

PRESS RELEASE

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FRINJ
COFFEE

Jay Ruskey is “Awakening Care:” Teaching Farmers How to Grow Specialty Coffee in California with an Authentic Farmer-First Model

FRINJ Coffee’s Jay Ruskey gets his farmers a 60% return on their coffee crops with a simple, 3-node system that brings incentives for quality production and fosters a fair working system.

Santa Barbara, CA (December 2020) — According to Fairtrade International, coffee is booming but farmers are earning less than a dollar a pound for their beans. The same article reports that nearly 61% of producers are selling their coffee at prices under the cost of production. And with the growing popularity of coffee pods and capsules pushing greater value to roasters and brands, very little is making it back to the farmers. While the global coffee industry generates more than \$200 billion per year, the average farmer’s income has not changed in the past 20 years, in fact it has declined when taking into account higher farming costs.¹



Quail Haven Farm Owner, Chris Calkins, Tending to his FRINJ Coffee crops in Encinitas, CA

Jay Ruskey, the pioneer of the California Coffee Movement and Farmer, Founder and Agronomist of [FRINJ Coffee](#), has set out to change this model as it relates to premium, fifth wave coffee. With the goal of making Southern California the next specialty coffee capital of the world, FRINJ is building California’s coffee industry from seedling to bean to cup. He planted his first trial crop at his Good Land Organics Farm in Goleta, CA, and as consumers gained appreciation for the craft of coffee, the market made room for rare and specialty coffees, grown in new and unique places. Ruskey found success inter-planting his avocados with coffee and realized the opportunity this crop had to benefit California agriculture. Today, FRINJ works with over 65 farms throughout coastal southern California. Their science-forward services span from production to post-harvest to product marketing, ensuring a smooth field-to-cup process.

"When I formed FRINJ, our goal was to change how the supply chain treats farmers and handles their products. Today, we are committed to getting the farmer a 60% return to afford their land, water and pay their workers' fair wages, and do it again the next year. We can do this because we have taken a complex global supply chain and compressed it into a simple, 3-node system miles apart: Farmer>FRINJ>Consumer.

¹ Fairtrade International: We Love Coffee. Are We Willing to Pay the Price? June 5, 2019.
<https://www.fairtrade.net/news/we-love-coffee-are-we-willing-to-pay-the-price>



This model brings fair returns and incentives for quality production. Our model won't work everywhere, but it will awaken care in our industry with the resounding message that we care for our farmers and foster an authentic working system. We also teach our FRINJ farmers how to practice regenerative agriculture, a layered approach that interplants coffee trees amongst existing fruit orchards to rebuild the soil and give back to the environment," said FRINJ Founder, Farmer, and Agronomist, Jay Ruskey.

FRINJ works with over 65 participating farms, and roughly two-thirds of those farms are in San Diego County with the remaining in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. They get a lot of traction from "over-the-fence marketing," which is when one farmer sees another farmer doing something successfully, it drives interest. FRINJ has gone from working with first-adopter farmers only and into the mainstream. Their coffee tree orders are getting bigger and earlier, and farmers with smaller plantings are expanding their plantings after seeing initial success after the first harvest. FRINJ has seen a 60% increase in farm growth per year.

"Everyone immediately concludes that growing coffee in California is impossible because it is so expensive. Yet, this state produces a majority of the United States' food production and is the most diversified growing region globally. Like blueberries and strawberries, many crops are just as labor-intensive as coffee. Yet these crops account for over \$4 billion worth of farm revenue for California. When you look at things in this light, we see that producing a non-commodity coffee can make sense."

FRINJ Coffee

FRINJ Coffee is a late-stage growth company, coffee breeder, and luxury coffee producer. In 2002, Farmer & Agronomist Jay Ruskey planted a trial crop of coffee at his family-owned and operated farm in the hills of Santa Barbara, California called Good Land Organics. Ruskey proved that coffee could be grown successfully outside of tropical regions and put California coffee on the map! FRINJ has amassed 500 mature coffee trees, which are yielding 350 pounds of green coffee per year. The farm takes the coffee experience full circle, from seed to harvest to roast to cup. FRINJ Coffee was incorporated in 2017, setting out to provide California farmers an opportunity to diversify their farm portfolios. Today, they support a growing number of farms in the coastal climates of Central and Southern California. Their science-forward services span from production to post-harvest to product marketing, ensuring excellence from the field to the cup.

For more information, visit [FRINJ Coffee online](#). For media inquiries, contact Christina Madrid at Christie & Co, www.christieand.co, by phone (818) 621-1897 and/or email christina@christieand.co.

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