

Supporting Chinese Producers

www.ethicalteapartnership.org

China is the world's largest tea producer and accounts for 35% of world production. Despite over three-quarters of this production remaining in China, it's still the third biggest exporter of tea, and the largest exporter of green tea. ETP has been operating a number of programmes in China since commencing its work there in 2007. ETP's China team has recently seen rapid developments as sustainability rises up the agenda within the Chinese tea sector.



First aid training

Reducing the risks of using agrochemicals

Many Chinese tea farmers who use agrochemicals don't receive any safety training. They're therefore unaware of the health risks associated with them, and as a result they use agrochemicals in a way that's detrimental to themselves and the environment.

ETP has entered into a partnership with the Tea Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (TRICAAS) on a project to provide training to farmers to reduce the risks from agrochemical use.

To develop the most effective training programme, ETP and

TRICAAS worked with international agrochemical experts CropLife. ETP and TRICAAS conducted a baseline survey to gauge what farmers understood about agrochemical management and to identify areas of risk. The material from CropLife was then adapted for the Chinese tea industry by TRICAAS, in order to change harmful practices. The session included:

- How to interpret information about hazardous chemicals on pesticide labels
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- How to correctly store, mix and spray agrochemicals
- Proper maintenance of spraying equipment to minimise leaks

- Correct disposal of chemical containers and packaging
- Keeping records on agrochemical use

Suppliers have reported that the training has had the beneficial side-effect of reducing chemical use.

This is a positive outcome not only for the tea farmers, but also for the international tea buyers who follow strict limits for chemical residues.

Improving factory health and safety

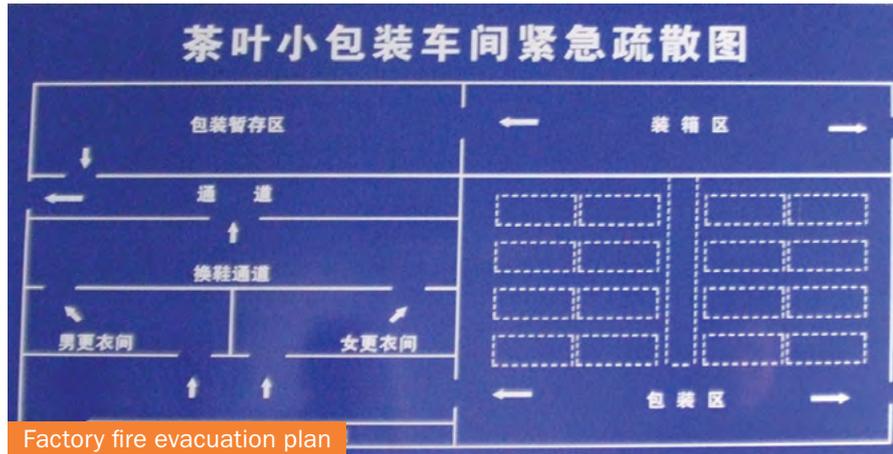
As in many countries, young people in China tend to prefer to move to the cities to find work, and are not attracted to farming or processing tea. By making improvements in the working environment to ensure good health and safety standards, businesses will keep their workers safe and be able to better attract employees in the future.



Machinery with safety guard & clear hazard sign

Over the past three years, this programme has brought about a range of improvements, including:

- Reduced levels of tea dust in the workshop
- Electrical safety upgrades such as installing covers on switches to prevent dust accumulation, and higher specification fuse boxes and wiring



Factory fire evacuation plan

Ensuring good employment practices

Recent upgrades in Chinese legislation have led to significant changes across all industries and an employment framework that is at least as rigorous as international standards. Big companies in urban areas have been the first to adapt to the new law, while businesses in rural areas including many tea factories, are less aware of the details of current requirements.

Our employment practices project is designed to support tea factories in adapting their policies and human resource (HR) practices to ensure fair treatment of their workforce and compliance with national and international standards.

The project begins at board level to assess the current situation and discuss the policies that are required. Attention then moves to agreeing the most suitable way to implement the policy, followed by direct training of the staff who will be responsible for following any new procedures.

A toolkit has been developed showing good examples of HR record keeping, along with advice on how to adapt systems that are common practice in the tea industry.

- Appropriate numbers of fire extinguishers with labelled fire exits and evacuation routes
- Proper guards on moving parts of all equipment to prevent injury
- Introduction of risk assessment procedures so that health and safety is systematically addressed on an ongoing basis

As part of the initial project, ETP commissioned Business for Social Responsibility to put together a handbook using photos to demonstrate to factory managers examples of good and bad practice. This approach has led to us creating similar 'toolkits' in other projects so that all participants have a reference point once the training is completed.



Unguarded machine: bad practice demonstrated in the toolkit



Guarded machine: good practice demonstrated in the toolkit

"ETP's approach to training is different from what we've previously experienced. Their sensible analysis of potential risks, together with practical solutions, has increased worker safety and led to improved efficiency at a time when the Chinese tea sector faces labour shortages."

Mr Peng Yanping, Workshop Supervisor

OUR MEMBERS



BOOTHS

