

Concept of Safe Tea

A Consumer Point of View



Tocklai Tea Centenary Conference
Joseph P. Simrany, President
Tea Association of the USA, Inc.
10-11 May, 2010

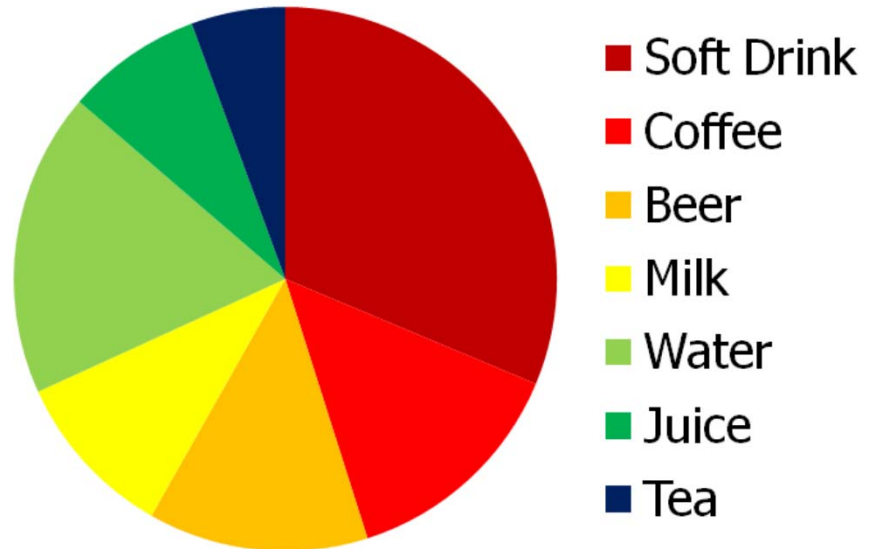


Background

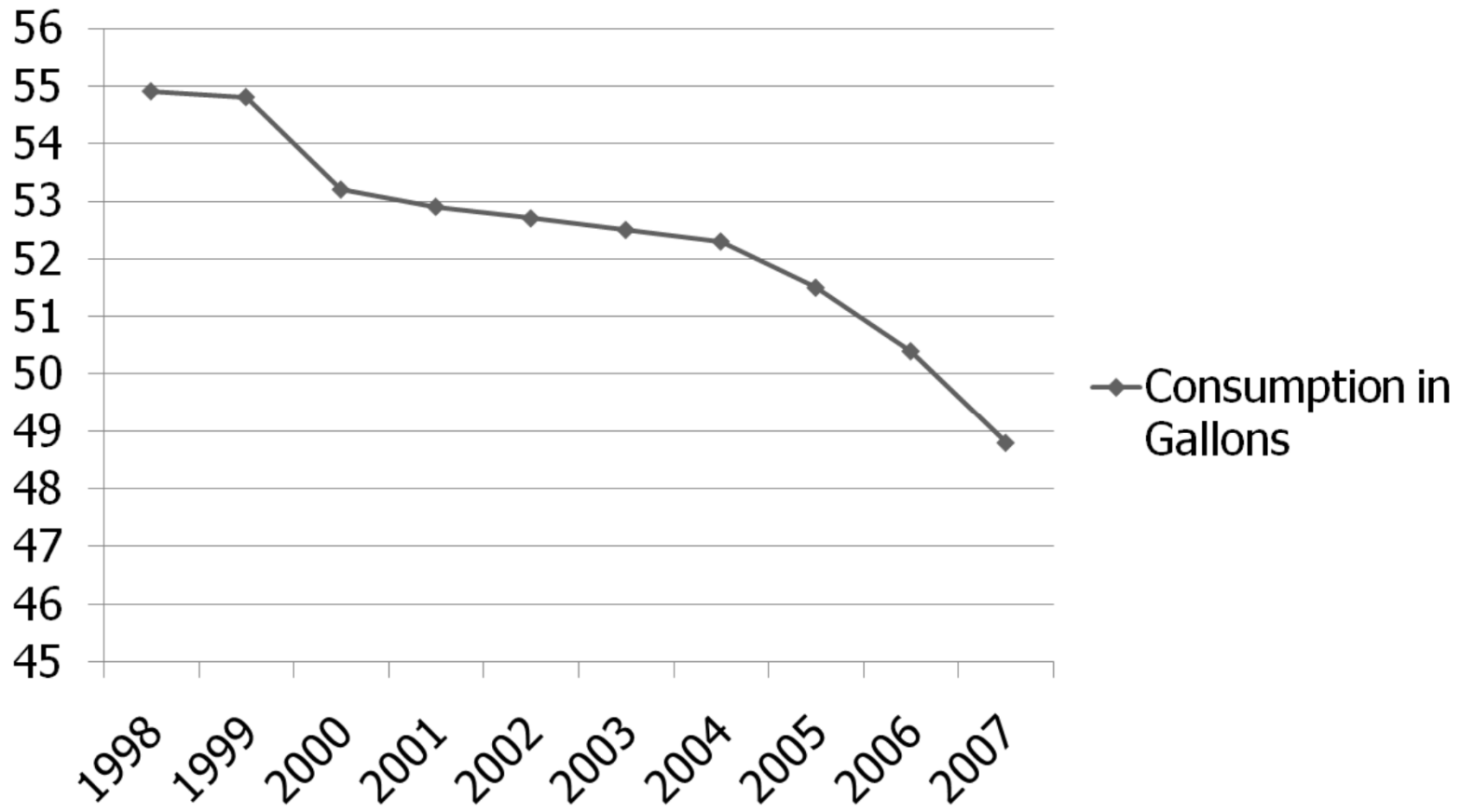
- Health Benefits have “Always” been Associated with Tea Consumption
- Water is a Critical Component of Tea
- Despite this great heritage, Tea has not been very popular in the USA

