

Tea producers and tea growers meet at Golaghat



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Ritupallab Saikia 26 March 2012 55223 views

The North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) in association with Golaghat Dist. Small Tea Growers' Association today organized an Interactive Meet on "how to bring more discipline to the green leaf trade" between the black tea producers and green leaf growers of Golaghat Dist., at the NETA Conference Room, Golaghat. According to the Govt. of Assam survey, there are 11287 small tea growers and 23 bought leaf factories in Golaghat District, which are third highest in numbers in the survey conducted in 14 districts of Brahmaputra valley. According to the NETA Statistics, there are total 72 factories in Golaghat Dist., of which 43 are estate factories and 29 are bought leaf factories. The Tea Board has chosen Golaghat Dist. out of the total five districts of Assam to carry out a study on the price sharing formula (PSF) so that the PSF can be effectively implemented throughout Assam from the tea season 2013.

Altogether thirty factory representatives and ten representatives of green leaf growers participated in the Interactive Meet chaired by Bidyananda Barkakoty, Chairman NETA. A power point presentation was made where it was shown the huge difference in price realization of good quality made tea and general quality made tea in auction centers. In a particular month in Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) in 2011, when very good quality teas were selling above Rs.175/- per kg, during the same time, general quality teas were selling at about Rs.100/- per kg. Hence though the average price of Assam CTC teas in 2011 were sold below Rs.4.50/- compared to 2010 in GTAC, but the good quality teas were sold at much higher price in 2011 compared to 2010 whereas general quality teas were sold at much lesser price in 2011 compared to 2010. There is a huge variance in price vis-a-vis quality. According to an auctioneer, "in a scale of 1 to 10, for a difference of one point in quality, the difference in price is about Rs.10/".

Bidyananda Barkakoty, Chairman, NETA told Assamtimes that the interactive meet was the need of the hour to give necessary emphasis on quality aspect. He further added that, as the saying goes “tea is made in the field not in the factory”, hence it was decided to bring awareness among the small tea growers to pluck leaves within a certain period of time, normally once in seven days, which may vary from month to month. When asked about the outcome of the interactive meet Barkakoty told that it was decided to bring awareness among the suppliers to deliver leaf in good condition to the factories also a time will be fixed for delivery of leaves to factories after which the factories will not receive any more green leaf for that day. Spraying of right pesticide for different pests and diseases and the interval between pesticide spraying and plucking also came up during discussion. It was decided to announce minimum base price of green leaf in Golaghat Dist. from time to time so that so that the growers are not cheated. Everybody present felt it necessary to maintain self discipline in the green leaf trade so that it is win-win situation for both the green leaf sellers and the tea manufacturers.

Members present felt that this type of interaction should be held regularly which will help in maintaining discipline in the green leaf trade and finally help in improving the quality of Assam tea. Golaghat Dist. is known as the quality belt in the world tea map and everybody present felt the importance of maintaining the glory of tea produced in Golaghat. The meeting decided to invite Chairman Tea Board to have further discussion so that the green leaf trade takes place in a more organized manner and which will finally help in fair price discovery for both the green leaf sellers and black tea manufacturers.

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BY RITUPALLAB SAIKIA

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