

Recreating the Banana Grower: The Role of Private Certification Systems in the Windward Islands Banana Industry

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Abstract

Private standards and certification schemes in agrifood networks tend to be described as neoliberal, suggesting that they share a common understanding of that which they seek to govern and the tools to be used. Although such certification systems do have many features in common, this article argues that much is to be learned by contrasting certification systems with regard to their ideational groundings. Through a historically grounded discussion of the adoption and implementation of two certification systems – GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade – in the Windward Islands banana industry, it is argued that there are important differences with regard to how the systems envision shared key concepts such as accountability, adaptability, professionalism and not least sustainability. These differences permeate the standards as well as their enforcement structures, demonstrating a flexibility in certification as governmental technology which is often overlooked. Moreover, the article explores how the certification systems' governmental rationalities articulate with local understandings of the role of farmers and agriculture in the Windward Islands, arguing that the tension existing between the visions embedded in the systems mirrors a tension within these islands societies. This tension preceded the adoption of the certification systems and continues to influence their implementation today.

Keywords: Certification, private standards, political rationalities, agrifood networks, banana farming, the Windward Islands

Introduction: Certification Systems in the Global Marketplace

Certification systems constitute a governance tool which despite its relative newness has come to have tremendous influence on global commercial activity, not least within international agribusiness. Where the early international standardization movement of the late 19th century was coupled to growth in mechanized production and dominated by engineers, from the late 1970s and onwards systems oriented quality management standards drastically enlarged the scope of that which could be governed through standards (Higgins & Hallström 2007). This development was followed by what Michael Power, writing of Britain in the 1990s dubbed the ‘audit explosion’, whereby audit technologies, in the quest for ‘greater accountability, efficiency and quality’ have come to permeate society (1994:1). In the ‘audit society’ the promulgation of standard systems is far from the sole prerogative of public agencies and national and international standards development organizations such as ISO (Power 1997). These are joined by a host of private standard setters such as businesses, industry consortia, NGOs and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

In agrifood networks standards and certification schemes enable private parties to standardize products, production processes and, by implication, producers.¹ Certification technologies have prospered in the transnational spaces opened by free market ideologies advocating political deregulation. Where international agreements under the WTO restrict the public regulation of trade, such rules do not apply to private parties. Rather, private certification systems are typically construed as depoliticized and value neutral governance tools, their credibility boosted further by techno-scientific discourse (Bain, Ransom & Worosz 2010). Nonetheless, certification technology is employed in the reconfiguring of power relations in agrifood networks, arguably shifting power from the production to the market side of the supply chain (Campbell & Le Heron 2007). Using certification, supermarkets have been able to define parameters for food quality, or rather *qualities*, since the term has been applied to an increasingly long list of product and production process attributes. Standards and associated certification schemes, whether retailer specific or the outcome of industry collaborations, have become the supermarkets’ primary supply chain governance tools, and in a globalized business environment supermarkets have emerged as key standard setters in agrifood networks. This supermarket power is not uncontested, however, as social movement organizations (SMOs) and to some degree producer groups have also developed certification systems seeking to influence the manner in which agrifood networks operate. Still, if they are to succeed in moving the retailers, they need to foster and maintain a consumer demand for their certified products which major retailers cannot afford to ignore.

One may distinguish between two main approaches to the use of certification in agrifood networks: certification aimed at product differentiation and certifica-

tion for supply chain management purposes (Henson & Humphrey 2010). In what has been dubbed the 'economy of qualities', certification has allowed sophisticated product differentiation to address the manifold tastes and concerns of a differentiated mass of consumers. Most prominently, certification allows the standardization of products with respect to what information economists call credence attributes, i.e. qualities which remain concealed to the consumer even after the point of consumption (Darby & Karni, 1973). A label on a product, when backed by a credible certification scheme, purportedly renders visible attributes of the product or the production process, which would otherwise have remained hidden. SMOs and others involved in standard setting have used this approach to enable consumers to 'see behind' the product itself. Because certification in this regard is ultimately directed at the consumer, such schemes are referred to as business-to-consumer (B2C) or labelling schemes. Early examples were organic certification initiatives pioneered in the 1970s (Dankers & Liu 2003). In contrast, certifications used for supply chain management typically remain hidden to the consumer and are known in certification jargon as business-to-business (B2B) schemes, their function being to convey information between firms. In many cases they are retailer risk management tools with a significant emphasis on food safety and traceability, sometimes accompanied by social and environmental considerations. Such food safety schemes began to appear in the UK in the 1990s in response to food scares (Henson & Caswell 1999), increased media and NGO scrutiny (Loader & Hobbs 1999) and enhanced food safety legislation (Hobbs & Kerr 1992), which had the supermarket chains fear bad publicity as well as legal liability generated by events in their supply chains.

The simplicity and versatility of certification – the apparent ease with which it transforms a multitude of complex and messy realities into easily digestible pieces of information – has had a tremendous appeal to private regulators who in turn have contributed to a constantly growing market for certification systems. A big part of this market consists of what is often referred to as sustainability standards, which may include both B2C and B2B standards (Riisgaard 2009). The multitude of sometimes rivalling sustainability standards reflects power struggles, differences of emphasis and contesting notions of how sustainability can and should be codified in standards and certification schemes. Being market based and seemingly depoliticised, sustainability certification, like audit technologies more generally, tend to be depicted as essentially neoliberal tools of governance (Higgins & Hallström 2007; Guthman 2008). In terms of governmentality, this would imply that they also share in building on a neoliberal political rationality, i.e. ideas, values, principles and knowledge framing that which is to be governed (Djama, Fouilleux & Vagneron 2011: 189). Critics of sustainability certification have argued that because these initiatives are products of 'thinking inside the neoliberal box' (Guthman 2008), the kind of change they can produce is severely restricted (Fridell 2006). However, an outright dismissal of market based certification on the

grounds of an assumed ‘neoliberal nature’ may be to gloss over important differences in how certification systems are structured and operate. A more informative approach may be to compare such systems with regard to their ideational groundings.

