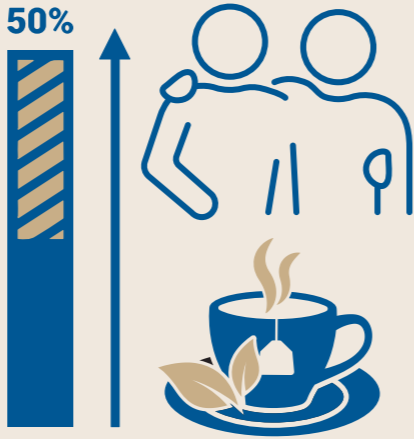
A REVIEW OF 2025/26

“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.”

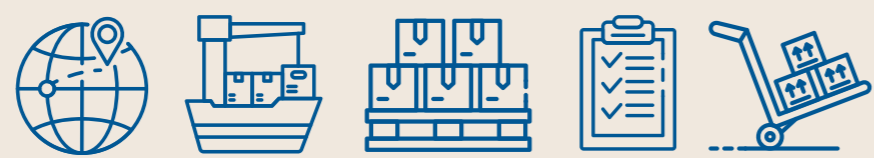


Collaborating with others to bring a wider range of ethical foods to market.

Sales of our “Friends” products grew by **50%** in the year. Sourced from like-minded ethical brands, expanding this range enabled us to continue providing meaningful market access for fair trade producers during a period when we had limited stocks of product from our producer partners.



By working together, we were able to offer customers greater choice while continuing to champion fairer supply chains and sustainable livelihoods.



We engaged a digital marketing agency as part of our plan to widen our customer base whilst continuing to serve our loyal fair trade supporters. We held “content days” to create marketing assets, agreed “key words” to help improve our website visibility and ranking in search engine results, developed our marketing “content pillars”, and trialled new ad campaigns and discount approaches.

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

GROWING OUR BUSINESS



With all the learnings from 2025 in place and with support through Just Enterprise we invested in the development of a wider Marketing Plan for 2026.



We had a stall at the **Eat & Drink Festival** in Glasgow’s SEC May 2025 where our range of grinders received a great response, with tastings working well to introduce people to the products.



## True Origin Business Review – Tracy Mitchell, MD

### A Year of Recovery, Renewal and New Connections

2025/26 was a year of resilience, creativity and fresh beginnings for True Origin. Following the challenges of the product recall in late 2024/25, our focus throughout the year was on rebuilding with care; strengthening our product range, deepening relationships with producer partners and continuing to place people and planet at the centre of every decision we make.

While the wider economic and political environment remained difficult, we were encouraged by the continued support of our customers, stallholders, supporters and partners. Total sales for the year reached £453k. Although this was below the previous year, it reflected a business in transition – adapting, innovating and laying foundations for future growth.

Everything we do continues to be guided by our commitment to fair trade and to the producers at the heart of our supply chains. Working closely with our parent charity, True Origin Partnerships, we have continued to strengthen the connections between trading and charitable impact, ensuring that commercial activity delivers meaningful benefits for farming communities and supports long-term sustainability.

Ongoing support through the Recovery & Resilience Fund from Social Investment Scotland provided important stability, while our parent charity, continued to stand alongside us throughout the recovery journey. We were also deeply encouraged by the generosity of donors and supporters who chose to invest in our future. During the summer, we launched a pilot “Impact Partners” initiative, inviting individuals and organisations to become part of our long-term vision for fairer trade and sustainable impact. The response reinforced the strength of belief in what True Origin is working to achieve: using food and trade as a force for good.

Throughout a challenging year, our Board and staff team remained focused on stewarding the organisation responsibly while continuing to invest in the future. The commitment, adaptability and determination shown across the team has been extraordinary and gives us confidence as we look ahead to the opportunities of 2026/27.

[trueorigin.org.uk/foods](https://trueorigin.org.uk/foods)

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

2025/26 was a time for strengthening the foundations for our work over the next few years.

Our partnership with True Origin Foods is fundamental to our work for trade justice. A priority for the Partnerships has therefore been to continue support for True Origin as it navigates its recovery from the Eswatini Kitchen product recall at the end of 2024.

A focus on governance has led to strengthening our capacity in both board and project group which will enable us to deliver future project work with our producer partners.

Our longstanding partnership with KASFA in Malawi had been impacted by the retiral from the KASFA board of those who have worked with us over the 17 years of our relationship. Successfully establishing new relationships with the team at KASFA was therefore a priority for 2025.

Scoping a capacity building project with Meru Herbs in Kenya is underway, with the project due to commence in 2026.

Continuing with small grants to support projects, this year we have been able to support building repairs for the briquette project; transport of tools and other goods to Malawi for Youth Skills Workshops and an audit for Meru Herb’s work to gain food standards certification. A further grant from Unicorn Grocery in Manchester has supported another 12 young farmers in Eswatini through training in climate smart techniques.

At the end of the year, we said goodbye to another longstanding board member, Nena Riches, who has been part of the charity since its establishment in 1980. Thank you for all the years of support Nena - you will be missed.

[trueorigin.org.uk/partnerships](https://trueorigin.org.uk/partnerships)

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

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