

# Hawaiian coffee growers to study Mareeba company

A GROUP of Hawaiian coffee growers will visit the Atherton Tableland this week to study what are claimed to be some of the most advanced coffee growing and harvesting techniques in the world today.

The group of about 12 to 14 coffee growers will visit the Jaques Brothers coffee plantation tomorrow and also plan to visit some macadamia nut and rare fruit plantations near Kuranda and elsewhere on the Tableland during their stay in the North.

A director of Jaques Brothers Coffee Pty Ltd, Mr Dick Jaques, said yesterday the visit would prove an eye-opener for the growers.

"We believe we have one of the most modern coffee farms in the world," Mr Jaques said.

The 73 ha Jaques plantation, the largest Australian coffee producer, has a computerised, drip feed irrigation and fertilisation system servicing each individual tree on the property and was the first coffee plantation in the world to undertake fully mechanised harvesting methods.

A New Zealand berry-picking machine was specially converted and developed by Mr Jaques and his brother, Nat, into the world's first successful mechanised coffee harvester.

In the past year, one or two Brazilian plantations also have started experimenting with mechanised harvesting.

Mr Jaques said one of the growers in the group already had paid a short visit to the Jaques plantation previously and had been so impressed he

could not wait to return to Hawaii and arrange a second visit with other growers.

The plantation is about to begin harvesting this year's crop of coffee in the next couple of weeks and plans are afoot for a massive expansion.

Mr Jaques said his company planned to add another 243 ha of coffee trees to the existing plantation over the next six years and was looking for investors to participate in the project on a private unit trust basis.

He said the company would concentrate on consolidating its position in the Queensland market this year and next year and then look at expanding elsewhere.

"We might then make a thrust overseas into New Zealand and the United States, and/or New South Wales," he said.