This article sets out to carry out such a comparison of two certification systems being applied to the same object of governance: the banana industry of the Windward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean. The two systems – GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade – are, due to retailer and consumer demand, de facto mandatory for banana growers on these islands who produce for the UK retail market. While the systems are similar in several respects – both may be included under the rubric of sustainability certification – I argue that they also represent different forms of governmentality which is reflected in the manner that certification is employed as governmental technology. In the following I will begin by presenting the historical background of the Windward Islands banana industry before going on to discuss, in chronological order, the adoption and implementation of the two certification systems. The historically grounded discussion seeks to present the systems in some detail in order to highlight what they set out to achieve and how. From that discussion I proceed with a further exploration of what kind of farmer and agricultural sector the schemes explicitly or implicitly seek to create and how well these visions resonate with the banana industry stakeholders. While I believe the discussion has a general validity for the Windward Islands banana industry as a whole, it is informed particularly by the situation in St. Vincent, where I conducted a year of field research from July 2008 to August 2009.

The Windward Islands Banana Industry

When the UK company Geest in the early 1950s agreed to purchase all export grade bananas from the Windward Islands, i.e. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Lucia and Grenada, the event marked the beginning of a new era for these small British colonies. The sugar industries, which had once rendered them so attractive to England, had by the end of the 19th century collapsed and economic alternatives were few. Consequently unemployment levels were high and living conditions difficult for the many who had relied on the plantations for an income. Fearing social unrest the colonial administration in St. Vincent followed the recommendations of the 1897 West India Royal Commission and initiated land settlement schemes at the turn of the century (Fraser 1986; John 2006). Through the acquisition of marginal and unproductive estate lands, which were surveyed and sold in small lots, the number of holdings of less than 10 acres grew from 46 in 1896 to 7 459 in 1946. Because lots were commonly subdivided, moreover, more than half of these measured less than one acre (John 2006: 53, 86). The smallholders eagerly embraced the opportunity to grow and export bananas to a guaranteed market in Britain and, as Trouillot (1988) has noted, this was

linked to the comparative suitability of bananas over alternative crops to a peasant mode of production. Geest, on its part, had been encouraged by the British government which gave preferential terms to bananas from its colonial sources. Banana exports grew quickly to become the backbone of the fragile Windward Island economies. Particular note must be made of the 'banana boom' taking place from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. During those years, more than in any other period, the banana truly lived up to its nickname 'green gold'. Money from banana exports transformed the islands, making new consumption patterns and lifestyles available, even to the poorest. By 1990, banana exports accounted for over 20 percent of the GDP and over 80 percent of total agricultural exports in the three islands of Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, while almost 37 percent of agricultural land was under banana cultivation (Nurse & Sandiford 1995: 4). From 1992 and onwards, however, in response to the likely erosion of trade preferences in Europe and continued challenges posed by weather events, ecological restraints and high production costs, the industries went into a steady decline which has continued until the present day. In this prolonged decline the boom remains a historical reference point and a constant reminder of the wealth that banana had the potential to bring in.

The Windward Islands banana industry had always had difficulties associated with managing large numbers of growers, many of them ill-equipped and unproductive (Spinelli 1973:189). For this reason Geest had demanded not to deal with individual growers but with Banana Growers' Associations (BGAs) on each island (Reid 2000). The BGAs bought the bananas from the growers, regulated production and provided extension services. From 1958 an umbrella organization, WINBAN, was charged inter alia with negotiating contracts with Geest and with pursuing research and development focused on agronomic practices, postharvest handling and technology transfer (La Gra & Marte 1987:122). This was more or less the setup until the post-boom period of the 1990s when threats to the viability of the Windward Islands banana industry seemed to require drastic changes in the organizational structures as well as growers' practices. The boom period aside, environmental and economic conditions had from the onset left the industry depending not just on preferential access to the UK market, but also on a series of injections of aid from the British government to stay afloat (Grossman 1994). As Grossman points out, these interventions, including the preferential access, were conceived of as temporary measures to allow the industry to get on a competitive footing, but quality issues and low productivity have remained substantial causes of concern throughout much of the industry's life span.

Survival by Certification?

When European integration by the early 1990s seemed to threaten the continuation of trade preferences for Windward Island bananas, growers as well as gov-

ernments began to fear for the future of the industry. A number of consultancy reports commissioned on behalf of the industry by entities such as the Caribbean Development Bank, the EC and the British Overseas Development Administration agreed that the way forward was one of restructuring and rationalization (Lewis 1998). A lax attitude toward growers was identified as the main reason for the industry's difficulties and essential components of the restructuring exercise were therefore held to be the cultivation of a stronger market orientation on the part of the industry as a whole and, critically, the elimination of poorly performing growers. Cargill, for instance, stated that

the present non-discriminatory approach to grower services, fruit purchasing and market feedback will have to be replaced with one that allows the [BGAs] to consolidate their support to growers who adhere to cultivation practices [and] are dependable suppliers of quality fruit [...] (Cargill Technical Services 1995: 23)

The message was clear: Europe's likely withdrawal of the protection it had offered Windward bananas would force the banana industry to withdraw the protection it had offered its growers. Any kind of direct subsidization or cross-subsidization of unproductive growers would have to cease (Lewis 1998). From a neoliberal point of view such subsidies were counterproductive and dangerous, yet the extensive participation of marginal growers in the industry ensured a wide distribution of wealth and added to highly beneficial multiplier effects (Grossman 2003). Politicians and industry officials were no doubt aware of this, but seemed to accept changes as a necessary evil. In the face of impending trade liberalization the choice was perceived as being between the implementation of a socially disruptive industry reform and an altogether abandonment of the banana industry. One point at which all consultants agreed, however, was that there was no real alternative to bananas in terms of contribution to the economy (Lewis 1998).

One of the first results to come of the restructuring was the replacement in 1994 of WINBAN with a new, private entity, WIBDECO, part owned by the governments and the BGAs.² WIBDECO was to focus more on business and less on research than what had been the case with WINBAN. In 1996 the company was able to acquire, in a joint venture with the Ireland-based multinational fruit company Fyffes, Geest's banana division, thereby entering into the marketing and distribution of bananas (Clegg 2002). With a presence in the market place, WIBDECO soon began work to channel more produce away from the wholesale markets and into the better paying but more quality conscious retail sector. The primary means of achieving this was to be the implementation of a farm certification system – The Certified Growers' Programme (CGP) – tailor-made by WIBDECO to develop 'a pool of farmers/farms capable of producing, processing and packaging bananas to meet the specific requirements of the Multiples' (Allardyce 2000: 3).³ The multiples' concerns were divided between being able to offer premium quality products at competitive prices and being pro-active in the face of

growing public attention to issues such as food safety, environmental health and worker welfare.

