

Coffee agreement will benefit poorest growers

By Lisa Lipman
The Associated Press

BOSTON — The nation's largest coffee sellers in the past have barely concerned themselves with the Third World farmers whose crops enabled their businesses to thrive. Now, however, they are waking up and smelling the coffee.

Starbucks, Green Mountain Coffee, Peet's Coffee and Tea, Dean's Beans, and 78 other gourmet coffee sellers have agreed to start a line of coffee purchased from farmers under "fair trade" regulations.

Those regulations include paying farmers at least \$1.26 per pound regardless of how low the coffee market drops, and paying them 60 percent of the cost prior

to shipment.

The companies have signed on through the efforts of Oxfam America, which fights poverty worldwide, and Transfair America, a nonprofit organization that works to promote fairly traded food imports.

"We think that, one cup at a time, we can make an enormous difference in the communities that are the poorest in the world," said Barbara Fiorito, president of Oxfam's board of directors.

Coffee market prices are low, which means that coffee farmers from Third World countries often make only \$3 a day selling their beans to companies that can make almost that much on one cup in

the United States.

"It's not enough to live on, and a little too much to die on," said Rob Everts of wholesale coffee seller Equal Exchange, the first company to sign on.

Starbucks will start selling a

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Sue Mecklenburg
Director of Environmental and Community Affairs
Starbucks

line of fair trade coffee in 2,300 stores on Oct. 4. The coffee will sell for \$11.45 a bag. Peet's has already started selling its own line of fair trade coffee for \$10.95. Equal Exchange sells its coffee for \$8.99. Equal Exchange is the only company at which 100 percent of the coffee meets fair trade standards.

Starbucks' Director of Environmental and Community Affairs Sue Mecklenburg said her company will sell the fair trade coffee for one year, then evaluate whether selling more than one kind of it is feasible.

"The fair trade movement is fairly new in the U.S. . . . we're building this market as we

speaks," she said.

The gourmet coffee market has gotten increasingly crowded over the years. Americans spend \$18 billion a year on coffee, more than any other nation. Coffee is the second most heavily traded commodity after oil. The two largest coffee importers — Maxwell House and Folgers — have not signed on to the fair trade agreement. Transfair executive director Paul Rice dismisses the idea that the companies are signing on more as a marketing ploy than as an altruistic inclination.

"Sure a lot of it may be lip service," he said. "But I see a lot of companies really trying to walk the walk."

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Bootleg tape a surprise to Gore camp

By Tom Raum
Associated Press Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Vice President Al Gore declared Sunday that he doesn't know how his campaign ended up with a bootleg videotape of George W. Bush rehearsing for next month's debates.

But, he told reporters, "If somebody in the Bush campaign keeps sending confidential internal data to us, we'll keep turning it over to the FBI."

That comment, in a conference call with reporters, came as the two camps traded new accusations over the mysterious package —

whether there is a Gore spy in Bush's campaign.

Bush operatives seized upon the Gore campaign's suspension of a junior staffer in debate preparations sent the tape to Gore's campaign.

However, they have not ruled out the possibility that a junior staffer may have stumbled upon a copy of the tape and passed it on, or that a security lapse may have allowed the tape to be copied outside campaign headquarters.

FBI agents were in Austin on Friday interviewing staffers with direct access to debate preparation material.

Both candidates stayed close to home Sunday — Gore in Washington, Bush in Austin — while the race was conducted by conference calls laying out the coming week.

Handling his own phone work, Gore promised a "detailed book" — 74 pages, an aide said — on how he would modernize and expand Medicare.

"Medicare faces insolvency unless we act now. I want to make a rock-solid commitment to Medicare," Gore said. "The other side treats the surplus as a piggybank for a tax cut."

Bush, just back from a two-day trip to Florida, was leaving Monday on a three-day trip to Oregon, Washington state and California during which he will promote his



the matter to hurl new accusations at Gore's Nashville, Tenn.-based operation.

"The more the FBI inquires, the more nervous they're getting in Nashville," said Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer.

The Gore staffer, Michael Doyne, 28, was suspended after he acknowledged boasting of a "mole" planted in Bush's campaign.

Doyne now insists the "mole" was a product of his imagination and Gore spokesman Mark Fabiani said campaign officials do not believe there is any such Democratic spy.

But Fleischer said Doyne's suspension "raises questions on whether others in the Gore campaign have information" obtained through political espionage.

"It defies credibility," Fleischer said of the whole incident.

GOP running mate Dick Cheney said there's cause for concern. "There seems to be a little bit of

of fast-growing housing development in west Beaverton.

Ari Fleischer, a Bush campaign spokesman in Austin, Texas, told reporters Sunday that Bush will argue that the United States is in an "educational recession" demonstrated by poor test scores.

That claim will likely be challenged. Educational experts say it's difficult to compare test scores across nations, particularly because achievement tests are taken by a much broader cross-section of American students than in many foreign countries.

Bush to campaign today in Beaverton, topics include education

PORTLAND (AP) — Locked in tight race for Oregon's increasingly important electoral votes, Republican George W. Bush will discuss education on his visit to Beaverton Monday.

The Texas governor will then fly to Spokane, Wash., to argue that the region can't afford the electricity and irrigation losses would result from breaching dams on the Snake River to help save salmon.

While Vice President Al Gore will be in Florida talking about Medicare, Bush will hold a late-morning "town hall" meeting at Bethany Elementary School, an area

education plans.

Timed to coincide the trip is a new Republican National Committee ad suggesting the nation is in the grips of an "education recession."

Citing low test scores, particularly on math and science, the ad implies that part of the blame rests with the Clinton-Gore administration. It also praises Bush's record as governor of Texas.

The ad will begin airing later in the week in 17 states, Fleischer said.

"Reading and math scores nationally have been declining for the past 10 years," Fleischer said. "There's a real worry in America about whether children will be safe in school."

Bush's trip will include an appearance Tuesday on CNN's "Larry King Live."

Bush has proposed a \$47 billion, 10-year education plan that would boost spending for literacy programs, college scholarships and programs that improve pupil achievement. He also wants vouchers that poor families could use for private-school tuition.

Bush's camp also welcomed new weekend polls suggesting he had reclaimed some of his losses to Gore. It also confirmed reports of sharply reduced advertising in Illinois, a key battleground state, but denied that was because the campaign felt Gore's lead there had become unassailable.

Fleischer said the cutback was largely a response to a decision by Democrats to scale back their own advertising there. "We keep an eye on each other's advertising and that's what you're seeing ... Illinois is definitely a battleground state. We're going to contest it," he said.

Gore spokesman Fabiani painted a different picture of the ad cutback, telling CNN the decision to pull out of Illinois is "a major, major statement about where this election is going."

Associated Press writer Sandra Sobieraj contributed to this report.

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