

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

GUIDANCE

Tea Selling Marks

Document SA-G-MT

Version 1.2

English

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**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**



The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.

Translation Disclaimer

For any question related to the precise meaning of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the official English version for clarification. Any discrepancies or differences in meaning due to translation are not binding and have no effect for auditing or certification purposes.

More information?

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance, visit www.rainforest-alliance.org or contact info@ra.org

Name of the document	Date of first publication	Expires by
Guidance: Tea Selling Marks	September 23, 2022	Until further notice
Linked to		
SA-S-SD-1 Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Farm Requirements		
Replaces		
SA-G-MT-V1 Rainforest Alliance Guidance: Tea Selling Marks		
Applicable to		
All Tea Certificate Holders from all countries and all Certification Bodies		

This guidance document is non-binding. This means that this document provides important information to help readers understand, interpret, and implement the requirements set out in the documents listed in the section "linked to" above. However, following the guidance in this document is not mandatory.



OVERVIEW OF KEY CHANGES

Overview of key adaptations in this document

SA-G-MT-V1.2 Guidance: Tea Selling Marks, published on July 26th, 2023,
compared to the previous version

SA-G-MT-V1 Guidance: Tea Selling Marks, published on September 21st, 2022

The revised document has been simplified to make it more user- friendly.



INTRODUCTION

To enable tea traceability for the Rainforest Alliance tea certification program, it is essential that selling marks are recorded by each farm Certificate Holder (CH) prior to the audit, i.e., by sharing this information with their Certification Body (CB) and in the online traceability platform (Multitrace). This information is also required before being able to register any sales transactions in Multitrace. All selling mark information needs to be accurately recorded at the time of the audit.

WHAT IS A SELLING MARK?

A selling mark is the name under which the factory sells its tea. This may or may not be the same as the garden mark (smallholders do not have garden marks; garden marks are associated with tea estates in origins where tea was introduced/managed under a British system). Note: Buyers often use the terms “garden mark”, or just “mark” as shorthand for selling mark.

GUIDANCE ON SELLING MARKS

Selling marks are largely used globally in the tea industry as trademarks that identify the tea produced by manufacturing factories at the level of the farm CH. In some instances, a single green leaf processing factory can have multiple selling marks.

Buyers do not know what tea to buy at auctions, or from producers directly, if it's unclear which selling marks are linked to which certified producers (farm CHs). Buyers also rely on selling marks to identify the specific green leaf processing factory that the tea originates from as well as their certification status.

Moreover, if the selling mark is missing or incorrectly registered in Multitrace, buyers are unable to identify which garden the tea is coming from and are likely to send back transactions to the farm CH for correction, thus delaying the approval process.

A selling mark is used:

- On printed tea sacks shipped from farm CHs' factories or bulking factories,
- On commercial documents (purchase orders, contracts, invoices etc.),
- In auction catalogues,
- In the buyers' systems, if applicable,
- In the Rainforest Alliance online traceability platform (MultiTrace),
- As an identity or "brand" of the tea
- As produced/packed/sold tea into the marketplace, where it can denote the origin/factory/quality/type of the tea in question. Multiple grades (leaf quality/size) can be assigned under one selling mark.

A selling mark becomes transactional in Multitrace when:

- A farm CH selects a selling mark when converting green leaf into made tea
- A supply chain CH performs a bulk stock activity – where they either name it as one of the selling marks that went into the bulk or give it a unique selling mark. That selling mark can be alphanumeric.

A selling mark **can be:**

- A unique (alpha-numeric) identifier
- The name of the garden producing the tea



- The name of the village/ farm group/community producing the tea
- The factory name/location
- Part of the certificate name

NB: Two different factories in the same country/location cannot have the same selling mark.

A selling mark **cannot be:**

- The country to which the tea is sold
- The buyer's name
- The country of origin
- A production standard
- Purchase order, contract, batch, lot, or production numbers

Selling marks do not usually contain additions like "farm", "garden", "tea estate" or associated suffixes, but this can be acceptable if it is the selling mark commonly used by the farm CH in the trade and is consistently applied and communicated to the market.

DATA QUALITY REVIEW

The data quality review conducted by the Certification Body is important to ensure that correct selling marks are being approved and processed for sales transactions by verifying that:

1. Correct spelling according to local language is entered for each corresponding selling mark.
2. No duplicate selling marks are used by the same CH.
3. Corresponding selling marks are recorded in the Multitrace dashboard by the farm CH.
4. Corresponding selling marks are included in the CH's sales documentation.

CBs should raise an NC against requirement 2.1.5 for CHs not accurately recording their selling marks.