In some respects the CGP carried a close resemblance to other farm certification systems developed in the mid-1990s, the standards building on notions of integrated crop management (ICM) and integrated pest management (IPM), prescribing efficient agronomic practices and minimal and responsible use of agrochemicals. Yet, the standard was written very specifically to facilitate the rationalization of the Windward Islands banana industry and as such contained requirements intended to weed out growers seen to lack the prerequisites of viable farm operations. Important minimum requirements sought to disqualify farms with unsuitable terrain, inadequate rainfall or irrigation, a lack of road access and inappropriate packing sheds for fruit processing (Allardyce 2000). Moreover, the CGP contained quality standards for the produce itself and failure to maintain a high and consistent quality score would lead to decertification. Certification was voluntary but only certified growers would be able to sell fruit to the multiples and be rewarded with a price premium. However, the way the certification process was designed led growers to question the scheme's impartiality (Hubbard, Herbert, & de la Touche 2000). Certification officers were WIBDECO employees and could have experienced pressure from the company as well as the governments to 'go easy' on certain growers.

Clissold has noted that the CGP and the attached price premium 'brought into the open the unresolved question of whether the institutions in the banana industry had primarily social or economic objectives' (Clissold 2001: 7). There was great dissatisfaction among a segment of growers that local policies were not designed to counteract the effects of market pressures but to adapt to them. By the late 1990s many found themselves as vulnerable as ever, struggling to break even while being asked to comply with complex requirements. Disputes over the size of the price premium and allegations over supposedly favourable treatment of larger growers increased tension within the grower base and pressure mounted on politicians who worried about alienating an important segment of voters. Significant numbers of growers left the industry, the estimated number of active growers shrinking from 25 000 in 1992 to 9 400 in 2001 (Grossman 2003: 313). While many of these undoubtedly belonged to a category of growers deemed ill suited, some growers believed the price premium did not adequately compensate for additional labour requirements (Allardyce 2000), and consequently those who gave up banana farming may have included growers who would have been able to certify but chose not to. At the same time, a lack of assistance to growers choosing to exit the industry may have dissuaded those with no alternative source of income from doing so (Hubbard, et al. 2000).

In 2000, Bernard Cornibert, CEO of WIBDECO in the UK, described the CGP as having 'faltered because of divisions in the banana industry' and argued that to regain the trust of the supermarkets it was necessary to 'relaunch [the programme]

with more stringent application of the code of practice' (St. Lucia Online 2000). The CGP was never relaunched, but some of its functions would eventually be taken over by GLOBALGAP, a certification system devised by the retailers themselves. Prior to that, however, the Windward Island banana growers had responded to the developments of the 1990s by introducing *another* certification system. Fairtrade, in contrast to the CGP, was heralded as offering new hope to the many growers facing uncertain futures in the face of market liberalization.

Fairtrade

When the first shipment of Fairtrade certified bananas from the Windward Islands became available to British consumers on July 25, 2000 (Liddell 2000), it was an event which could easily be seen as a direct challenge to the objectives of the industry restructuring and the CGP. Indeed, a report from the UK Fairtrade Foundation published shortly after expressed hope that Fairtrade in the Windward Islands would 'embrace many of the smaller and poorer producers who have not been able to participate in the Certified Growers Programme' (Liddell 2000: 17). 'If successful', the report states, 'sales of Fairtrade Windward Island bananas will offer hope to thousands of farmers, make farming worthwhile for thousands more, and eventually encourage back destitute farmers who had long since given up the struggle' (Liddell 2000: 18). How could it be that the Windward Islands banana industry now found itself implementing two certification systems with such apparently contradictory objectives? The short answer is that the two systems were promoted by different actors within the industry. Where the CGP was introduced by WIBDECO, Fairtrade certification came about as a result of the actions of growers looking after their own interest.

The NGO-driven Fairtrade certification system emerged with the objective of reducing poverty and empowering producers in the global South. More specifically the initiative aimed to assist smallholders in collectively lifting themselves out of exploitative and unsustainable trade relationships by creating linkages with concerned importers and consumers in the North. To make it possible for consumers to recognize Fairtrade products these carry a label – the Fairtrade Mark – which is owned, along with the Fairtrade standards, by the Germany-based NGO Fairtrade International⁴. The Fairtrade standards address the trade relationships as well as the production process, reflecting the view that decent terms of trade are a prerequisite for sustainable production. The trade standards therefore require, among other things, that buyers pay producers a minimum price which is to be adjusted at regular intervals so as always to cover the cost of sustainable production. On top of this producers are to receive a Fairtrade premium intended to promote sustainable development. The production standards are to some degree product specific, standards existing today for 15 product ranges as well as composite products, but all address social, socioeconomic, and environmental develop-

ment, as well as labour conditions.⁵ A core principle in the Fairtrade standards is that producers should be organized in small producer organizations (SPOs)⁶, required to operate in a democratic, transparent, and non-discriminative manner with an overarching aim to ‘promote the environmentally-sustainable social and economic development of the organization and its members’ (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International 2009: 6). The Fairtrade standards are directed at the SPO and not the individual grower and consequently the annual Fairtrade audit is an audit of the SPO and not of members’ farm operations. While a Fairtrade banana grower is required to comply with restrictions on the use of herbicides and maintain pesticide free buffer zones next to streams and roads, the onus is on the SPO to educate, facilitate and cultivate awareness among its members so that they abide by the rules.

Fairtrade’s emphasis on collective action resonates well with the philosophy of the organization which brought the concept of Fairtrade to the Windward Islands. The Windward Islands Farmers’ Association (WINFA), was formally launched in 1987 with a secretariat in St. Vincent, as an umbrella body for national farmers’ organizations in the four Windward Islands (Rittgers & La Gra 1991). From the beginning, WINFA promoted farmers’ democratic participation in development processes and acknowledged the importance of creating linkages and alliances nationally and internationally in order to foster awareness and solidarity and to improve farmers’ socio-economic well-being (Rittgers & La Gra 1991: 131). WINFA’s international network included Christian Aid and Oxfam in Britain, and these NGOs sponsored and co-ordinated a WINFA fact-finding mission to the UK and Belgium in 1992 to learn more about the likely consequences of European integration. The trip linked WINFA with pioneers of the European fair trade movement, initiating the process which culminated in Fairtrade certification and the export of Fairtrade bananas in 2000.

