



DRWakefield

EST. 1970

Uganda

CLARKE FARM

An eco-friendly coffee estate in Katambale, with a goal to support the local community.



Uganda

CLARKE FARM



<i>Location</i>	Katambale, Kyenjojo District
<i>Altitude</i>	1250 masl
<i>Size</i>	607 hectares, 302 under coffee
<i>Processes</i>	Washed, Honey, Natural

Clarke Farm is billed as an eco-friendly farm and coffee estate that mainly grows Robusta under shade canopy in Katambale, Uganda. However, Dr Ian Clarke is expansive in his thinking and having lived in Uganda for 35 years and a dual national, wants to impact more than his sphere. Originally opening hospitals and medical centres as well as a university he began to notice the impact improving coffee would have on the population.

Dr Clarke says he is “doing this through two areas of focus. The first is by having a commercial hub farm with coffee processing facilities which acts as an offtaker centre, but where we also grow our own [Robusta] coffee and demonstrate good agricultural practice. The farm is deep in the village (as we say here) and provides employment for at least 600 people. The vast majority of these people are local men and women who are also subsistence farmers.

“The second area of focus is Arabica from the foothills of Rwenzori [where this coffee comes from]. This involves having a network trained on good agronomy and correct picking so that we get the ripe red cherry. Because we want only red floated cherry we pay quite a lot more so this gives the farmers extra income and also encourages good agronomy which produced improved yields. We then process this coffee for export on our own farm.”

They also have a few hectares of arabica. Experiments are underfoot with a local clone called cfc1 which is grafted onto rootstock. They also grow macadamia, eucalyptus, maize, potatoes, mangoes and oranges and have planted indigenous trees to remake a small forest as well as stopped the felling by charcoal makers of a neighbouring forest. With the new trees amongst the coffee, they aim to provide 30% shade.

Stretching across the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, a smallholder farm here is on average just under 0.2 hectares and somewhere around 200 plants. Most are located close to the house, though some are away too. Altitudes stretch between 1600 and 2500 masl, with harvest running from late August through to November. Smallholders will have other crops too, such as bananas or beans, and may keep goats or poultry as livestock.

Rwenzori Arabica is designated by the Ugandan Coffee Development Authority as Drugar (DRied UGandan ARabica) or Wugar. Drugar is sun dried while Wugar is washed. There is no category for Honey which just falls under washed, and therefore Wugar.

