



International Tea Day: Consumers demand a fair cuppa

UK tea drinkers consume 165 million cups a day. And 66% of UK tea consumers buy Fairtrade or would be in favour of their preferred tea brand converting to Fairtrade, according to a poll commissioned by international development charity Traidcraft.

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The poll is published on International Tea Day, and tea drinkers are already making their views known, having sent over 20,000 postcards to the five brands that dominate the market – PG Tips, Tetleys, Twinings, Typhoo and Yorkshire Tea – calling for them to go Fairtrade.

The call is backed by the Women's Institute and by Traidcraft, both of whom helped set up the Fairtrade Foundation, which awards the Fairtrade Mark.

An estimated 20 million people in the developing world rely on tea for their livelihoods and UK tea lovers understand the importance of giving tea producers a fair deal with 64% of tea buyers willing to pay more for Fairtrade tea.

The poll also revealed that Welsh tea drinkers top the survey with 25% of Welsh adults drinking five or more cups of tea per day, compared to only 11% of Scots.

The Network of Asian Producers, which includes tea producers in India and Sri Lanka, recently passed a resolution at their General Assembly in Chennai, recognising the unique benefits of Fairtrade: "While there are many labels in the market, Fairtrade is the only scheme which is producer owned, has a good track record on development and is best equipped to provide a better deal for producers via the assurance of a minimum guaranteed price and premium for our development."

Camilla Porter, Traidcraft head of campaigns, said: "The big tea brands are lagging behind popular consumer brands like Starbucks, Tate & Lyle, Cadbury's Dairy Milk and Nestlé's KitKat, which have all made a commitment to Fairtrade.

"Right now there are 80 registered Fairtrade tea producers with spare Fairtrade tea to sell. PG Tips, Tetleys, Twinings, Typhoo and Yorkshire Tea have 72% of the market. Their commitment to Fairtrade would make a lasting difference to the lives of millions of tea workers.

"The UK is truly a nation of tea lovers and the massive response by consumers calling for Fairtrade shows that they care about the people in the developing world who grow and pick the tea leaves to make our daily cuppas."

NFWI Chair Ruth Bond said, "As founder members of the Fairtrade Foundation, the WI has long campaigned for many of our household goods to be produced to the Fairtrade standard, which ensures that producers in the developing world get a fair deal.

"This campaign gives tea companies a great opportunity to build on any ethical commitments they already have and show consumers that they are truly committed to giving their tea producers a fair deal.

"Ordinary shoppers will really benefit from having a clearly recognisable standard on their favourite tea brand, which can help inform their choices when they do their weekly shopping."