Still, it had been no easy task for WINFA to convince politicians and industry officials in the Windward Islands to lend their support to the Fairtrade initiative. Renwick Rose, co-ordinator of the ’92 delegation and for many years WINFA coordinator, has asserted that the leaders of the St. Vincent Banana Growers’ Association (SVBGA) at first would not ‘touch Fairtrade with a ten-foot pole’ and that the people in WINFA were ‘scoffed at as dreamers, out of touch with the realities of the banana industry’ (Rose 2009). The conflict was one of ideas as well as of the actors championing them; of governmental and programmatic differences as well as of industry leadership. Already in 1992 WINFA had noted with regret the ‘pettiness on the part of officials in the banana industry and Governments, reflected in their unwillingness to cooperate with WINFA, perhaps in thinking that WINFA was stealing the limelight’ (WINFA 1993: 12). It is quite possible that WINFA’s active role in promoting fair trade was interpreted by some industry officials as the actions of a competitor vying for control. Considering that a degree of paternalism saturated the industry it seems likely that a governance initiative

advocated by growers would be dismissed by industry leaders. These leaders could have feared that WINFA, using Fairtrade, would mobilize growers to challenge their positions of power.⁷ Moreover, a number of growers suggested to me during fieldwork that the opposition of certain key figures to Fairtrade was due not so much to Fairtrade ideational content as to their own lack of influence over the scheme. Yet, there was obviously also a clash of ideas and real disagreement as to what was the best path forward for the industry. Fairtrade was offering an alternative to the neoliberal vision of rationalization and for someone subscribing to the view that competitiveness could only be achieved through a leaner industry where responsibility was clearly individualized Fairtrade must definitely have appeared as a step in the wrong direction. The paradox was that Fairtrade made sense from a business point of view as there was a large, untapped market for Fairtrade bananas in the UK. When WIBDECO realized this the BGAs were given no choice but to accept Fairtrade as a new order of business.

From a cautious first shipment of some 1 800 boxes of bananas, the Fairtrade exports grew significantly over the succeeding years in response to increasing demand (Smith 2010; Fairtrade Foundation 2011). By 2009, 90 percent of the bananas exported to the UK were sold on Fairtrade terms, the explicit goal being a total switch. More than 90 percent of the Windward Islands banana farmers, numbering some 3 300, had joined the Fairtrade scheme (Fairtrade Foundation 2010). Fairtrade farmers belong to national Fairtrade organizations (NFTOs) which are recognized as members of WINFA, and WINFA, being the Fairtrade certificate holder, acts as the NFTOs' co-ordinator. Each NFTO is, however, largely autonomous and democratically run by its membership with members organized in local Fairtrade groups which hold meetings on a monthly basis. While Fairtrade exports grew rapidly to constitute a large share of total exports, growers continued to exit the industry and the total exports continued to decline in the new century. In the case of St. Vincent the tonnage exported fell by almost 60 percent between 2000 and 2007 and the number of active growers was reduced to less than one third (Fridell 2011). Arriving in St. Vincent in July 2008 I found that Fairtrade certification, while still controversial and drawing fire in some quarters, had been accepted as indispensable by most in the banana industry, as had the role played by WINFA. Yet, the general consensus was that the industry was in deep crisis and that growers were barely scraping by. The tensions between two partly contradicting visions for the industry persisted, now expressed through the parallel implementation of Fairtrade and GLOBALGAP.

GLOBALGAP

GLOBALGAP, an acronym for Global Good Agricultural Practice, are sets of sector specific pre-farm gate standards emphasising food safety, but also covering areas such as environmental protection, traceability, animal welfare and worker

health and safety. The initiative grew out of coalition of European retailers established in 1997 under the name EUREP (Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group) (GLOBALG.A.P., n.d.). The secretariat is hosted in Germany and the membership is international, but GLOBALGAP is in many ways the offspring of the Assured Produce Scheme (APS), a British domestic farm certification system based on ICM principles (van der Grijp 2007). The APS was designed in the early 1990s with the objective of harmonizing the multiples' various food safety codes for domestic producers. Having achieved this much, the UK multiples quickly identified the need for a similar system holding their foreign suppliers to the same standard and took the initiative to set up EUREP (van der Grijp 2007).

The first EUREP protocol, with a scope covering fruits and vegetables, was ready in 1999 and named EUREPGAP (Möller 1999). The standard was devised as a generic HACCP approach to farming, requiring producers to identify potential risks, plan for their control and identify action to be taken in the event that predefined critical limits are breached. The standard is comprehensive, covering farm activity from the seed stage to the dispatch of the final product (Campbell 2005). Since the introduction of the first protocol, it has been revised three times (in 2004, 2007 and 2010) and with the third edition in 2007 the name of the certification system, as well as the organization responsible for it, was changed to GLOBALGAP, reflecting the initiative's global ambitions and expanding reach.⁸ Indeed, GLOBALGAP promotes itself as 'the global partnership for safe and sustainable agriculture' and currently more than 100 000 certificates are awarded in over 100 countries (GLOBALG.A.P. 2010). Over the years a number of scopes and sub-scopes have been added so that GLOBALGAP today offers 'integrated farm assurance' relevant for a wide range of farm enterprises, including livestock and aquaculture. Importantly, GLOBALGAP is a B2B scheme as producers' certification status is only communicated to buyers. This underscores GLOBALGAP's function as a supply chain management tool for maintaining baseline standards, to which other systems, such as Fairtrade, may be added for product differentiation.

A key driver behind the GLOBALGAP venture was the need to harmonize already existing standards. It was believed that having one globally recognized standard for food safety would be beneficial to suppliers as well as retailers, allowing both parties more flexibility. In other words, GLOBALGAP was created to replace other standards such as the CGP or proprietary supermarket codes, or if not to replace them, to function as a benchmark standard against which other standards could be recognized as equivalent (Bain, Deaton & Busch 2005; van der Grijp, Marsden & Cavalcanti 2005). GLOBALGAP offers four different 'certification options'. Under options 1 and 3 individual producers apply for either GLOBALGAP certification or certification through a benchmarked scheme. Options 2 and 4 give the same alternatives to producer groups. Potentially the CGP could have been developed into a benchmarked scheme, but this was considered too time consuming and WIBDECO therefore decided upon option 2 (Sylvester

Vanloo, interview, May 15, 2009). As a producer group WIBDECO accepted responsibility for running a quality management system (QMS) covering all growers included under the scheme. All registered growers are subject to annual inspections while the QMS itself is subject to an annual external audit by an accredited certification body.

