Cupping Evaluation
Grading Form – Single Sample

Name: _____   Date: _____

Company: _____   Ref # _____

Fragrance/Aroma: (aromatic complexity *– **preference** **rating***)

Very Poor   Outstanding

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Acidity: (brightness of the coffee *– **intensity ranking***)

Very Flat   Very Bright

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Flavor: (pleasing characteristics of the coffee *– **preference rating***)

Very Poor   Outstanding

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Body: (mouthfeel of the beverage *– **intensity ranking***)

Very Thin   Very Heavy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Aftertaste: (pleasing sensations on the palate *– **preference rating***)

Very Poor   Outstanding

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Balance: (overall pleasing characteristic of the coffee *– **preference rating***)

Not Rated   Outstanding

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

SCAA CUPPING FORM

Purpose of form: The SCAA Cupping Form is designed for specialty coffee exporters, importers, wholesale and retail roasters who want an easy to use, "read-at-a-glance" comparative chart-like form, that can also serve as a reference guide of the specific coffees (sources, marks, regions, estates….) they cup. It uses a common grading language, based on traditional cupping criteria, to facilitate assessing the coffees, recording the data, and communicating the results.

The Cupping Form is designed for use in SCAA educational programs for group cuppings during such events as Producer Country Field Trips, SCAA Conventions and other training programs. It is the standard form for all SCAA cupping competitions.

The Cupping Form should be used to evaluate one or more samples of a coffee against a control coffee coming from any single region that produces a typical cup profile. For example: two or more samples of Ethiopian Sidamo could be compared. Ethiopian Harrar, however, should not be evaluated on the same sheet (or in the same session). The Form presumes a limited number of samples, a normal range being from two to four and a maximum of five per tasting exercise. It is comparative, demands some time, and allows for subtle differences to be noted.

Ease of use: The form is designed for ease of use at the cupping table. Up to five samples can be evaluated on one sheet. Each sample is graded from left to right and in chronological cupping order. Horizontal lines are placed on the left margin to allow for notation on *origin/type, green appearance and roast*.

- Origin/Type information should include both the geographic indication of origin and the method of processing, i.e. washed, unwashed, pulped naturals, etc.
- Green Appearance should include a reference to class relative to SCAA's Green Coffee Classification Chart, moisture level measurement if available, and a note on defect levels where appropriate.
- Roast Color must be noted for uniformity and future reference purposes, using the Agtron/SCAA roast classification system.

Graded scales: For user convenience, six columns (*Fragrance/Aroma, Acidity, Flavor, Body, Aftertaste, Cupper's Points*) allow for placing a line across a graded scale. Lines will make visual comparisons between the coffees on the sheet easier to read. Lines allow for easy correction, and also as the coffees cool, lines provide for a certain chronology of perception changes regarding the coffee's organoleptic stimulations. For instance, when the coffee is still hot one might give an 8 score for acidity but later reduce it to a 7 when tasted at a cooler temperature. Do not erase. Simply place an arrow pointing from the 8-line to the 7-line on the grading scale.

Cupping Form Columns

Fragrance/Aroma: Fragrance and aroma are the olfactory perception of the gases released from ground coffee and the vapors released from brewed coffee that are collectively combined into a single score. This score, which is a ***preference rating,*** ranges from 0 to 10. Zero means not rated. Plus 1 to 5 means "Very Pour" to "Average." Plus 6 to 10 means "Good" to "Outstanding." (See Coffee Attribute Scaling)

Acidity: Acidity is the corporeal gustatory perception of the hydrogen ions present in the brew, an actual physical sensation on the tongue. While it can be measured quantitatively, its taste perception often varies between individuals, ranging from slightly sweet to slightly sour. Cuppers should rank acidity according to its intensity, which ranges from 1 – "Very Flat," to 3 – "Very Soft," to 5 – "Slight Sharp," to 7 – "Very Sharp," to 10 – "Very Bright." As an intensity rating, cuppers should not rank acidity based on their own personal preference of like and dislike.

