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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NPR story on Palestinian Freekeh features Canaan Fair Trade

Helotes, TX. 2 June 2015. Canaan Fair Trade, a social entrepreneurship firm dedicated to artisan quality products that seeks to sustain the livelihood of Palestinian producer communities was featured in a [26 May NPR story on Freekeh](#), the ancient flame roasted green wheat dish of Palestine.

Freekeh has a delicious nutty, smoky taste and is firm and chewy. Freekeh has been called the new supergrain replacing quinoa in 2015. It is double the fiber and half the fat of quinoa, and 30% higher in protein, as reported on the USDA website nutrition facts.

"We are happy to report that our farmers are celebrating an abundant Freekeh harvest in Palestine," says Dr. Nasser Abufarha, Director of Canaan Fair Trade and the Founder of the Palestine Fair Trade Association. "This year Palestinian farmers produced 3,500 tons of Freekeh, up from about 2,000 tons last year. "

The NPR story, [Game For Ancient Grain: Palestinians Find Freekeh Again](#), by Daniella Cheslow ran May 26, 2015. She hosts a weekly radio show about food.

[The Palestine Fair Trade Association](#) is the largest fair trade producers union in Palestine, consisting of 53 village based cooperatives of over 2000 small landowner farmers and 200 women producers.

[Canaan Fair Trade](#), a Palestinian company with a social mission, was founded in 2004 to empower thousands of small farmers caught in conflict to sustain their livelihood, build hope for a better future, and promote economic and cultural interaction towards a peaceful tomorrow.

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About Canaan Fair Trade, LLC

Canaan Fair Trade became the largest exporter of olive oil from Palestine to Europe and North America within four years of its founding in 2004. Canaan is the marketing member of the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA), and benefits 2500 farm families in Palestine by selling their certified organic, certified fair trade olive oil and foods, produced by the traditional, sustainable Palestinian farming methods of cultivating and harvesting. Canaan <mailto:meryl@canaanfairtrade.com> Fair Trade, LLC is the United States sister company of Canaan Palestine.

Canaan was pleased to bring the first fair-trade certified olive oil to the world market. The success of this Palestinian olive oil product has helped thousands of small farmers sustain their livelihood in the conflict-torn region, builds hope for a better future, and promotes economic and cultural interaction and exchange towards a peaceful tomorrow. At the same time it gives Canaan the opportunity to share our treasured product with a wide range of food connoisseurs and fair-trade communities around the world.

This historic achievement has been well received by fair-trade communities in Europe and North America. Our partner in the UK, Equal Exchange, has listed the olive oil at the Co-op (500 stores). British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he was "delighted" by the launch of Palestinian Fair trade olive oil in the UK. The [Guardian](#) reports that Canaan's UK partners and distributors have realized three fold increase in their olive oil sales.

In the USA, Canaan's olive oil and spreads are in Whole Foods Market, America's premier natural food store with 275 locations across the nation. This comes on the heels of previous successes in the US market, where Canaan has been the main supplier of olive oil to Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap, the best selling natural soap product in the USA. Dr. Bronner's was very supportive of Canaan's development by providing assistance and guidance for USDA organic certification and Fair for Life certification by IMO. These US market successes caught the attention of the [US State Department](#) team working for peace in the region. They see jump-starting the local Palestinian economy as a catalyst for peace in the area. They looked to Canaan to provide a model for Palestinian businesses to connect with US markets. In a March 2009 visit by a delegation from the US State Department to Canaan's facility in Jenin, West Bank, delegation head Sean FitzGerald commented "We were really impressed with [Canaan's] establishment, but more so with the Fair Trade principles [they] promote and the community service [they] give."

Aside from the social impact this product generates, Canaan's olive oil is aromatic, fruity, fresh, and fully flavored, with a lingering slightly peppery taste. Treat yourself to one of the world's best olive oils, promote peace, create hope, and look for a better, peaceful and prosperous future for all people of the region.

Canaan supports Trees for Life, a PFTA program started in 2005 that has planted almost 100,000 olive trees with start-up farmers, small farmers, and those whose trees or lands have been destroyed by Israeli forces.

