

## **Fairly Traded and Fairtrade, the Difference!**

I hope we all care about trade undertaken on our behalf being conducted as ethically as possible; we are distressed to hear of exploited workers making our clothes in the third world, or the factories which leak poisonous chemicals into rivers making our goods, and so much more that happens to lower costs to consumers, or is it to increase profits!

The Fairtrade mark was designed to satisfy those fears; it guarantees a decent price for the producing farmer and in addition provides a small sum of money to be used by the community as they wish. It costs the retailer, and therefore the consumer for that price is never lower than the market price and may be significantly higher and the community premium has to be paid. Other organisations have produced other forms of certification, perhaps the best known is "Rainforest Alliance". This guarantees a degree of environmental protection but does not make any rules about price so the farmer is left open to just the same exploitation that the open market offers.

Sainsbury's have gained considerable acclaim as the largest supplier of Fairtrade goods in the world, but have just changed their policy. They are in future going to sell "fairly traded" tea. The rules for this certification which is purely of their own invention are not clear and certainly will be less stringent than Fairtrade requirements. This is a cost cutting exercise and the loser will be the farmer in the tea producing country. Almost certainly if their tea sales suffer no decline they will do the same with other commodities.

Few of us have the time to read all the small print; I ask you to insist on the well known "Fairtrade" logo and do so in the confidence that it is the most stringent system of ensuring as ethical a trading system as exists.

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