As an ***intensity ranking***, a high score may be positive or negative, depending on what the cupper expects from a particular origin or desires for a particular blend. Example: many cuppers would reject a highly acidic ranking for Sumatra Mandheling, which would then receive a correspondingly low score for Balance.

Flavor: Flavor means the perceived combination of aroma and taste, with the modulation of the basic tastes: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, achieving a distinctive cup characteristic. The aroma is experienced retro nasally through the back of the palate as the coffee is aerated in the mouth while it is slurped. A very specific flavor may be highly prized in certain origin coffees. If the particular flavor attribute is recognizable, the appropriate descriptor should also be recorded on the form. Flavor receives a ***preference rating*** on a scale of 1 to 10, ranging from "Very Poor" to "Outstanding."

Body is the sensory perception of the mouthfeel of the brew. It is a combination of the fats, oils, and sediment swept off the surface of the freshly ground coffee particles and suspended in the unfiltered brew. Body is given an ***intensity ranking*** on a scale of 1 to 10, ranging from 2 – "Thin," to 4 – "Light," to 6 – "Full", to 9 – "Heavy."

Aftertaste: Aftertaste means the perceived flavor sensations lingering in the back of the palate after the coffee has been swallowed or expectorated. While the sensation is often the result of prolonged stimulation of the nerve endings on the tongue by various astringent residues, it may also be combined with retro-nasal stimulations from aromatic substances creating a distinctive flavor-like impression. Aftertaste is a ***preference rating*** on a scale of 1 to 10, ranging from "Very Pour" to "Outstanding."

Cupper's Points, also known as **balance,** means the overall liking for the harmonious integration of the total sensory impact of the five primary sensory attributes of Aroma, Acidity, Flavor, Body, and Aftertaste. Balance is generally the single most important attribute that separates out coffees with exceptional cup quality, and therefore coffees are awarded "cupper's points" for this exemplary aspect of their cup characteristics, or conversely points are deducted due to one or more attributes that overshadow or distort the overall flavor impression of the brew. Cupper's Points are a critically important ***preference rating*** and are awarded on a scale of -5 to +5, in a range from "Very Poor" to "Outstanding."

Overall: The *Overall* score is an "additive total" calculated in the following way: Sum each of the six columns: Fragrance/Aroma, Acidity, Flavor, Body, Aftertaste, and Cupper's Points (which are either positive or negative). Add an additional 50 points to adjust the final score to a 100-point basis. (Note: It is possible exceptional coffees may score slightly above 100.) Record the total score in the box on the form.

The scoring system has been designed so that coffees graded according to SCAA's Green Coffee Classification Chart should receive the following scores: Class I – Specialty grade, 90 to 100+ points; Class 2 – Premium grade, 80 to 89 points; Class 3 – Exchange grade, 70 to 79 points; Class 4 – Below Standard Grade, 60 to 69 points; and Class 5 – Off grade, 50 to 59 points.

Sample Form: **A sample of the SCAA Cupping Form is presented on the following page.**

Appendix I – Prescreening Questionnaire

CUPPING PANEL SELECTION

Prescreening Questionnaire

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Tel _____ Fax _____ e-mail _____

1. Number of year's experience in the coffee industry?   _____

2. Number of year's experience cupping coffee?   _____

3. Have you ever participated in a Cupping Competition?   Yes ___   No ___

4. Do you take any medications affecting your taste and smell? If yes, explain:

   _____

5. Do you smoke on a regular basis?   Yes ___   No ___

6. Are you allergic to any foods?   Yes ___   No ___

7. Do you have any sinus allergies?   Yes ___   No ___

8. Is your ability to distinguish tastes:

    Better than Average ___   Average ___   Worse than Average ___

9. Is your ability to distinguish odors:

    Better than Average ___   Average ___   Worse than Average ___

10. Have you ever been selected for participation on a flavor panel?

            Yes _____   No _____

Appendix II – Prescreening Flavor Recognition Tests

CUPPING PANEL SELECTION

Basic Tastes Ranking/Rating/Combination Tests

1. ***Reference Set of Solutions:***

Taste		Concentration in grams/liter			
		I	II	III	IV
Sour	citric acid/water, g/L	0.25	0.50	1.00	2.00
Sweet	sugar/waster, g/L	5.00	10.0	20.0	40.0
Salt	salt/water, g/L	0.50	1.00	2.00	4.00