In 2006 Canaan's micro-loan program extended fair trade benefits of economic and social empowerment to six women's collectives making traditional Palestinian foods.

Canaan supports the education efforts of the Canaan Center for Organic Research and Extension, benefiting farming communities and linking them with the modern organic movement.

Contact in Palestine:

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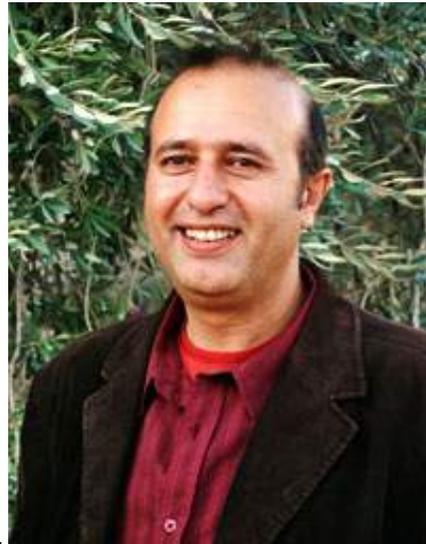
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Nasser Abufarha: Social entrepreneur and scholar

Palestine Fair Trade Association ([PFTA](#)) founder Nasser Abufarha is bringing Palestinian olive oil and other traditional delicacies to mainstream American and European markets, while also improving economic conditions for farmers in the West Bank. While studying at the University of Wisconsin, Abufarha learned about fair trade practices being used in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. Determined to bring fair trade to Palestine, he encountered a major stumbling block - there was no international fair trade standard for olive oil. In 2004, Abufarha developed the standard himself based upon recognized international fair trade principles. After working diligently with the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO), an international standard for fair trade olive oil has now been developed making PFTA the first producer of fair trade certified olive oil worldwide.



Canaan Fair Trade Director Nasser Abufarha.

Also in 2004, Abufarha established [Canaan Fair Trade](#), which today is the largest exporter of certified fair trade and organic Palestinian olive oil to America and Europe. The oil is produced by more than 2,000 Palestinian farmers.

"Palestine may not be in the atlas," Abufarha says, "But we have put it on the shelves." Canaan Fair Trade supplies 95 percent of the olive oil used by [Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap](#), the largest natural soap producer in the U.S., and supplies major organic coop chains in Europe.

"At first the farmers were skeptical," Abufarha says, "They couldn't imagine why anyone would pay them above the market price. But they were willing to give it a try." Since the establishment of Canaan Fair Trade, the average price of Palestinian olive oil has more than doubled.

"Fair trade isn't just about the price," Abufarha says, though he acknowledges that the increase in income has been vital to many farmers in Palestine. "We have given farmers hope. An economic exchange that recognizes Palestinian farmers' rights and respects the value of their connection to their land, after years of marginalization under Israeli occupation, is a major accomplishment," he explains.

In 2008, Canaan Fair Trade broke ground on a new state-of-the-art olive processing facility nestled on five acres of olive country north of the West Bank city of Jenin. The facility employs 40 Palestinians now and is sized to commercialize the products of 3000-5000 Palestinian farmers.

Abufarha was born in 1964 in Al Jalama, a farming village near Jenin. After high school, he came to the United States and earned his Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Wayne State University in 1989. He worked for several years in high technology, before gradually finding himself drawn to the food industry, a new career path that would eventually lead him to settle in Madison, Wisconsin, where he opened a restaurant in 1996.

Abufarha went on to earn his PhD in Cultural Anthropology and International Development from the University of Wisconsin in 2006. His first book, which focuses on landscapes, the environment and violence, was published by Duke University Press in 2009.

To interview Nasser Abufarha contact 608-770-7007 or nasser@canaanfairtrade.com.

FACT SHEETS ON CANAAN FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

[Nabali Olive Oil](#)

[Rumi Olive Oil](#)

[Jerusalem Olive Oil](#)

[Crushed/Infused Olive Oils](#)

[Freekeh wheat](#)

[Maftoul \(Palestinian couscous\)](#)

[Za'atar spice blend](#)

[Green Olive Tapenade](#)

[Sundried Tomato Caper Spread](#)

[Olive Oil Soap](#)