

Tea

November 2013

Did you know?

In Sri Lanka 1.5 and 2.5 kilograms of wood is used to produce the heat required to dry 1 kilogram of tea (WWF, 2009).

Minimum Sustainable Recommendations

Request vendors supply tea that is:

- Certified Organic and
- Fair Trade Certified

Other things to consider

In addition to the specifications noted above, consider making all applicable tea supplies including sugar, Fair Trade certified.

Finally, in keeping with provincial commitments to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste production, the vendor should be encouraged to develop sustainable delivery strategies;

1. Product delivery consolidations
2. Efficient transportation logistics
3. Proper route planning
4. No idling of vehicles during product delivery
5. Use of fuel efficient delivery vehicles

What are the issues?

There are many economic, social and environmental issues associated with the production of tea including unfair remuneration for tea producers, soil degradation, water pollution, habitat conversion and, as a result, biodiversity loss.

Energy use has a significant environmental impact as large amounts of wood are used in the drying of tea. Chemicals are also often used to grow tea and these chemicals can be harmful to human health and wildlife if these chemicals leach into soil and groundwater. Water consumption can also be an issue, as water is often used for irrigation of the tea crop.

What are the options?

Today there are many purchasing options available to consumers that help to reduce the environmental and social impacts associated with the production of tea.

Certified organic teas are grown without the use of synthetic chemicals or pesticides, using only sustainable agricultural methods.

In addition, consumers can select Fair Trade certified tea to support better trading conditions for tea producers and workers in developing countries.

Under Fair Trade certification, organizations work directly with cooperatives of small farmers to eliminate much of the middleman costs and provide the producers with a stable price that ensures a reasonable standard of living. The International Fair Trade standard for tea also includes environmental standards.

Fairtrade Canada at <http://fairtrade.ca> provides additional information on this third party certification and the variety of products available under the Fair Trade System. In addition, the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation has created a Fair Trade Manitoba website at www.fairtrademanitoba.ca. This website provides information on Fair Trade products, Fair Trade events and a listing of local businesses that supply Fair Trade products in Manitoba.

References

World Wildlife Fund. (2009). Agriculture and Tea.

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