Prepare solutions using water free of off-flavors ("Crystal Fresh" bottled drinking water is recommended). Solutions may be prepared 24-36 hours prior to use. Refrigerate prepared samples. On day of evaluation, allow to warm to 70°F (room temperature) and serve 10 milliliters per participant.

2. ***Ranking Tests:***

　　　a. Scope: Panelists are required to discriminate between varying concentrations of sour, sweet and salt in the reference set of solutions.

　　　b. Test Design: Panelists are presented coded samples, samples I through IV of one Reference Set at a time, ranking the relative intensity of each sample.

　　　c. Scoring System:

　　　　　Rank the *"sour"* taste solutions in the coded cups in ascending order:

Code

　　　　Least "sour"   _____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　Most "sour"   _____

　　　　　Rank the *"sweet"* taste solutions in the coded cups in ascending order:

Code

　　　　Least "sweet"   _____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　Most "sweet: _____

　　　　　Rank the *"salt"* taste solutions in the coded cups in ascending order:

Code

　　　　Least "salty"   _____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　　　　　　　　　_____

　　　　Most "salty"   _____

3. ***Identification and Ranking Tests:***

    a. Scope: Assessment of coffee's flavor requires recognition of and rating on a numerical scale varying degrees of intensity in sourness, sweetness, and saltiness. Skill is required in assessing the correct proportionality to a particular stimulation.

    b. Test Design: Panelists are present twelve coded samples of each concentration of the Reference Set of solutions (I through IV of sour, sweet, and salt) in random order, *identifying* <u>and</u> *ranking* them on a numerical scale from 0 to 16.

    c. Scoring System: Rate the *"sourness," "sweetness,"* and *"saltiness"* of each coded solution for its relative intensity/strength on the scale below:

Code	Identify	Ranking
1-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
2-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
3-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
4-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
5-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
6-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
7-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
8-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
9-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
10-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
11-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
12-_____	_____	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

4. ***Basic Tastes Combination Tests:***

    a. Scope: Coffee's flavor often includes a combination of two or three modalities, and tasting the *blends* of sour, sweet, and salt provide the panelists with an opportunity to develop the skills of rating taste intensities without the distraction of aromatics.

    b. Test Design: Panelists begin by familiarizing themselves with the Reference Set, consisting of single component solutions. The cups carry labels such as Sweet I, Salt II, Sour III, Sweet IV, where I = 1 – 4, II = 5 – 8, III = 9 – 12, and IV = 13 – 16. The Reference Set remains available for the duration of the exercise.

    The Evaluation Set consists of equal-proportion blends of two *or* three of the Reference solutions. The panel leader can prepare some or all of the blends in the Evaluation Set. The panel leader hands out one blend at a time, and the panelists record their impressions using a score sheet.

    c. Evaluation Set:

Code	% Sweet	% Sour	% Salt
232	I	II	
715	I	IV	
115	II	III	
874	I		II
903	I		III
266	III		II
379		III	II
438		IV	I
541		II	III
627	II	I	II
043	II	IV	III
210	III	I	I
614	I	III	II
337	I	I	III

Prepare solutions by mixing equal quantities of the appropriate reference solutions. Solutions may be prepared 24-36 hours prior to use. Refrigerate prepared samples. On day of evaluation, allow to warm to 70°F (room temperature) and serve 10 milliliters (10 ml) per participant.

d. Scoring System: Panelist rank intensity/strength of **Sweet, Sour,** and **Salty** on a scale of **0 – 16**, with 0 = imperceptible, 1 = very slight and 16 = very intense.

