

Statement from: Tea and Herbal Association of Canada, Tea and Herbal Infusions Europe and the Tea Association of the USA

07.28.2021

RE: DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY TEA

The Tea and Herbal Association of Canada, Tea and Herbal Infusions Europe and the Tea Association of the USA take great pride in our collective approach of inclusion, representing the tea industry from bush to cup. Our members include all parts of the supply chain operating in what is commonly referred to as the 'traditional' tea industry as well as the 'specialty' tea industry.

The European Specialty Tea Association (ESTA), has recently announced their definition of 'specialty tea'. Although we agree fully with their statement acknowledging "...that it will be difficult if not impossible to achieve a definition which is universally agreed by all...", we are concerned with the language used to then differentiate 'specialty tea' from other tea.

The ESTA definition of 'specialty tea' includes knowledge of supplier, farm, location, production dates and processing methods. These supply chain facts are known and documented by every reputable company operating in the tea industry regardless of 'specialty' or 'traditional' label. In fact, they are critical to traceability requirements which are at the core of food safety laws in place around the world and must be demonstrated as part of regular audits for large retailers as well as certification programs.

The definition goes on to list five criteria by which quality is defined: dry leaf, aroma of dry leaf, colour and clarity of the liquor, flavour and mouthfeel of the liquor, appearance and aroma of wet leaf. Again, these are the same criteria used by every tea taster in the industry, regardless of 'specialty' or 'traditional' label. Although all the above may be a part of 'specialty tea', suggesting they are not a part of 'traditional' tea is factually incorrect.

As national associations, we celebrate the vast range of teas available to consumers. We believe in accessibility for all and strongly support elevating the value of tea. We encourage all efforts to make the industry more sustainable, thereby benefiting the entire supply chain – from bush to cup.



TEA AND HERBAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA | THAC

Founded in 1954, THAC is the leading authority and industry voice on all things tea (*Camellia sinensis*) and herbals in Canada and represents members throughout the supply chain. THAC provides proactive

leadership in the areas of advocacy, generic promotion, education and information in order to ensure the long-term viability of the tea industry. THAC's membership includes producing countries, growers, importers, packers and retailers.

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Tea & Herbal Infusions Europe | THIE

THIE is the European association representing the interests of producers and traders of tea (*Camellia sinensis*) and herbal infusions as well as extracts thereof in Europe. Its members are Österreichischer Kaffee- und Teeverband

(A), Interessengemeinschaft Tee, Gewürze und verwandte Produkte | IGTG (CH), Deutscher Tee & Kräuterteeverband (D), Branche foreningen for Kaffe og Te (DK),

Asociación Española de Té e Infusiones | AETI (E), Syndicat du Thé et des Plantes à Infusion | STEPI (F), UK Tea & Infusions Association | UKTIA (GB), Franck company and Spider Grupa Company (HR), Unione Italiana Food (I), Irish Tea Trade Association | ITTA (IRL), Koffie & Thee Nederland (NL), Fares Company (RO), Balarne Obchodu Company (SK), Observer: MÜMSAD Culinary Products & Magarine Industrialists Association (TR)

Contact: Sonninstrasse 28 | 20097 Hamburg | Germany www.thie-online.eu



Tea Association of the USA, Inc. | USTA

Founded in 1899, the Tea Association of the USA, Inc. was formed to promote and protect the interests of the tea trade in the United States and is the recognized independent authority on Tea. Its vision for 122 years has been to enable sustainable growth of the U.S. Tea Market as a whole while guiding its membership through an ever-changing external environment.

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