The standard consists of three kinds of requirements classified according to their importance. To become certified a grower must comply with all 'major musts' and 95 percent of 'minor musts'. Additionally there are requirements classified as recommendations, with which compliance is not required. A grower failing to pass the inspection must carry out corrective action within a time period not exceeding 28 days, but may, in severe cases, be suspended (GLOBALG.A.P. 2007). While the rigorous focus on scheme integrity and the comprehensiveness of GLOBALGAP clearly differed from the CGP, the core content would have been recognizable to growers familiar with the latter. For instance, the concepts of ICM and IPM were of central importance to the GLOBALGAP standard setters (Möller 1999: 18). About half of the control points deal with pesticides or produce handling. Other important areas are workers' health, safety and welfare, fertiliser use, harvesting practices, propagation materials, site and soil management and irrigation. For each control point, compliance criteria specify how the inspector should verify compliance, requiring different kinds of action on behalf of the grower. Broadly speaking the inspector tests a grower's knowledge by asking questions and asking for demonstrations when possible, but he also assesses the farm, including equipment, protective gear, infrastructure and signage, and documentation presented by the grower. This documentation includes the grower's own records of farm activity, training certificates, various risk assessments, plans and policies, invoices, a farm map and pack shed site plan.

The GLOBALGAP standard is subjected to a regular revision cycle reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement, and my arrival in St. Vincent in July 2008 coincided with the implementation of version 3 of the standard containing several new control points and the reclassification of others. Growers were clearly finding it difficult to comply with the revised standard, and in June 2009, only just over 40 percent of about 1 000 active growers in St. Vincent had been able to certify (WINFARM 2009). During this period, various actors in the industry were seeking to assist growers in different ways. Importantly, the extension officers, acting as growers' technical advisors, are charged with educating farmers about the requirements. Moreover, producer group certification allows for the centralization of certain tasks, such as the carrying out of generic risk assessments, the provision of materials such as record books and signage, the calibration of scales, the provision of various specifications for infrastructure, and the conducting of training sessions for growers and workers to acquire formal competency in key areas such as pesticides, hygiene and first aid. Some of these tasks are taken care of by WIBDECO, but the BGAs, the NFTOs and to some degree the governments all have responsi-

bilities. The assistance provided clearly relieves the growers of much work. However, since the growers are ultimately held responsible at the time of the inspection their reliance on support also renders them vulnerable if that support should fail to materialize.

It is my impression from interviews and from listening to growers' discussions that many of them felt let down or betrayed by one party or another. The extension officers, working for the SVBGA, were crucial in bringing growers 'up to standard', yet I heard a number of growers complain of being neglected by their officer. This may or may not have been the case but some extension officers certainly had far better reputations than others. From time to time there were also complaints that WIBDECO's team of internal inspectors was understaffed and consequently unable to inspect growers by their recertification deadlines. A cause of concern in the preparation for the 2008 external audit – essentially an audit of the QMS along with farm inspections to cross check a sample of growers – was that growers with irrigated farms had not received the required risk assessment on irrigation water pollution which was to be carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. This automatically resulted in two minor must non-compliances (both control points elevated from recommendations in version 2). Another minor must non-compliance (also elevated from a recommendation in version 2) was given to several growers for lacking evidence of first aid training, even if no training sessions had been held for them to participate in that year. Other requirements which caused difficulties pertained to infrastructure such as packing sheds, dining areas, and pit toilets. There was some confusion as to what these control points actually entailed and improvements were associated with some expenditure, leaving growers depending on assistance provided by the NFTO. Finally, a constant cause of concern among industry officials and extension officers were growers' shortcomings with regard to record keeping. In order to rectify this, efforts were made to train growers through workshops, yet industry officials argued that the root of the problem was a low level of literacy and growers were therefore encouraged to enlist the help of children or others who could be able to assist. In practice, however, extension officers were often expected to do record keeping along with growers.

Recreating the Vincentian Banana Farmer

The certification systems discussed in the preceding pages represent different approaches to the private governance of agricultural production and trade. Table 1 summarizes the key characteristics of the systems, revealing distinct similarities and differences. The CGP has been included in the table for its historical significance, yet the discussion in the following will centre on GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade, the two systems currently being implemented.

	Standard setter	Products & countries covered	Conformity assessment type	Objectives	Regulated party	Adopting party	Certification addressee
Certified Growers' Programme (discont.)	Export company (WIBDECO)	Bananas in the Windward Islands	Industry internal certification	Rationalization of industry, quality, food safety	Growers	Export company (WIBDECO)	Retailers (B2B)
GLOBALGAP	Industry external (retailer consortium)	Wide range of products globally	3 rd party certification (ISO Guide 65 accredited)	Food safety & sustainable production	Growers	Export company (WIBDECO)	Retailers (B2B)
Fairtrade	Industry external (NGO)	Wide range of products from developing countries	3 rd party certification (ISO Guide 65 accredited)	Sustainable development for producer	Growers' organization and traders	Farmers' association (WINFA)	Consumer (B2C)

Table 1: Characteristics of certification systems in the Windward Islands banana industry

As 'global', private certification systems designed to be applicable to a wide range of product types, addressing social and environmental aspects of production and relying on certification by purportedly independent and ISO Guide 65 accredited certification bodies, GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade clearly share important features making it possible to speak of them as variations of a neoliberal mode of governance. Yet, in other respects the two systems evidently differ. GLOBALGAP, as a B2B scheme is essentially a supply chain management tool whereas Fairtrade is a B2C scheme and aimed at assisting consumers making shopping choices. GLOBALGAP was designed by commercial actors to address market and consumer concerns whereas Fairtrade originated in civil society and addresses the producers' conditions. Perhaps the most critical difference, however, and one that is easily overlooked, is that GLOBALGAP is aimed at individual growers and seeks to individualize responsibility, whereas Fairtrade is aimed at producer organizations and seeks to collectivize responsibility. For this reason, Vincentian banana growers always think of GLOBALGAP when they speak of becoming certified, whereas Fairtrade is something they see themselves as either 'joining' or not. In the final part of this paper I attempt to build on this formal comparison by comparing the standard systems with regard to what kind of farmer they implicitly or explicitly require. The discussion, which is necessarily quite cursory, is focused around some key qualities that the standards, to a varying degree and manner seem to request, i.e. accountability, adaptability, professionalism and sustainabil-

ity-mindedness. One manner in which the standard systems differ notably is in detailing how such qualities are to be operationalized.

