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World Bank Study Predicts Steady Upward Price Trend For Central American Coffee Varieties

by Deborah Tyroler

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According to a recent study by World Bank, Brazil's poor coffee harvest and rising demand for the Arabic variety common to Central America means increased coffee export revenues in the next few years. Study results were presented Nov. 21 at the 4th annual International Coffee Week (SINTERCAFE) conference in San Jose, Costa Rica. Coffee prices in 1988 averaged \$130 per 60-kg. sack. Since then the average has declined to about \$81, or below production costs in several coffee-exporting nations, said the report. In 1990, despite low prices, Central America obtained over \$1.45 billion in coffee export revenues. Prior to July 1989, under the International Coffee Agreement, Brazil had 30% of member producer nations' total export quota. Brazilian coffee production for 1991 is estimated at around 22 million sacks, result of drought, and inadequate incentives and technical assistance. The report stated that if current tendencies continue, the Arabic varieties will be priced 50% higher than the Robust type produced by Brazil. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 11/21/90)

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