



## Sainsbury's, Traidcraft and the Fairtrade Mark



Last year you may have read about Sainsbury's ditching the Fairtrade Mark from their own brand tea and replacing it with their own 'Fairly Traded' label. Sainsbury's argue that their new scheme is better than Fairtrade but charities including Oxfam, Cafod, Christian Aid, Tearfund and Traidcraft Exchange disagree, as do tea producers who wrote an open letter to Sainsbury's outlining their concerns. Local supporters of the campaign included the North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit. Under the scheme, the cash bonus that farmers receive on top of what they earn for their tea (similar to the Fairtrade Premium) no longer goes directly to them. Instead their money is held by Sainsbury's, who have instructed farmers to apply to a board in London to find out whether they can have it. Rather than empowering producers, which is a key principle of fair trade, Sainsbury's are taking power away. (For more information about the campaign visit [dontditchfairtrade.com](http://dontditchfairtrade.com))



The other issue is that it is a self run scheme whereas the Fairtrade Mark is an independent certification. Sainsbury's are not the only company to move away from the Mark and towards an in house accreditation - Cadbury's have done something similar with their Cocoa Life scheme. The result has been confusion for customers and many conversations amongst the fair trade community about the future of the Mark. There has also been disquiet for some time about large multi-nationals who carry a few fair trade lines whilst continuing to avoid tax, treating their own work force badly or causing environmental destruction. Should these companies be allowed to use the Fairtrade Mark at all?



Traidcraft was set up as a 100% fair trade company, for its first ten years products did not carry the Fairtrade Mark, Chief Executive Robin Roth writes: *we understood our role as being the home of fair trade, not as an occasional supplier of fairly traded goods. Fair trade was all about partnerships with people, it was not about certifying products.* The Fairtrade Mark is limited to a relatively small number of raw commodities and easily identifiable products. Some of the items you can buy on the stall such as rubber gloves or compost don't carry the mark as no standards for those products have been written. Despite that the Mark has been effective because it's easily recognisable and carries an implied promise about wages and working conditions, it is credible because it is independent and claims are checked.



Traidcraft was a founder member of the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO). The WFTO have a system which checks whether companies are acting and behaving fairly, as well as putting fair trade into commercial practice. It set out ten guiding principles for fair trade companies. These are illustrated above and explained in detail at [wfto.com/fair-trade/10-principles-fair-trade](http://wfto.com/fair-trade/10-principles-fair-trade)



Traidcraft aims to start using the WFTO label on more of its products. Robin Roth again: *The label is simple and clear. It tells customers that the product is "Fair Trade Guaranteed." I like that very much. It also tells customers that we are not like Sainsbury's who may come and go when it comes to fair trade.* The Fair Trade Mark is all about the product - it tells you very little about the company itself. The WFTO label tells you about the company as well as the products.



The Fairtrade Mark won't be disappearing from your favourite Traidcraft products, although some new ranges won't be carrying it. This is because Traidcraft feel that these products go so far beyond the minimum requirements for the Mark that the WFTO logo is more appropriate. (Watch this space for more on the new Eat Your Hat range of chocolate, coffees, biscuits and teas!)



If you would like to know more about fair trade and labelling then Robin Roth has written two excellent, detailed articles and I would be happy to email the links to anyone who is interested.  
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