The Accountable Grower

Notions of accountability through audits and inspections are of course central to certification systems in general. The new Chief Executive of Fairtrade International, Harriet Lamb, has e.g. asserted that ‘you can trust the FAIRTRADE Mark because we trust no one’ (Fairtrade Foundation 2008: 8). The attitude epitomizes how certification’s appeal as a governance tool relies on perceptions of scheme integrity among those whom certification addresses. Certification represents a transfer of trust from the parties subject to certification, to a system which holds these parties accountable; ‘from operatives to auditors’ (Power 1994: 6). Yet, as we have seen there are clear differences in how the Windward Islands banana growers are held accountable by the certification systems discussed. Where the GLOBALGAP standard emphasises each and every grower’s responsibility, the Fairtrade standard addresses the collective. The producer organization is held accountable for establishing relationships of reciprocal accountability between itself and its members. In essence, the growers must decide through the organization how they are to be held accountable to it and vice versa. To the extent that Fairtrade requires growers to give account during the annual audit (e.g. through visits to farms and Fairtrade group meetings), the questions asked have the intention of assessing this reciprocal accountability. Arguably GLOBALGAP also requires the producer organization to be held accountable, but this is ultimately to ensure that it acts as an intermediary layer of control over the growers. The producer organization is purely a pragmatic means of making feasible the certification of smallholders. This is a fundamental difference in the rationalities of Fairtrade and GLOBALGAP, reflecting their respective primary concerns of safe food and development.⁹

To my surprise I found that for many Vincentian banana growers, the notion of being held accountable by the Fairtrade group is more difficult to accept than the notion of being held accountable through farm inspections. As has been duly noted in research on Caribbean societies (cf. Wilson 1973; Abrahams 1983), autonomy and individualism are culturally highly valued traits. With a historical point of reference being slavery and the exploitative labour extraction of the plantation sector, land tenure for the emerging peasantry became emblematic of newly won freedom and farming provided an opportunity to be independent and self-made (Grossman 1998). Carla Slocum has noted that in St. Lucia ‘growing bananas was a means of achieving autonomy, a flexible work schedule, avoidance of an employer’s overseeing, and individual security’ (Slocum 2006: 95). Yet, Slocum also makes note of another and co-existing discourse on farming, which complains about the strict control over the grower. Somewhat paradoxically it may be that this second discourse is strengthened through Fairtrade, at least if the reciprocal

accountability emphasised by Fairtrade is experienced as an exercise in social control. The producer organization is after all made up of fellow growers and even if the annual GLOBALGAP inspection is far more rigorous, GLOBALGAP remains a faceless authority through most of the year and possibly feels less intrusive because of that. GLOBALGAP's individualized accountability may resonate better with the larger and more self-reliant producers who were doing well under the CGP and resent the influence of smaller, less efficient or quality conscious growers over the industry. An anecdote illustrates this tension: Several of the larger producers were opposed to Fairtrade from the beginning and never became certified, preferring instead to ply their own business in the regional market. In 2008, some of them established an export company targeting the market in Trinidad. At this company's first general meeting in 2009 there was a good deal of discussion about quality issues which had lost the company a major customer. One grower suggested that the company begin to do spot checks of the produce before shipping. The managing director, however, dismissed this outright and asked rhetorically why an honest grower should ever have to pay for checking another grower's bananas.

The Adaptable Grower

The proliferation of standard systems in international agrifood networks since the 1990s can be understood as attempts by variously situated actors to re-regulate liberalized markets, whether to accommodate increasingly differentiated consumer tastes, or to manage risks (Henson & Humphrey 2010). Standards themselves represent adaptations to changing circumstances. And standards, of course, regardless of their objectives, require others to adapt to them. The issue of adaptability is particularly salient with respect to the impact of certification schemes in the Windward Islands banana industry. As we have seen, the CGP was a tool intended to allow the industry to reconfigure around a core group of progressive growers, i.e. those able to adapt to new and changing realities. The assumption was that some growers had what it took to compete and some not, and that the role of certification was to separate the one kind from the other. This explicit objective of 'weeding out' is not present in GLOBALGAP. However, GLOBALGAP with its myriad of control points and compliance criteria presents an even more formidable demand on farmers' ability to adapt, not least because the standard is continually revised and must be interpreted with an eye to local conditions.¹⁰

In the section on GLOBALGAP I gave several examples illustrating how banana growers in St. Vincent – and I suspect the situation is similar on the other islands – are far from self-reliant in meeting certification requirements. While the provision of extension services and various kinds of support has been required throughout the history of the banana industry, it is my conviction that GLOBALGAP certification requirements have intensified growers' dependence on others.

The dependence will necessarily be most acute as the introduction of a revised standard forces the industry to accommodate to new or changed requirements. If future revisions are less extensive and growers become familiar with the logic of the standards, the problem may go away. However, with the industry finding itself in a state of crisis and growers lacking confidence in the future, GLOBALGAP's emphasis on continuous improvement is likely to have contributed to the continued exodus of growers.

Exaggerating somewhat, where GLOBALGAP *requires* adaptability, Fairtrade seeks to *facilitate* it. The Fairtrade standard is intended to empower growers, through the building of organizational capacity and economic leverage, so that they are able to collectively tackle challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. Fairtrade can for instance facilitate farmers in complying with other standards, the premium in several cases having been used to facilitate a transition into organic farming (Nelson & Pound 2009). In St. Vincent the NFTO saw it as a priority to assist and encourage farmers in becoming GLOBALGAP certified, as captured by the theme of the its 2009 general assembly: 'Farmers revitalize, become certified, keep banana alive'. The NFTO assisted its members by allocating Fairtrade premium for the provision of materials to build pit toilets and lunch rooms and to improve pack sheds, but perhaps the most important manner in which the organization would facilitate adaptability was by providing channels and arenas for the dissemination and exchange of information.

