

## Fairtrade Herbs, Herbal Teas and Spices

### The Challenge...

Back in 2009, a new Fairtrade Herbs and Spices Standard opened up the doors for countless herbs and spices to be Fairtrade certified. Since then, many new farmers have joined Fairtrade and have started selling their basil, cloves, ginger and many more on fair terms. There are now over 60 small producer organizations based in countries as diverse as India, Egypt and Indonesia.

As the variety of herbs available has increased, so has demand. In particular, tea companies are interested in making Fairtrade herbal teas, either to expand their existing range or to join Fairtrade for the first time. Interest is also growing in fresh culinary herbs, with estates in countries like Egypt and Kenya eager to sign up to Fairtrade.

It became apparent that this new level of demand could only be met by expanding the Fairtrade supply base. Therefore after consultation with Fairtrade stakeholders, including producer networks, the Fairtrade Standards Committee agreed to open up the Standard to larger set-ups with numerous workers ("hired labour") to meet specific market needs, while also continuing to ensure market opportunities for small producers of herbs and spices.

### Fairtrade responds...

An expanded list of herbs and spices, and a new Hired Labour Standard for Herbs and Herbal Teas means we can expand the range of Fairtrade herbs, spices and teas available, allow completely new groups of producers and workers to benefit from Fairtrade, and also give new sales opportunities to existing groups.

#### Opening up to new producer groups

Under the previous standard, hired labour set-ups could only obtain Fairtrade certification for four types of herbal tea: camomile, peppermint, rooibos and hibiscus. Now hired labour groups can become Fairtrade certified for any fresh herbs and herbs for tea, meeting the identified demand for these products and great new sales opportunities for those who produce them.

### The Standards at a glance

**Who it is for:** All producers of herbs, herbal teas and spices

**Key changes:**

- New Fairtrade Standard for Herbs and Herbal Teas for Hired Labour set-ups
- Fresh herbs now available as Fairtrade
- About 150 products added to herbs & spices list

**Scope:** Global

**Valid from:** 1 August 2012

**Where to get a copy:**

[www.fairtrade.net/standards.html](http://www.fairtrade.net/standards.html)



Tobhar Small Growers Society in Egypt recently earned Fairtrade certification for their herbs & spices. Read more on our blog.

## **Fresh herbs – a first for Fairtrade**

Retailers, particularly in the UK, have expressed interest in fresh Fairtrade herbs for some time. The delicacy of fresh herbs means they need a cooled supply chain from field to shop, something that none of our small producers currently have because it only makes financial sense for larger groups with big quantities to sell. Now that the Standard is open to hired labour set-ups, retailers can expand their Fairtrade ranges and workers can benefit from Fairtrade Premium payments and Fairtrade Standards in their workplaces. It will also bring Fairtrade products to new consumers and increase Fairtrade awareness and presence near the front of store, where these products are typically sold.

*“We have been waiting with anticipation for the expansion of the Herbs & Herbal Teas Standard to include Hired Labour. The Joint Body committee is extremely excited by the prospect of more regular Fairtrade Premiums to help us to pursue the projects that we have been discussing but unable to fund.”*

Maggie Hobbs, Tambuzi Ltd, growers of flowers and fresh herbs in Kenya.

## **Protecting small farmers**

We are conscious of the need to support small farmers and to make sure their voices are heard. So after collecting feedback from small producers across the system, the Fairtrade International Standards Committee decided that spices and dried herbs will continue to be exclusively sourced from small producer organizations. In addition, an expanded list of Fairtrade herbs and spices provides new sales opportunities for existing small producer groups.

## **An even bigger Fairtrade herbs and spices rack**

The expanded list means we have more than doubled the number of Fairtrade herbs and spices, adding 150 more to the range. We're also following an EU-approved classification of herbs, herbal teas and spices so it's very clear for producers and traders which products can be sourced from hired labour set-ups and which ones from small farmers only.

## **Pricing**

Given the huge number of herbs and spices now available, setting an appropriate minimum price for each is not viable. Instead, all the new herbs, herbal teas and spices will have a fixed Fairtrade Premium of 15% over and above the negotiated price between producer and seller. This approach allows products from a very diverse category to enter the Fairtrade market easily and quickly. At the same time, producers can still request that Fairtrade International sets a Minimum Price for their products if they feel it is needed. Certain long-standing Fairtrade herbs and spices, such as vanilla, will continue to have a fixed Minimum Price and Premium.

**For more information about the Standard, contact Sarina Wiens, project manager:**

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**For more information about opportunities to develop new Fairtrade products in the herbs and herbal tea sector, contact your national Fairtrade organization ([see list here](#)) or Lee Byers, Global Product Manager, Tea: [l.byers@fairtrade.net](mailto:l.byers@fairtrade.net)**

## **About Fairtrade International:**

Fairtrade International is a global non-profit organization that works with farmers and workers to improve lives through fairer trade. We lead the Fairtrade system, develop the Fairtrade Standards and support producers. Fairtrade International owns the FAIRTRADE Certification Mark, a registered trademark recognized around the world. Find out more at [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)