

Thank you for writing to Sainsbury's about Fairtrade.

Did you get a response to your letter? A friendly follow-up will help Sainsbury's understand that we're here to stay. Here's what you might like to say back to Sainsbury's CEO Mike Coupe.

Sainsbury's says: The 'Fairly traded' pilot helps "our tea farmers and their communities meet the increasingly complex challenges of the 21st century and improve their quality of life".

Our response: It's great that Sainsbury's want to tackle the impacts of climate change and achieve long-term security in food supply chains. But it is not clear why Sainsbury's must drop the Fairtrade mark in order to meet these goals. Most of the claimed additional benefits already exist as part of the Fairtrade certification. Others are certainly not prevented or prohibited, in fact they are often incentivised and can be introduced alongside the Fairtrade certification.

Surely keeping the Fairtrade mark and working to strengthen it would demonstrate Sainsbury's leadership and concerns for farmers and workers?

Sainsbury's says: They will continue to commit to minimum prices and the financial equivalent of the Fairtrade premium. For many, being able to decide what to spend the Fairtrade Premium on allows them to plan business and farm investments, social programs and more.

Our response: The published 'Fairly Traded' standards currently have significant gaps compared to Fairtrade. For example, they contain no information on issues of fair trading such as dispute mechanisms and have very few requirements for upholding workers' rights. Under the scheme that Mike Coupe has outlined, decision-making will not be under the control of producers, as instead producers will need to apply for funding. This represents a huge shift from current Fairtrade practice.

Does Mike Coupe agree that the definition of overcoming poverty is having power over your own destiny?

Sainsbury's says: All their tea suppliers are happy with this shift.

Our response: In 2016 when Fairtrade arranged for Sainsbury's staff members to present the 'Fairly Traded' pilot plans and receive feedback at two consultations with producers from 27 co-operatives in Africa, the picture was quite different. At the time of the consultation, most of the producers at these meetings either had been or were due to be in Sainsbury's supply chain. We understand that Sainsbury's has cut the number of its tea suppliers. Following the launch of the 'Fairly Traded' scheme, the tea producers present endorsed this letter outlining the feedback they gave to Sainsbury's: www.fairtradeafrica.net/uncategorized/an-open-letter-to-sainsburys-from-fairtrade-producers.

What are Sainsbury's doing to address the concerns in this letter? And how will they ensure that farms and workers who are part of their pilot will be able to raise grievances or complaints in a safe way?

Sainsbury's say: Introducing 'Fairly Traded' will reduce confusion.

Our response: We disagree. In fact, independent research shows Fairtrade is the most trusted and recognised ethical mark. This is surely because Fairtrade uses independent certification, has demonstrated significant impact over the last 20 years and is accountable to many stakeholders - the most important ones being farmers and growers - and has a global, grassroots supporter movement behind it.

Surely Sainsbury's should aim to protect the trusted work of Fairtrade?