



REPORT SUBMITTED BY:
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KENYA DELEGATION

SPECIALTY COFFEE ASSOCIATION 2024 EXPO,
CHICAGO, USA

Introduction

The 2024 Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Expo was a vibrant and immersive event that brought together coffee enthusiasts, industry professionals, and stakeholders from around the world. Held at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago, USA from May 10-12, the Expo served as a hub for innovation, education, and networking within the specialty coffee industry. This summary highlights key aspects of the Expo, including notable exhibits, workshops, competitions, and emerging trends that shaped the event.

- **Exhibits and Showcases:** The Expo featured an extensive array of exhibits showcasing the latest products, technologies, and trends in specialty coffee. Attendees explored booths from leading coffee equipment manufacturers, roasters, green coffee suppliers, and specialty beverage vendors. Exhibitors demonstrated cutting-edge brewing equipment, sustainable packaging solutions, artisanal coffee beans from diverse origins, and innovative coffee-based products. The Expo's marketplace provided a platform for businesses to launch new offerings and engage with industry professionals and consumers.



Plate 1: Exhibition and industry showcases at the 2024 SCA

- **Workshops and Educational Sessions:** A highlight of the SCA Expo was its diverse lineup of workshops, seminars, and educational sessions designed to enrich attendees' knowledge and skills. Coffee experts and industry leaders led interactive workshops on brewing techniques, coffee roasting fundamentals, flavor profiling, and sensory analysis. Participants had the opportunity to enhance their expertise in areas such as latte art, espresso preparation, and coffee cupping. Additionally, sessions focused on sustainability practices, ethical sourcing, and business development provided valuable insights for coffee professionals seeking to elevate their craft and operations.

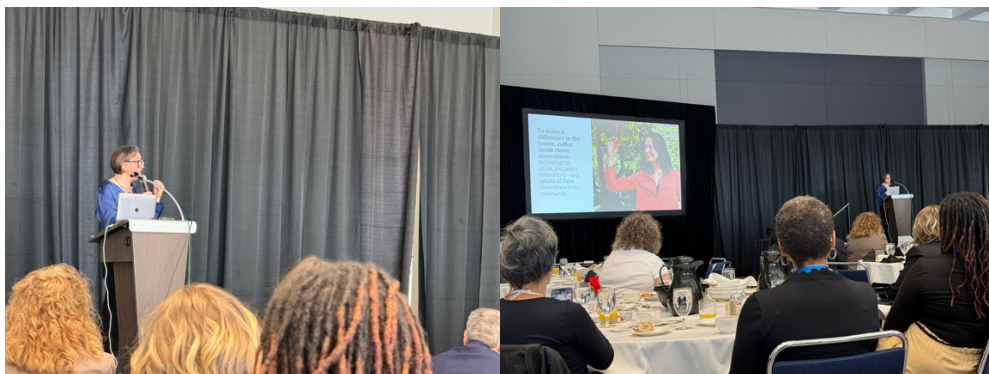


Plate 2: Workshop presentation by the CEO of the World Coffee Research during SCA 2024

- **Competitions and Events:** The Expo hosted prestigious coffee competitions that showcased the talent and creativity of baristas and coffee roasters. The United States Barista Championship (USBC) and the US Coffee Roasting Championship (USCRC) drew intense competition, with participants demonstrating exceptional skills in espresso preparation, milk texturing, and signature beverage creation. The Expo's competition stage buzzed with excitement as judges evaluated competitors based on taste, technical proficiency, and presentation. These events not only celebrated excellence in coffee craftsmanship but also inspired attendees to push the boundaries of their own abilities.

- **Industry Networking and Collaboration:** Networking opportunities were abundant at the 2024 SCA Expo, allowing attendees to connect with industry peers, forge new partnerships, and exchange ideas. Coffee professionals, including growers, exporters, roasters, and cafe owners, engaged in meaningful discussions about market trends, sustainability initiatives, and consumer preferences. The Expo facilitated collaborations between stakeholders across the coffee supply chain, fostering a spirit of innovation and cooperation aimed at advancing the specialty coffee industry.
- **Emerging Trends and Insights:** Throughout the Expo, several emerging trends and insights emerged that are shaping the future of specialty coffee. Sustainability remained a prominent theme, with a growing emphasis on eco-friendly practices, carbon-neutral operations, and transparent supply chains. Alternative milk options, such as oat milk and pea milk, gained traction as consumer demand for dairy-free alternatives increased. Additionally, the rise of cold brew, nitro coffee, and specialty tea beverages reflected evolving consumer tastes and preferences.