The Professional Grower

Common assertions among industry officials in the Windward Island banana industry is that the majority of growers are not treating farming as a profession, that they lack business acumen, that they do not make plans or reflect on their business choices, and that they aim for short-term rather than long-term profits. The picture painted is of someone who did not become farmer by choice, but because of tradition or necessity – someone lacking the skills or formal qualifications necessary for other careers. This was the kind of grower that the banana industry traditionally was set up to accommodate for. To ensure that growers reinvested in their farms, a cess was deducted from their payments and had to be retrieved in kind as fertilizer. The arrangement is still in place although in a somewhat modified form and as far as I could tell is not controversial. Clissold (2001: 6) has also noted paternalistic attitudes in the BGAs which in her view have prevented a transformation of growers into 'independent-minded, innovative problem-solvers – the mentality now required for survival in the new era'.

The term 'professionalism', as used in lamentations over growers' supposed shortcomings, refers essentially to two separate but inter-linked notions. 'A professional farmer' might suggest someone complying with the professional standards of his occupation, i.e. the farmer-agronomist, but it might also refer to someone with a good grip on farming as an economic enterprise, i.e. the farmer busi-

nessman. The certification systems discussed relate in differing degrees to these distinct notions of professionalism. GLOBALGAP, through the concept of good agricultural practices, commitment to expert knowledge and a technical and systematic approach to production, resonates well with the first view. To the extent that GLOBALGAP is promoted to farmers as having the potential to enhance their business it is as a tool for increasing the efficiency of farm operations or as tool to convince buyers of their professional approach to farming. Fairtrade on the other hand is geared to foster professionalism in the second sense – by seeking to empower producers to make better deals and look for ways to improve their bottom line. While a common criticism of Fairtrade is that the scheme may work to lock farmers in unprofitable productive spheres, advocates of Fairtrade, backed up by impact studies (Nelson & Pound 2009), counter that Fairtrade in many cases enables diversification of income and facilitates business development. This has been attempted in the Windward Islands where WINFA and the NFTOs in 2008 used of the Fairtrade premium to buy an agro-processing plant with the intent of diversifying into the production of jams, jellies and juices and to develop the estate on which the plant is situated for agro-tourism (Rose 2008). Where GLOBALGAP requires certificates from training sessions, Fairtrade requires business plans anchored in collective decision making processes. Marcella Harris, former president of WINFA puts it the following way:

All around you hear farmers being told to work hard, to be 'businesslike'. A lot of farmers take that to mean that it has to be you alone fighting against the world. I don't agree. Another message farmers everywhere are being given is 'be efficient'. A lot of people interpret that to mean being independent, isolated even, but I don't believe it does. [...] I believe farmers, particularly smaller scale farmers, need to group and do certain things together to get better markets and get what they need so as to improve as producers (Harris 2004)

The Sustainable Grower

Both GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade seek to operationalize sustainable farming and are consequently sometimes referred to as 'sustainability standards' (Djama et al. 2011). GLOBALGAP refers prolifically to sustainability in its promotional material and communication to members, claiming for instance to be 'the world's most widely accepted standard of food safety and sustainability' (GLOBALG.A.P. 2012). Fairtrade International meanwhile recently published a position paper entitled 'Fairtrade's Contribution to a More Sustainable World' spelling out the Fairtrade philosophy on sustainable development (2010). Both certification systems lay claim to a holistic approach covering environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability but treat each of these dimensions differently.

Fairtrade emphasises the inherently positive contributions of growers as members of farming communities and society at large. In terms of economic sustainability Fairtrade argues that the main responsibility for the marginality of third world producers does not belong with the producers themselves, but with the

market place and consumption patterns. In this view, economic sustainability enables and is a prerequisite for social and environmental sustainability, the argument being that producers in a hand-to-mouth existence cannot reasonably be expected to prioritize longer term objectives. The Fairtrade minimum price and premium is intended to rectify this. Just as central, however, is the idea that collective action, encouraged through the SPO and the premium, contributes positively to social, environmental, *and* economic sustainability. In contrast, GLOBALGAP always construed food safety, environmental protection and worker welfare as interconnected objectives with an ICM approach taken to deliver positive results with respect to each (Möller 1999). Compared with Fairtrade therefore, GLOBALGAP is more specific in its detailed involvement in farm operations. GLOBALGAP's approach to social and environmental sustainability is focused on the farm level, on the conditions of and activities on the production site and the competence of producers. A sustainable farm is understood as a farm adhering to good agricultural practice as defined by experts. To ensure sustainability the system had to be designed in such a way that this practice was rendered auditable, and to make sure that expert knowledge was respected by producers the scheme was devised with a strong emphasis on monitoring and sanctions. In GLOBALGAP's vision of sustainable agriculture, the onus is on the individual grower.

GLOBALGAP differs from Fairtrade in not offering an economic incentive such as a price premium for growers to comply with the standards. It is argued that producers benefit from certification by becoming more attractive to buyers, but in cases such as in the Windward Islands, where certification was made a requirement for *remaining* in the market, that argument rings hollow. The fact is that the multiples that back GLOBALGAP and demand certification of their suppliers are in a position where they do not need to offer economic incentives since the standard has become a de facto market entry requirement. Producers may face considerable investments in bringing farms into compliance, and on top of that comes the economic burden of certification itself (de Battisti, et al. 2009). This additional economic strain, in already difficult times, may impact adversely on Windward Island banana growers' ability to operate in a sustainable fashion. However, I found clear indications that GLOBALGAP had brought with it significant improvements to certain aspects of farm operations in St. Vincent, perhaps most significantly with respect to the handling and storage of pesticides. When I asked growers during interviews if and how they had benefitted from GLOBALGAP certification, they frequently mentioned increased awareness on the use of protective equipment and the value more generally of training sessions on dealing with pesticide use, hygiene and first aid.

