



## Dilmah Tea: 2026 could be the toughest year for tea growers

### Descrizione

COMUNICATO STAMPA - CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Feb. 8, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - Dilhan C. Fernando, Chairman of Dilmah Tea explains the danger of 2026 being the toughest year is not only to growers; this sounds dramatic, but the danger is genuinely to humanity.

Discount culture fuels an accelerating emphasis on cheap produce, forcing growers to become unethical, unsustainable or give up. Discounts blind consumers to true value, the welfare of workers, shifting attention to price, manipulated perception of price, opaque value chains, normalisation of cheapness and ultimately a discount fuelled disconnect from ethics. Even at the cost of their own health. It's a race to the bottom for growers but it continues, growing in pace as it delivers profit to those that drive it; at unimaginable cost, because that race threatens to compromise everything we value and need more now than ever, from biodiversity and fertile soils to food safety and security.

Climate change and inequality are amongst the most severe threats to human existence. Solutions to both have been evident for decades, but they come at a cost. They include agricultural innovation, strengthening rural economies, addressing the gender balance, health, welfare, reproductive health, education, nutrition, housing and the host of linked truths that feature in the routine vilification of producers. For growers, there is tragic irony in all this; the world needs good, nutritious and healthy food and beverage, yet we are trapped in a tightening vice of discount driven commodity pricing, making that dream more challenging year on year. More tragic is the knowledge that it's not because the money we need to make agriculture sustainable isn't there, it just goes to the wrong pockets.

As growers, our produce is our passion and a livelihood for millions; we cannot compromise either, yet daily we suffer demand for cheaper teas as an unavoidable part of the journey from harvest to consumers. The result is that poor to mediocre teas proliferate by design, finding favour among buyers motivated by profit in preference to quality. Their sales performance is often strong for a while - powered as they are by packaging worth more than their contents and marketing funded by compromise. In the long term though, it signals the disintegration of the tea category.

The dysfunction is systemic and consumers are unwitting participants. The dangerous reality is harming our precious produce and worse, stimulating some of the greatest risks to humanity – climate extremes, worsening inequality, compromised food security, water and air quality.

And what of tea producers who don't have that ability at all because they cannot earn a fair price for produce? Neither tea industry nor Sri Lanka can genuinely afford the adaptation we need to make to continue to offer the world the healthy herb. This is the context of our Grower's Story. It echoes in every agricultural sector sustaining an existential threat that begins with tea, but quickly expands to include humanity.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2L1wKyBLhc>

Photo –

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