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By Ed Leahy

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UK growers among Ugandan tree project

Eight executives from British food and farm businesses take part in Thousand Trees challenge in Uganda



Eight food executives from the UK food and farming industry are flying to Uganda to help female agricultural entrepreneurs develop their farms.

The group will work alongside young Ugandan coffee farmers to plant a thousand trees in just three days, including avocado, jackfruit and mango.

Dubbed the Thousand Trees Challenge, the fruit trees will not only boost soil quality and food security but provide coffee plants with shade, helping coffee plants to grow.

Members of the fresh produce industry will be represented on the trip by Vitacress Salads' technical director, Helen Brierly, alongside Kettle Produce's CEO Susie McIntrye.

The Thousand Trees challenge is one of the events organised this year as part of Farm Africa's Food For Good network, which unites the global food and farming businesses behind the power of food to

change lives in support of Farm Africa's work driving agricultural and environmental change across eastern Africa.

Sarah Louise Fairburn, brand and sales director at LJ Fairburn & Son, who is taking part in the challenge, said: "What's really inspiring about Farm Africa's work in Kanungu is that it addresses the practical issues hindering women and young Ugandans from setting up profitable coffee businesses. As someone who is very involved in promoting and encouraging women and young people in food and farming in the UK, this really resonated with me.

"Our aim is to plant one thousand trees and raise imperative funds which will support Farm Africa's ongoing work to help these farmers grow and sell more for a higher price, for a profit.

"Coming from a proud British family business, I understand the importance of ensuring sustainability for future

generations; our work will help combat the environmental challenges for years to come and will help empower women and young people to ensure fair and sustainable farming."

Coffee is Uganda's most valuable crop, and the majority of the country's beans ends up in the cups of European coffee drinkers. Despite coffee's profit-making potential, many of Kanungu's coffee farmers struggle to make ends meet.

In 2018, with co-funding from the European Union, Farm Africa started supporting 4,800 coffee farmers in Kanungu by offering training in the sustainable production of high-quality coffee so that they can meet lucrative coffee markets' high standards.

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