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## Promising Harvest Despite Weird Weather

Just back from a journey to Burundi, JNP Coffee founder and owner Jeanine Niyonzima-Aroian could still taste that home-cooked bugali served at her brother's home. The corn meal boule was a perfect side dish for what had to be a quick family reunion with her mother and two brothers. She had a lot of ground to cover during this trip.



Going home gave Jeanine the opportunity to benefit from her local knowledge to navigate the country successfully, even with fuel shortages and frequent power outages. A lack of foreign currency has led to lower fuel imports. In the country, the lack of fuel meant generators couldn't run.

Traveling upcountry to visit wet mills near the end of harvest required finding enough fuel for the rental car's roundtrip. Once she arrived, however, she liked what she saw, Jeanine said.

Her persistence paid off. At Akeza, the wet mill was implementing new standard operating procedures, learned during the Rainforest Alliance certification training. At Bavyeyi, environmental remediation was on view. New tanks made it possible to clean the water used to process cherries before returning that water to the river.





Both mills were setting aside cherries grown by women farmers, so they could be processed and sold to meet the growing demand for more women-grown green coffee, and more choices among them. That is happening for nearly every coffee on offer this year from JNP Coffee.

JNP Coffee staff present during harvest has also proved to be a wise investment to ensure the best quality possible.

Irregular and more intense weather patterns created an unusual harvest, Jeanine reported. To finish this season, “we needed to see two to three days of steady rain for cherries to ripen to that beautiful red for harvest,” she said. Rain showed up far later than usual, and then all the trees ripened at once. At highest elevations, cherries had not yet fully ripened by early June.



Many wet mills were forced to build more raised African beds to accommodate the surge in volume.

But just as fast as the cherries came off the trees, the volume tapered off, resulting in slightly more cherries than last year, but not the predicted bumper crop.

In addition, one wet mill's mechanical challenges at the start of the season led operators to produce more natural coffees this year than initially expected, she said.

The world is experiencing a shift from the El Niño pattern of warmer eastern Pacific waters and subsequent drought to a La Niña cycle, warming the Atlantic instead and triggering more hurricanes and intense rainfall episodes. Coffee production systems can be slow to adapt to these changes. The Rainforest Alliance training that many wet mill managers attended courtesy of JNP Coffee back in March has provided some guidance on ways to respond to global warming.



As a nation, Burundi has its challenges, but coffee is one of the solutions within reach. Greater international sales can bring in the foreign currency required to purchase enough fuel to keep the economy humming.

JNP Coffee continues to seek out the highest-quality cherries for clients who have come to expect the surprisingly sweet flavors of Burundi coffee. Pre-orders for this latest harvest are open now at [jnpcoffee.com](http://jnpcoffee.com) to secure the lots required by JNP Coffee clients.