

**Rejoinder to the News Article on pesticides residue found in various crops  
including tea – Tea Board's response**

Tea Board of India has taken several steps to ensure that there is no health hazard as far as consumption of Indian Tea is concerned. The Board is committed to ensure that no undesirable pesticides contaminate the teas produced in India. To achieve this integrated pest management practices have been adopted for quite some time.

The Board has enforced the Plant Protection Code with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 and all the stake holders have adopted that. The code mandates the tea growers as well as manufacturers to critically review and monitor the use of chemical formulations, reduce their use and apply the approved chemical formulations in the safest way possible. The objective of this code is to achieve sustainability through Good Agricultural Practices, Integrated Pest Management, and promotion of alternative control strategies viz. Biological control to gradually reduce the dependence on chemicals minimizing the possible negative impact of pesticides on humans, wildlife and the environment.

The PPC developed by Tea Board of India is best practiced guide to tea production, setting standards jointly agreed by key stakeholders, supplementing and strengthening the existing regulations, such as the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA) of India, 2006 and the list of products permitted for use in tea by the Central Insecticides Board & Registration Committee (CIB&RC). Each and every stakeholder in the supply chain, from the tea growers to the manufacturers, to the bulk and packet tea sellers, all are following the PPC standards.

From 2014 onwards the Tea Board has initiated massive awareness campaign for implementing the PPC. A large number of seminars, workshops, awareness programmes, media advertisements etc. are carried out to educate the small and big growers, workers, manufacturers, traders etc. about the Code. Tea Board also conducts random testing of samples of made tea at regular intervals to ensure that the Code is followed strictly. This has helped the Tea Industry to produce teas where non-approved pesticides are not used and simultaneously in case of approved ones the MRL limits are not exceeded.

Tea Board has also launched 'Trustea' with the aim to sustainably transform the Indian tea industry. A trustea verified unit does not use any pesticides or chemical formulations that have been banned by the Central and State Governments or their affiliated bodies.

The Tea Board under the guidance of Ministry of Commerce and with the continuous support of FSSAI & CIB&RC is taking several steps to make tea cultivation more sustainable and reduce its reliance on synthetic plant protection formulations to ensure that Indian tea continues to meet the high standards for safe consumption of the masses.