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) MAKING good coffee is not a simple business. Coffee bushes must be grown in shade neither too much, nor too little. A hillside is best but it mustn't be too s_____. After three years, the bushes will start to produce bright-red coffee "cherries", which are picked, processed to remove the pulp, and spread out to dry for days, ideally on concrete. They are m_____ again to separate the bean, which needs to rest, preferably for a few months. (1) Only then can it be roasted, ground and brewed into the stuff that dreams are _____ In Mexico and parts of Central America, as in Colombia and Peru further south but not in Brazil, most coffee farmers are smallholders. (2) They found it especially hard to deal with the recent slump[2] in the coffee price. The price has since recovered: the benchmark price applied to m_____ coffee now ranges from \$1.11 to \$1.14 per pound. That is roughly double its rock-bottom[3] level of August 2002. But the v_____ of their income makes it hard for farmers to invest to sustain their crop, says Fernando Celis of the Mexican National Organisation of Coffee Growers. The slump forced many small farmers to switch to other crops, or migrate to cities. Mexico's exports of coffee are less than half of what they were six years ago. (3) For farmers, one way out of this dilemma is to decouple the price they are paid from the international commodities markets. This

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