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## **EcoTeas Achieves Fair Trade Certification Through IMO**

Ashland, OR—EcoTeas, a grass-roots company best known for its category-leading unsmoked yerba mate products, has achieved fair trade certification for its entire product line through IMO's *Fair for Life* program. IMO's rigorous inspection covered all aspects of EcoTeas' operations, including rights of workers, environmental management, and trade relationships.

According to EcoTeas founder Stefan Schachter, "We're thrilled to finally receive recognition for our longstanding fair trade practices. After all, the company owes its success to a 10-year fair trade partnership between three best friends in Oregon and a three-generation yerba mate farm in northern Argentina." During IMO's visit to the Argentine farm, they verified its working conditions and environmental performance. IMO went a step further by helping the farm workers develop their own fair trade premium fund to be used in community projects.

IMO's *Fair for Life* certification process improves upon traditional fair trade models that focus solely on product ingredients. *Fair for Life* also ensures that EcoTeas' overall business practices adhere to fair trade principals.

"Fair trade is one of the many things we are doing to model a better way to do business," Schachter said. "We insist on using 100% organic ingredients in all our teas. We also plant thousands of trees each year in reforestation efforts in Argentina. We purchase 'Green' and 'Blue' tags from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation to offset our energy and water usage. Last but not least, we are pursuing initiatives to minimize our shipping footprint and switch to 100% biodegradable/recyclable packaging."

The future is exciting at EcoTeas. Over time, the company intends to grow its network of direct-trade partnerships with small-scale organic farmers. The tangible fruits of fair trade practices—health care, education, sustainability, and quality of life—will take form in the communities that produce and trade its products. EcoTeas is a proud member of the fair trade movement, growing a more just and peaceful future 'one tea leaf at a time.'

For more information, visit **[www.EcoTeas.com](http://www.EcoTeas.com)**.