As suggested in the discussion of accountability, Fairtrade's emphasis on social solidarity and collective action may not be entirely uncontroversial with growers. In St. Vincent, the NFTO sought through media and meetings to actively disseminate information on the accomplishments of the Fairtrade venture. The impression

created is one of farmers pulling together. Yet, the emphasis on collective action could be difficult to accept for many Vincentian farmers who seemed more interested in how they could personally benefit from Fairtrade than in how they, through Fairtrade could contribute to the common good. Discussions in Fairtrade group meetings revealed that farmers were often hesitant or unwilling to contribute time and labour, whether it was for clean-up campaigns, road improvements or other community projects. When I asked Fairtrade certified farmers if they were contented with the way the social premium had been spent it was frequently argued that more money should find its way back to the farmers, e.g. through subsidies on farm inputs or other kinds of assistance. These sentiments were likely a reflection of the difficulties which continue to face the industry under Fairtrade, yet are interesting in indicating that also Fairtrade farmers can be critical of Fairtrade's social profile

Conclusion

The co-implementation of Fairtrade and GLOBALGAP in the Windward Islands banana industry demonstrates that standards and certification schemes, far from representing a depoliticized governance technology, are political devices and that even when their objectives overlap their rationalities promote different understandings of common concepts. In this case the standard systems addressed a pre-existing tension within the banana industry concerning its fundamental role in society, society's responsibilities toward farmers and farmers' responsibilities toward society. In other words, the standards speak to the issue of the value of farmers and farming, and they constitute packaged technologies whereby the industry and its farmers can recreate themselves.

The CGP sought to recreate the industry around a core of progressive growers who would be competitive and able to deliver what the market required if given the right kind of support. This grower was construed as an atomized subject and along with the farm constituted a self-contained unit. The basic premise was that all those farmer-farm-units, if fitting the bill, would stack up nicely like standardized bricks and make a strong structure, i.e. a competitive industry. GLOBALGAP, as a global standard takes this notion one step further. Its objective is not to transform the Windward Islands banana industry or its farmers, but to transform agriculture on a global scale. GLOBALGAP presents farm-farmer units globally with the same standard, asking them to adapt and paying no heed to local conditions. The techno-scientific rationality at its core, including the valorization of audit technology and individual accountability is promulgated as a consequence of retailers' flexing of market muscle in buyer-driven commodity chains (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz 1994). When the standard addresses producer groups it is only as means to enable the further spread of this recipe for safe and sustainable agriculture to smallholders. In the context of the Windward Islands banana industry

GLOBALGAP picked up where the CGP left off, favouring the same farmers that the CGP attempted to single out. However, this rationality was challenged by the growers themselves who in the face of impending loss of trade preferences turned to Fairtrade. Fairtrade dismisses the notion that the grower should be recreated to stay afloat in a free market. Rather, the Fairtrade standards build on the assumption that sustainable production requires changed consumption patterns and trade relations, and consequently aims to recreate the very value chain. Using certification technology, Fairtrade seeks to do this by connecting producers and consumers through the Fairtrade label. These ideas resonate well with growers in the Windward Islands who have a long history of getting short-changed for their strenuous efforts. However, Fairtrade's emphasis on social commitment and the producer organization as a key driver for development does not sit equally well with all growers. For some of the larger ones it represents a step in the wrong direction, resembling the cross-subsidization practices that the BGAs had been accused of prior to the restructuring.

The fact remains that the Windward Islands banana industry depends on the UK retail markets and that in order to retain those markets a large share of the growers must be *both* GLOBALGAP and Fairtrade certified. Being de facto mandatory for UK market entry the two certification systems have become intricately entangled in the sphere of production. In a number of respects they complement each other, yet the systems also work to reproduce a tension between two visions of farmers and farming. By taking a historical approach to the role of certification in the banana industry I have wanted to show that this tension preceded the certification schemes and informed farmers' perceptions of them. But I have also wanted to demonstrate how the co-implementation of standards has had the unintended effect of sustaining a tension between conflicting ideas on relations between producers and markets, individuals and collectives, and control and empowerment, as well as on key concepts such as accountability, adaptability, professionalism and sustainability.

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Notes

- ¹ A note on the nomenclature employed in this article: I find it useful to follow Litjens et al. (2011) in distinguishing between standards and schemes, the latter referring to the added layer of rules whereby the former is enforced. Certification represents one set of such enforcement technologies. I refer to the totality of standards and schemes as 'standard systems' and use the term 'certification system' to refer to the totality of a standard and a certification scheme.
- ² WIBDECO rebranded itself as Winfresh in 2010 but in the following I will consistently use the old name.
- ³ 'Multiples' refers to the supermarket chains, i.e. retailers with multiple stores. By the mid-1990s in the UK, four multiples accounted for more than half of the total food sales. Fifteen multiples, defined as chains with more than ten stores, accounted for nearly two thirds of the total sales area but only one seventh of the total number of stores (Lang 1999: 179).
- ⁴ The name was initially Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), reflecting its original membership of national labelling organizations. The membership has since been expanded to include three producer networks and three marketing organizations and in 2011 the name was changed to Fairtrade International.
- ⁵ In late 2009 FLO's standard unit began a process of reviewing the framework of the standards, culminating with the release of a 'revamped' version in May 2011. According to Fairtrade International (2011) the standard was rewritten in a simpler language, restructured, and a new scoring system was introduced with the intent of allowing producers more freedom in choosing how to achieve development. Apart from a strengthening of certain environmental requirements, however, the revision did not substantially change the content of the standards.
- ⁶ Fairtrade standards were first written only for SPOs, but now also exist for hired labour situations for certain product types. This is a controversial issue within the Fairtrade movement, however, with some arguing that the nature of plantations is irreconcilable with the goals of Fairtrade (Equal Exchange 2009).
- ⁷ Such fears may have been bolstered by an outright challenge of industry leadership in St. Lucia where banana growers in 1993 went on a strike led by a group calling itself the Banana Salvation Committee (Slocum 2006; Moberg 2008).
- ⁸ For the sake of convenience I will in the consistently refer to the standards and the scheme as GLOBALGAP.
- ⁹ A dilemma for the Fairtrade standard setters is the extent to which environmental requirements necessitate more formalized accountability from the grower. The line currently taken seems to be that growers, given that they have the necessary knowledge, economic leeway and social encouragement to act in an environmentally friendly manner, will choose to do so. Fairtrade, however, is not promoted as a strict environmental standard and producer groups interested in going beyond the Fairtrade standards in that respect are often encouraged to adopt organic production practices. Organic standards require more formalized producer accountability though the mechanism of an internal control system (Grosch 2000).
- ¹⁰ It deserves mentioning that several steps have been taken to make GLOBALGAP more smallholder friendly, e.g. by developing illustrated guidelines which explain basic concepts and practices. GLOBALGAP also encourages the establishment of National Technical Working Groups to adapt standards to different national settings.

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