CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE HERBAL TEA SECTOR

A high diversity of ingredients, supply chain structures and relatively small volumes make the herbal tea sector complex.

UTEZ and the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) came together to launch the program for sustainable herbal tea in 2015 with an innovative collaborative approach focusing on the certification of herbal supply chains. Together with our members, we are bringing more sustainability to the herbal tea sector.

THE SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

The certification program focuses on protecting biodiversity, promoting ingredients of high quality, and creating a better future for farmers and workers.

WHAT IS HERBAL TEA?

Herbal and fruit teas are made from the leaves, fruits, flowers, seeds, roots and bark of hundreds of different plants from all over the world.

Some of the common ingredients include:

- Chamomile
- Fennel
- Hibiscus
- Lemongrass
- Linden Flower
- Peppermint
- Rosehip
- Wild Apple

**PEOPLE**

- **Community development:** sharing the benefits within communities.
- **Workers’ rights:** e.g. working hours, employment contracts.
- **Working conditions:** e.g. training, health and safety, water and sanitation, housing.

**PLANET**

- **Protection of biodiversity:** awareness, commitment and conservation of biodiversity.
- **Responsible use of agrochemicals:** fertilizers and plant protection.
- **Sustainable wild collection:** avoiding overpicking.

**PROFIT**

- **Better crops:** focus on quality through e.g. selection of plants and seeds, good harvest & postharvest practices, training of farmer and workers, traceable ingredients.
- **Market connections:** enabling long term trading relationships. Supply and demand are better matched and producers count on a stable income.
THE PROGRAM IN PRACTICE

Producers, processors, packers and retailers work together and invest in creating sustainable supply chains for herbal ingredients.

Companies at different stages of the herbal tea supply chain can become a certificate holder. They need to comply with the UEBT/UTZ standard, which requires among others an internal monitoring system and procedures for regular audits of herbal tea suppliers. UTZ brings additional requirements to the program, including a traceability system, chain of custody audits, and the label on pack. Certificate holders receive a premium when selling certified herbal ingredients.

WHY JOIN THE UEBT/UTZ HERBAL TEA PROGRAM?

Be in the driving seat for sector change:

Meet customer demand: Demand for sustainability is ever increasing. The full range of tea products can now carry the UTZ label.

Secure supply: Invest in farming practices that lead to a better future for local producers and build a reliable supply at competitive prices.

Availability: The program is global and covers all herbal tea ingredients, including cultivation and wild collection. A selection of certified ingredients is already available with more added over time.

Flexibility: Various control, assurance and monitoring systems can be used within the program.

Traceability: Connect long and complex supply chains.

Impact: Contribute to better lives for farmers and workers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For information on how to join, email membersupport@utz.org.

ABOUT UTZ

UTZ stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers, their families and our planet. The UTZ program enables farmers to learn better farming methods, improve working conditions and take better care of their children and the environment.

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ABOUT UEBT

The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) promotes the ‘Sourcing with Respect’ of ingredients that come from biodiversity. Members adopt sourcing practices that advance sustainable business growth, local development and biodiversity conservation.

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