Plate 3: Exhibition of innovative industry products Left to Right: Cold brew to-go packaging, Coffee makers and coffee grinder cleaning tablets.

Kenya's Participation at the SCA 2024, Chicago

The participation of Kenya in the 2024 Chicago Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Expo was marked by a showcase of the country's renowned coffee offerings, rich cultural heritage, and commitment to sustainable coffee production. Kenya's presence at the Expo highlighted its position as a key player in the global specialty coffee market and provided a platform to promote its unique coffee varieties and industry initiatives.



Plate 4: Kenya delegates at the SCA 2024 Seated, Left to Right: (Mr. Robert Ng'ong'a- Trade and Commerce Attaché at the Kenyan Embassy in the USA, Ms. Grace Kyalo- Director General AFA, Mr. Bernard Wangamati-Coffee Farmer and Exporter and Dr. Benson Apuoyo- Ag. Director Coffee Directorate. Standing, Second from left Ms. Getrude Alworah-RMAP-SCA.

- **Exhibits and Coffee Offerings:** Kenya's participation at the Expo included exhibits featuring a diverse range of high-quality Kenyan coffee beans. Attendees had the opportunity to sample and learn about Kenya's specialty coffee profiles, which are known for their bright acidity, complex flavor notes, and distinct fruity characteristics. The Expo showcased coffees from various regions of Kenya, emphasizing the country's rich coffee-growing terroir and the unique attributes imparted by its high-altitude farms.



Plate 5: Kenyan coffee farmers and traders showcasing their coffee at SCA 2024. Left to Right: Mr. Ephantus Muriithi Chairman Iria-ini FCS, Mr. Matanda of Matz Coffee and Ms. Mbula Musau of Utake Coffee.

- Cultural Representation:** In addition to coffee showcases, Kenya's participation highlighted its vibrant coffee culture and traditions. Cultural displays and presentations featured traditional Kenyan coffee brewing methods, such as the popular "Chorreador" pour-over technique, allowing attendees to experience the authentic preparation of Kenyan coffee. Cultural performances, music, and culinary offerings further enriched the Expo's atmosphere, providing insights into Kenya's rich coffee heritage and culinary diversity.



Plate 6: Representative of the Trans- Solid Coffee Women Farmers showcasing their coffee at SCA

- Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing:** Kenya's presence at the Expo underscored its commitment to sustainability and ethical sourcing practices. Exhibitors and representatives from Kenyan coffee organizations shared insights into initiatives promoting environmental stewardship, fair trade principles, and community development within the country's coffee industry. Kenya's emphasis on sustainability resonated with attendees seeking responsibly sourced coffees and demonstrated the country's dedication to fostering a sustainable coffee supply chain.
- Industry Engagement and Networking:** Kenyan coffee stakeholders actively engaged with industry professionals and coffee enthusiasts during the Expo. Representatives from coffee cooperatives, exporters, and government agencies participated in networking events, seminars, and panel discussions, discussing topics such as coffee production techniques, market trends, and industry challenges. This engagement facilitated meaningful connections and collaborations between Kenyan coffee stakeholders and international counterparts, contributing to knowledge exchange and business opportunities.



Plate 7: B2B session between Kenyan Coffee farmers and USA Based coffee traders, organised by the Kenya Embassy in the USA

- **Promotion of Origin Recognition:** Participation in the Expo allowed Kenya to strengthen its position as a recognized origin of specialty coffee. By showcasing its distinctive coffee offerings and engaging with a global audience, Kenya promoted awareness and appreciation for its coffee origins, highlighting the country's role in shaping the specialty coffee landscape. This promotion of origin recognition benefits Kenyan coffee producers by increasing market visibility and demand for their premium coffees.



Plate 8: The New KPCU showcasing coffees from small-holder farmers and estates at the SCA 2024. KALRO-CRI, coffee from Namwela was showcased.

Lessons learned

The 2024 Chicago Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) event provided valuable lessons and insights for attendees, highlighting key trends and best practices within the specialty coffee industry:

