



FACT SHEET No. 33  
Ozone-Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea:  
Grown Free from Methyl Bromide



## INTRODUCTION

Methyl Bromide (MB), also known as bromomethane, is an odorless, colorless but highly toxic gas widely used in agriculture since the 1930s as a fumigant to treat soil against harmful insects, worms and weeds. It is a very effective pesticide and kills organisms that attack crops in fields, storage and buildings.

Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, is an island of 65,610 square kilometers, and has been known worldwide for their tea – known as “Ceylon Tea”. MB has been used in Sri Lanka since 1965 to exterminate tea nematodes, weeds and diseases from tea soils in the nursery and in the field.

However, it was discovered that MB is an ozone-depleting substance (ODS). ODS are controlled under the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, a multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) ratified by 196 countries that committed to gradually reduce and eventually eliminate their production and consumption of ODS, including methyl bromide.

Sri Lanka signed and ratified the Montreal Protocol in 1989 and committed to totally phase out consumption of MB by January 1, 2015 (except in quarantine and pre-shipment uses (QPS)).

After years of efforts to shift to alternatives to MB in pest management in the tea industry, the country has completely phased out the use of MB in all tea plantations. Tea industry in Sri Lanka now uses ozone-friendly substitutes in all their operations, and Sri Lanka is now proud to serve **ozone-friendly tea**.



Sri Lanka's tea industry has totally phased out the use of MB.

## PURPOSE



The purpose of this factsheet is to help National Ozone Units (NOUs) of governments worldwide and other readers learn from the experience of Sri Lanka in phasing out the use of methyl bromide in the tea-growing sector. The phase out of MB in tea industry in Sri Lanka is also an example of phase out of MB well before target date of 1 January 2015.

### “OZONE-FRIENDLY PURE CEYLON TEA” LOGO

“Ozone Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea” to be displayed on the packing of all tea exports from Sri Lanka by 2012

In May 2011, the “Ozone Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea” logo was launched which is seen as a remarkable success story in complying with a global environmental treaty. Through the new logo, the Ceylon tea industry aims to market the tea as a

premium product, the first country to do so.

The logo is already displayed on the packing of some tea manufacturers and distributors and will be rolled out to cover all tea exports from the island by 2012. This marks another value addition to the island's best known export product that sustains an industry worth USD 1.5 billion a year.

## WHAT DOES "OZONE-FRIENDLY PURE CEYLON TEA" MEAN?

According to the *Regulations Governing the Use of the Certification Mark of Ozone-Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea* developed by the Sri Lanka Tea Board (SLTB), a body incorporated under the provision of the Sri Lanka Tea Board Law No. 14 of 1975, "**Ozone-Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea**" means:

- a) Teas cultivated, grown or manufactured in the tea gardens and factories in the tea growing districts of Sri Lanka, listed in the Annexure I, without use of any Ozone Depletion Substances; and
- b) Teas cultivated, grown or manufactured without use of any Ozone Depletion Substances in any of the tea gardens/factories located in the tea growing districts of Sri Lanka listed in Annexure II, which have been registered with SLTB in accordance with provisions of Tea Control Act No.51 of 1957, Tea (Tax and Control of Export) Act No.16 of 1959 and Sri Lanka Tea Board Law No.14 of 1975 of Sri Lanka, and may be updated from time to time by the SLTB.

## BENEFITS OF BRANDING

Ceylon Tea is widely distributed worldwide, and this mandatory display of the ozone-friendly logo will promote awareness on ozone layer protection. In addition, Ceylon Tea will also have a competitive advantage as in recent years, environmentally responsible products have gained value and markets all over the world.



## MB PHASE OUT IN TEA INDUSTRY A PRODUCT OF JOINT EFFORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Efforts to phase out MB in tea plantations were initiated and coordinated by the National Ozone Unit of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Environment over ten years ago.

Initiatives to find environment-friendly alternatives were led by the Tea Research Institute (TRI) in cooperation with tea plantation companies and in consultation with the Registrar of Pesticides, the state regulator for all agro-chemicals.

To assist Sri Lanka in its efforts to phase out MB in the non-quarantine and pre-shipment (non-QPS) sector, including the tea industry, the government received technical and financial assistance from the Multilateral Fund (MLF) for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

With the help of the implementing agencies United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the MLF-funded project for the phase out of MB in the tea sector was successful in shifting from MB to environment-friendly alternatives for both large and small tea plantations.

The joint efforts and partnership among the government, research institutes, tea plantation companies and international organizations enabled the Sri Lankan tea industry to be truly **ozone-friendly** and **methyl bromide-free**.

Sources:

- Sri Lanka Tea Board, "Regulations Governing the Use of the Certification Mark of Ozone-Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea".

<http://www.pureceylontea.com/Ozone%20Friendly%20Tea/REGULATIONS%20GOVERNING%20THE%20USE%20OF%20THE%20CERTIFICATION%20MARK%20OF%20OZONE%20FRIENDLY%20PURE%20CEYLON%20TEA1x.pdf> (Last accessed 15/11/2011).

-Gunawardene, Nalaka, "Ozone Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea". <http://www.businessstoday.lk/article.php?article=3453> (Last accessed 15/11/2011)

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