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Fair Rubber: Schwalbe enormously expands share of tires

Rubber tappers are directly supported with a premium



It is a great success for a flagship project that directly supports people at the beginning of the supply chain: Schwalbe is enormously expanding the proportion of Fair Rubber in its products. The number of tire models that can be produced with fairly traded natural rubber is being increased six-fold.

All gravel tires from Schwalbe from the G-One series, the three road bike models of the Pro One (Tubeless, Tube & TT) and the mountain bike tires Nobby Nic, Magic Mary and Big Betty are now equipped with Fair Rubber in the Evolution Line. Previously, the cargo tire Pick-Up and the e-bike specialist Marathon E-Plus were the first bicycle tires to be produced with it, as well as the Marathon Plus Wheelchair, the first wheelchair tire.

Felix Jahn, Head of CSR at Schwalbe: „We set the goal of expanding our Fair Rubber capacities in the CSR Report 2021. It is great that we have now actually reached this milestone and increased the number of members in Fair Rubber e.V. from 277 in 2020 to 2,320 in 2022. In this way, more and more smallholders are benefiting from fair trade.“

„In addition, this gives us significantly larger quantities of fair trade natural rubber, which we use in the production of numerous other tire models. But the end is not yet reached. We are currently working intensively with Fair Rubber e.V. to steadily increase capacity.“ - Felix Jahn

Three years ago, Schwalbe set out together with Fair Rubber e.V. to stand up for the people at the beginning of the supply chain. And they do so directly: for every kilo of natural rubber, Schwalbe pays a premium of 0.50 euros directly to the certified small farmers and tappers. This corresponds to about one third of the current world market price. They decide for themselves what to do with the additional financial support. Their living conditions are improved, for example, by renovating local schools to give children access to education.

„Schwalbe is demonstrating responsibility in practice by leading the way when it comes to fair-trade natural rubber. Together with Fair Rubber e.V., Schwalbe began in 2020 to directly support the people who work on the rubber tree to ensure that a bicycle tire is available in stores at the end of the supply chain. I'm thrilled with what we've accomplished together to date.“ - Stefan Hörmann, Managing Director of Fair Rubber e.V.

So far, Schwalbe is the only tire manufacturer that uses fair-trade rubber in its products and helps people directly with a financial premium. The certified natural rubber from Indonesia comes from so-called jungle plantations. This type of plantation - unlike monocultures - preserves the high biodiversity of the rainforest.

A few months ago, a Schwalbe delegation visited the schools as well as the plantations on site. In the very rural region on Java around 140 kilometers away from the Schwalbe plant, the working day for the rubber tappers begins during dusk, when the first trees are tapped. The trickling latex milk is collected, picked up and later processed into rubber blocks. Natural rubber is one of the most important raw materials for the production of bicycle tires.