1. **Sustainability Matters:** One of the predominant themes emphasized throughout the event was the importance of sustainability. From ethical sourcing practices to eco-friendly packaging solutions, coffee professionals are increasingly prioritizing sustainability initiatives to minimize their environmental impact.
2. **Quality is Non-negotiable:** The event underscored the significance of quality at every stage of coffee production. Whether it's sourcing premium beans, mastering precise brewing techniques, or investing in top-tier equipment, maintaining quality remains paramount in the specialty coffee realm.
3. **Continuous Learning is Essential:** Coffee enthusiasts and professionals alike recognized the value of ongoing education. Attending workshops, seminars, and cupping sessions provided opportunities to refine skills, discover new approaches, and stay abreast of industry developments.
4. **Community and Collaboration:** The SCA 2024 event reinforced the power of community within the coffee industry. Networking with peers, engaging in discussions, and sharing experiences fostered a sense of collaboration that is instrumental in driving innovation and growth.
5. **Consumer Education is Key:** Educating consumers about the nuances of specialty coffee was a recurring theme. Building awareness around factors like origin, processing methods, and flavor profiles empowers consumers to make informed choices and appreciate the craft behind each cup.
6. **Adaptation to Changing Preferences:** The event shed light on evolving consumer preferences, including the demand for alternative milk options, innovative brewing techniques, and experiential coffee offerings. Adapting to these shifts is essential for staying relevant in a dynamic market.
7. **Embracing Diversity and Inclusion:** Discussions at the event highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusion within the coffee industry. Promoting equity across the supply chain and celebrating diverse coffee origins enriches the industry and enhances its global appeal.

Areas of collaborative research

The 2024 Chicago Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) event opened up several promising areas for collaborative research within the specialty coffee industry, fostering innovation and advancing the field:

1. **Coffee Genetics and Breeding:** Collaborative research into coffee genetics aiming to develop new coffee varieties with improved disease resistance, flavor profiles, and adaptability to changing climates. By partnering with geneticists and agronomists, coffee researchers can contribute to sustainable coffee farming practices and enhance coffee quality.
2. **Sustainability and Environmental Impact:** Collaborative research initiatives should focus on reducing the environmental footprint of coffee production. This includes exploring regenerative farming techniques, carbon sequestration in coffee agroforestry systems, and innovative waste management strategies within coffee processing plants.
3. **Coffee Processing Innovations:** Research partnerships can drive advancements in coffee processing methods, such as exploring new fermentation techniques, optimized drying protocols, and novel approaches to enhance flavor development while minimizing environmental impact.
4. **Coffee Quality Assessment and Sensory Analysis:** Collaborative efforts in sensory science can refine coffee quality assessment methodologies, including standardized cupping protocols, sensory evaluation tools,

and sensory training programs. This research can contribute to consistency in coffee quality and facilitate consumer education.

5. **Health Benefits of Coffee Consumption:** Partnering with nutritionists and health researchers, collaborative studies can investigate the potential health benefits of coffee consumption, including its impact on chronic diseases, cognitive function, and metabolism.
6. **Coffee Supply Chain Transparency and Traceability:** Research collaborations can focus on enhancing supply chain transparency through blockchain technology, improving traceability systems, and ensuring fair compensation for coffee producers. This promotes ethical sourcing practices and consumer trust.
7. **Coffee and Culinary Innovation:** Collaborative research between coffee professionals and chefs can explore innovative culinary applications of coffee, such as coffee-infused cuisine, coffee-based beverages, and dessert pairings, expanding the culinary boundaries of coffee appreciation.
8. **Social Impact and Community Development:** Research partnerships can study the social impact of coffee farming on local communities, including socio-economic development, gender equity, and access to education and healthcare. This research informs sustainable development initiatives and social responsibility practices within the coffee industry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2024 Chicago Specialty Coffee Association Expo was a dynamic and influential gathering that celebrated the artistry, innovation, and community spirit of the specialty coffee industry. From engaging exhibits and educational workshops to thrilling competitions and networking opportunities, the Expo provided a platform for professionals to learn, collaborate, and be inspired. As the coffee landscape continues to evolve, events like the SCA Expo play a crucial role in driving progress, fostering sustainability, and enriching the coffee experience for enthusiasts worldwide.

The workshops and training sessions under the International Women in Coffee program at the 2024 Chicago Specialty Coffee Expo provided a platform for women to develop skills, expand knowledge, and connect with like-minded professionals. By empowering women in coffee, this initiative contributed to a more diverse, equitable, and vibrant coffee community, fostering innovation and sustainable development within the industry.

These areas of collaborative research highlight the multidisciplinary nature of the specialty coffee industry, where partnerships between researchers, industry stakeholders, and academia contribute to scientific advancements, sustainable practices, and enhanced consumer experiences. The outcomes of collaborative research efforts have the potential to shape the future of specialty coffee production, consumption, and appreciation on a global scale.

Overall, the 2024 SCA event served as a catalyst for professional growth, industry collaboration, and a deeper appreciation of the craft and culture of specialty coffee. The lessons learned underscored the necessity of sustainability, quality, continuous learning, community engagement, consumer education, adaptation, and inclusivity in shaping the future of the specialty coffee landscape.