



OZONE FRIENDLY' STORY

Protecting the Ozone Layer

Ozone is a gas, a special type of oxygen molecule made up of three atoms instead of two. The ozone layer, high up in Earth's atmosphere, contains large amounts of this gas, which acts as a barrier to ultraviolet (UV) light and other forms of high-energy radiation reaching Earth's surface from the Sun and elsewhere. These types of radiation tend to be harmful to life, affecting



fertility and reproduction as well as giving rise to birth defects, cancers and other diseases. Humans and other land animals, crops and marine life are all vulnerable to these effects. In addition, the presence of the ozone layer high in the atmosphere has important regulating effects on weather and climate.

The Threat to the Ozone Layer

During the 1970s, scientists studying Earth's atmosphere found that ozone was vanishing from its upper levels. By 1985, a very large area above Antarctica was almost entirely free of the gas. The cause of this depletion was quickly identified as chlorofluorocarbon compounds, or CFCs for short – a family of chemicals then commonly used in refrigerators, freezers and air conditioners. CFCs rise into the upper atmosphere, react with the ozone there, and destroy it. But besides CFCs, there was another offender: methyl bromide, a pesticide used to fumigate soil and many agricultural products. At the time this was discovered, methyl bromide pesticides were widely used in the Sri Lankan tea industry, on estates as well as in warehouses, aboard ships in and other places where tea was stored or transported. No-one suspected the environmental damage these pesticides were causing, 10-15km up in the sky! But given the size and geographical spread of the Sri Lankan tea industry, its use of methyl bromide posed a real threat to the ozone layer.

The Montreal Protocol and After



Alarmed by warnings from the scientists, the world's nations met in Montreal, Canada in 1987 to decide upon action to protect the ozone layer. Out of this meeting came the Montreal Protocol, signed by 191 countries including Sri Lanka. Under the protocol, methyl bromide use by the Sri Lankan tea industry was progressively reduced, then done away with altogether. As a result of such prompt and effective action by the tea industry and others, Sri Lanka was acclaimed a 'leader in ozone-layer protection', receiving the Montreal Protocol Implementers Award in 2007.

Refreshing You... and the Ozone Layer

All tea grown in Sri Lanka is now one hundred percent ozone-friendly. This is a distinction of which no other tea-producing nation can boast. Plans are now being drawn up to impose a total ban on methyl bromide use in applications like export packaging and shipping. As of May 2011, all Ceylon Tea is entitled to bear the new 'Ozone Friendly Pure Ceylon Tea' logo, certifying that it has been produced without the use of any ozone-depleting substances.

When you reach for a cup of Ceylon Tea, you're not just refreshing yourself; you're also helping refresh and renew an environmental resource critically important to all life on Earth.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF THE CERTIFICATION MARK OF OZONE FRIENDLY PURE CEYLON TEA