Code	Sweet	Sour	Salty
232	_____	_____	_____
715	_____	_____	_____
115	_____	_____	_____
874	_____	_____	_____
903	_____	_____	_____
266	_____	_____	_____
379	_____	_____	_____
438	_____	_____	_____
541	_____	_____	_____
627	_____	_____	_____
043	_____	_____	_____
210	_____	_____	_____
614	_____	_____	_____
337	_____	_____	_____

e. Basic Taste Combination Exercise – Average Results:

Sample	Sweet	Sour	Salty
232	4 – 8	6 – 9	0 – 2
715	2 – 6	11 – 15	0 – 2
115	7 – 11	8 – 12	0 – 2
874	2 – 6	0 – 2	2 – 6
903	2 – 6	0 – 2	4 – 8
266	8 – 12	0 – 2	4 – 8
379	0 – 2	8 – 12	6 – 10
438	0 – 2	9 – 13	2 – 6
541	0 – 2	6 – 10	8 – 12
627	4 – 8	1 – 5	2 – 6
043	6 – 10	8 – 12	7 – 11
210	5 – 9	1 – 5	1 – 5
614	3 – 7	7 – 11	6 – 10
337	4 – 8	1 – 5	4 – 8

Appendix III – Aroma Recognition Tests

Coffee Fragrance Matching Tests

1. Scope: Coffee fragrance matching tests are used to determine a panelist's ability to discriminate (and describe, if asked in addition) differences among multiple stimuli at intensities well above the threshold levels found in coffee.

2. Procedure: Familiarize the panelists with an initial set of six coded, *but not identified,* coffee aromas. Then present a randomly lettered set of nine samples, of which a subset is identical to the initial set. Ask the panelist to identify on the score sheet the familiar samples in the second set and to label them with the corresponding codes.

3. Reference Sets: (Selected from Le Nez du Café by Jean Lenoir)

Aromatic Taints

1st Set	2nd Set Match	Descriptor*
001	_____	_____
036	_____	_____
020	_____	_____
005	_____	_____
013	_____	_____
035	_____	_____

List of Descriptors:

Earthy*	Coffee Pulp*	Rubber*
Leather*	Basmati Rice*	Cooked Beef
Straw*	Medicinal*	Smoke

Enzymatic Aromas

1st Set	2nd Set Match	Descriptor*
012	_____	_____
015	_____	_____
011	_____	_____
017	_____	_____
002	_____	_____
019	_____	_____

List of Descriptors

Coffee Blossom*	Lemon*	Garden Peas
Tea Rose*	Apple*	Potato*
Honeyed*	Apricot	Cucumber

Sugar Browning Aromas

1st Set	2nd Set Match	Descriptor*
025	_____	_____
026	_____	_____
018	_____	_____
010	_____	_____
028	_____	_____
030	_____	_____

List of Descriptors

Caramel*	Dark Chocolate*	Roasted Hazelnuts
Fresh Butter*	Roasted Almonds	Vanilla*
Roasted Peanuts*	Walnuts*	Toast

Dry Distillation

1st Set	2nd Set Match	Descriptor*
008	_____	_____
024	_____	_____
007	_____	_____
009	_____	_____
006	_____	_____
033	_____	_____

List of Descriptors

Pepper*	Maple Syrup*	Malt
Clove-like*	Black Currant-like	Roasted Coffee
Coriander Seed*	Cedar*	Pipe Tobacco*

4. Instructions: Sniff the first set of fragrances; allow time to rest after each sample. Sniff the second set of fragrances and determine which samples in the second set correspond to each sample in the first set. Write down the code of the fragrance in the second set next to its match from the first set. Determine which descriptor from the given list best describes the fragrance pair.