



World International Property Organisation  
Mercanta The Coffee Hunters

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### Enhanced Traceability for Specialty Coffee Beans

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The emergence of the differentiated specialty coffee business began in the 1980s in **North America** and has since spread across the globe. Specialty coffee beans are generally considered those scoring 80 or above in a peer group cupping/tasting analysis. They can be considered the best harvest or pick of the crop.

Traditional traceability for specialty coffees includes detailed and comprehensive storytelling. Data about the geographical location of the producer(s), family history of the producer(s), varietal information, history or awards or accolades for the farm or producer group, geodata including altitude, soil/terroir, rainfall, and specific harvest date data.

**Ipanema's Premier Cru** program in **Brazil** ([Ipanema Coffees \(ipanemacoffees.com\)](http://ipanemacoffees.com)) is an example of exacting provenance data in a "traditional" sense. Also, the [Cup of Excellence](#) best of harvest competition-winning coffee beans has exacting provenance data included with the winning auction bids.

**Mercanta** has always made 'The Coffee Story' part and parcel of the information we provide on all the specialty coffees that we stock, and we make the provision of the information about coffees that we buy part and parcel of our purchasing routine.

There are now new initiatives to "enhance" traceability of specialty coffees.

[RFIDER](#) and similar technologies tag shipments at origin, with a QR code that allows the coffee roaster buyer to scan the code attached to the coffee bag or carton and unlock the traceability story. This technology can also move down the value chain to the end consumer, who can scan the background story on a packet of coffee. **RFIDER** is an origin applied tracking that enhances the traceability story.

[Oritain](#) is another technology and process that measures trace element and isotopic profiles by testing the coffee beans themselves to objectively verify origin in exacting degree. **Oritain's** origin verification technology is already being applied in many industries other than coffee, such as cotton, aquaculture, honey, eggs, meat, and many more. All products contain an inherent geochemical fingerprint instilled by Mother Nature based on where in the world they were grown or produced. Via **Oritain's** advanced scientific and statistical analysis, this natural code is unlocked allowing robust origin 'fingerprints' to be produced at varying origin resolutions.

The purpose of enhancing the traceability is not only to tell a better story about the provenance of the coffee beans but to add value.

Specialty coffee beans tend to trade at premiums over commodity grade beans, but the qualitative difference is not the only arbiter of increased value. The 'story' of where the coffee is from is an integral part of the added value chain.

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