

Coffee hit by global warming say growers

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Coffee beans growing at a nursery in India. Coffee producers say they are getting hammered by global warming, with higher temperatures forcing growers to move to prized higher ground, putting the cash crop at risk.

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"There is already evidence of important changes" said Nestor Osorio, head of the International Coffee Organization (ICO), which represents 77 countries that export or import the beans.

"In the last 25 years the temperature has risen half a degree in coffee producing countries, five times more than in the 25 years before," he said.

Sipped by hundreds of millions of people worldwide, coffee is one of the globe's most important commodities, and a major mainstay of exports for countries from Brazil to Indonesia.

But producers meeting in Guatemala this week are in a state of panic over the impact of warming on their livelihoods.

While boutique roasters often seek out highland-grown cherries for their subtle tastes, the cooler terroir comes at a premium.

And the new race to the top comes amid already increasing demands for resources between farmers and energy firms.

"Land and water are being fought over by food and energy producers," said Osorio, "we need to make an assessment to guarantee the sustainability of and demand for coffee production."

ICO figures show that production in [Latin America](#) dipped last year, largely due to poor weather, and producers say they are struggling to stay afloat.

In Colombia, one of the world's largest producers, production slumped 30-35 percent while Costa Rica and El Salvador still struggled to recover from poor harvests in 2000-2005.

The National [Coffee](#) Association of Guatemala -- a regional leader -- said production in nine Latin American countries was expected to fall 28 percent in the first three months of this season.

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