



Sustainable Tea Production

Booklet for smallholders in Sri Lanka



Rainforest
Alliance

Based on the Sustainable Agriculture Standard
of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN)



Principle 1

Farm management



- ✂ Let us plan our activities well so that important activities, such as pruning, weeding and harvesting are done in time.
- ✂ Let us draw a map of the farm so that we can visualize the planning and all the improvements we are going to make on the farm.



Example of a farm map

- ✂ Let us also record the cost of all the activities and inputs so that we can calculate the cost of production.
- ✂ Let us record the revenue from the tea, to be able to calculate the profit at the end of the production.

Example of recordkeeping

Principle 2

Ecosystem conservation



- ✕ Avoid planting tea near the streams and rivers, as it can result in soil erosion.
- ✕ If you spray tea that is planted close to a stream, the drift of spray will enter into the water source.



Tea recently planted next to a river

- ✕ Protect river banks by keeping distance between the rivers and the tea.
- ✕ Prevent erosion by letting natural vegetation grow or by planting and grasses and trees on river banks.



Tea planted with some distance from the river

River banks protected with vegetation

Principle 3

Wildlife protection



- ✕ Do not hunt animals for eating, keeping them as pets or selling.
- ✕ Do not set traps to capture them.



A trap to catch wild animals

- ✕ Birds are important predators of the pests of your farm. By keeping them, they keep the pests under control.
- ✕ Let us protect the animals on farms for our future generation.



Principle 4

Water conservation



- ✕ Streams and rivers are important water sources that need to be protected. There may be people who use that water downstream, and there are also fish and other aquatic animals in streams.
- ✕ Do not contaminate rivers and streams by discharging waste water into them.



Washing clothes in a river



Dead fish

- ✕ Let us conserve the water sources by building a small soak pit at home.
- ✕ A simple soak pit can be made of a barrel with the bottom part removed, filled with sand, stones and charcoal.



A simple soak pit

Principle 5

Fair treatment of workers



- ✕ This principle applies only when you have workers on the farm.
- ✕ Your workers need to be paid at least the legal minimum wage, and should not work more than legal maximum working hour.
- ✕ Your workers should be provided with potable drinking water.
- ✕ Your workers should not be discriminated based on religion, gender, ethnic group etc.
- ✕ Children should not be contracted to work on a farm.



Workers under a good working condition

- ✕ If you have workers living on the farm, they should be provided with adequate housing with rooms with good ceiling, walls and floor, toilet, shower, kitchen and laundry place.
- ✕ Workers living on the farm should have access to medical services, and their children should have access to education.



Good worker housing

Principle 6

Occupational health and safety



- ✘ Do not spray chemicals without protection. Exposing yourself to chemicals will cause you many diseases in a long run, such as kidney failure, cancer, respiratory problems, impotence and infertility.



Spraying without protective clothing

- ✘ If you go home with contaminated clothes, your family will also be affected by chemicals.



Spraying with protective clothing

- ✘ If you really need to spray, you need to protect yourself with long sleeves, long trousers, mask, cap, goggles, boots and gloves.

- ✘ It is best to stop spraying herbicides and conduct manual weeding. It is also better for the soil, and the weeds can be composted to make organic fertilizer.



Manual weeding

Principle 7

Community relations



- ✕ We should contribute to the community we live in.
- ✕ We can contribute by joining the community activities, such as cleaning campaigns, joint constructions, community meetings, etc.

Community cleaning campaign,
organized by a tea factory



Sorting the waste that has been collected
from the natural ecosystem



Community activities

Principle 8

Integrated Crop Management



- ✕ Instead of spraying chemicals, you can make organic foliar fertilizer/ insect repellent using herbs and other natural ingredients.

Ingredients

- Nika
- Pawatta
- Wal suriyakantha
- Nidikumba
- Ladappa
- Neem
- Garlic
- Chili
- Sugar



Pound all the leaves



Put it in a bucket of water



Put one spoonful of EM4 solution



Put two spoonful of sugar



Cover and leave it for a week



Sieve it with a cloth



Put the solution into a tank

Spray the tea with the solution right after harvesting





- ✕ Herbicide does a lot of harm to the soil. It affects the productivity of tea. The weeds cannot be used for mulching or composting. It kills microorganisms in the soil. By leaving the soil bare, it will cause soil erosion in a long run and could even result in a land slide.



- ✕ Let natural vegetation grow on slopes, and reduce or stop herbicide spraying.



- ✕ Cover the soil surface with mulch, such as pruned branches, weeded grasses or planted grasses. They prevent soil erosion and add organic matter to the soil. Mana grass can be planted in vacant areas, and can be cut and used as mulch.



Mulching with
Mana grass

Principle 10

Waste management



- ✕ When wastes are scattered on the farm, they breed bacteria, flies and mosquitos, which will cause diseases, such as dengue.
- ✕ If you burn wastes, toxic fumes will contaminate the air and will damage the health of your family.



- ✕ Prepare separate waste bins for polythene, hard plastic, glass and cans. They should be taken by the factory for recycling.



Polythene



Hard plastic



Glass



Cans

- ✕ Organic waste should be composted to make organic fertilizer for the farm.