1990 Popularity of Beverages in the USA

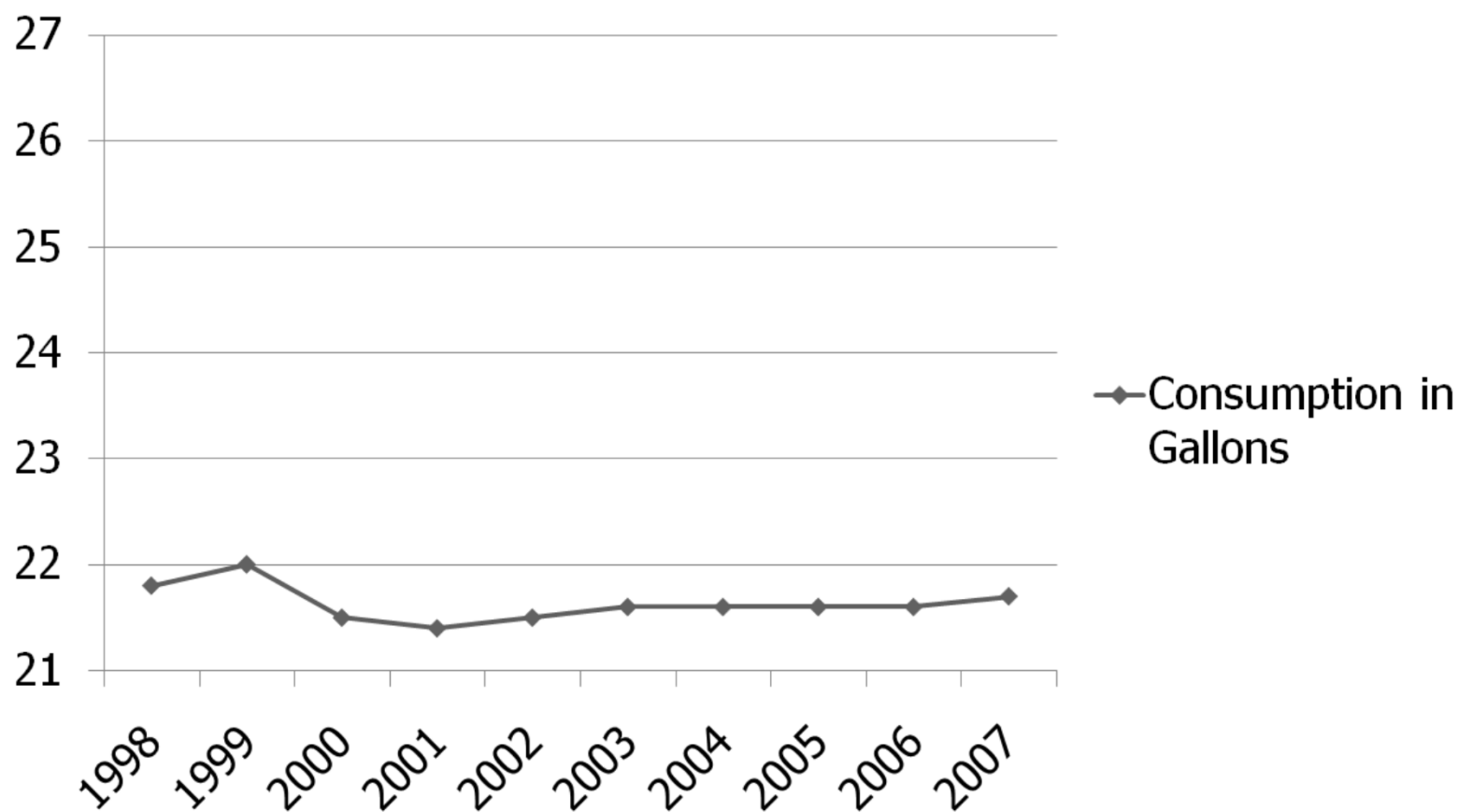
- Soft Drinks 31.3%
- Water 18.1%
- Coffee 13.8%
- Beer 13.1%
- Milk 10.0%
- Juices 8.1%
- Tea 5.6%



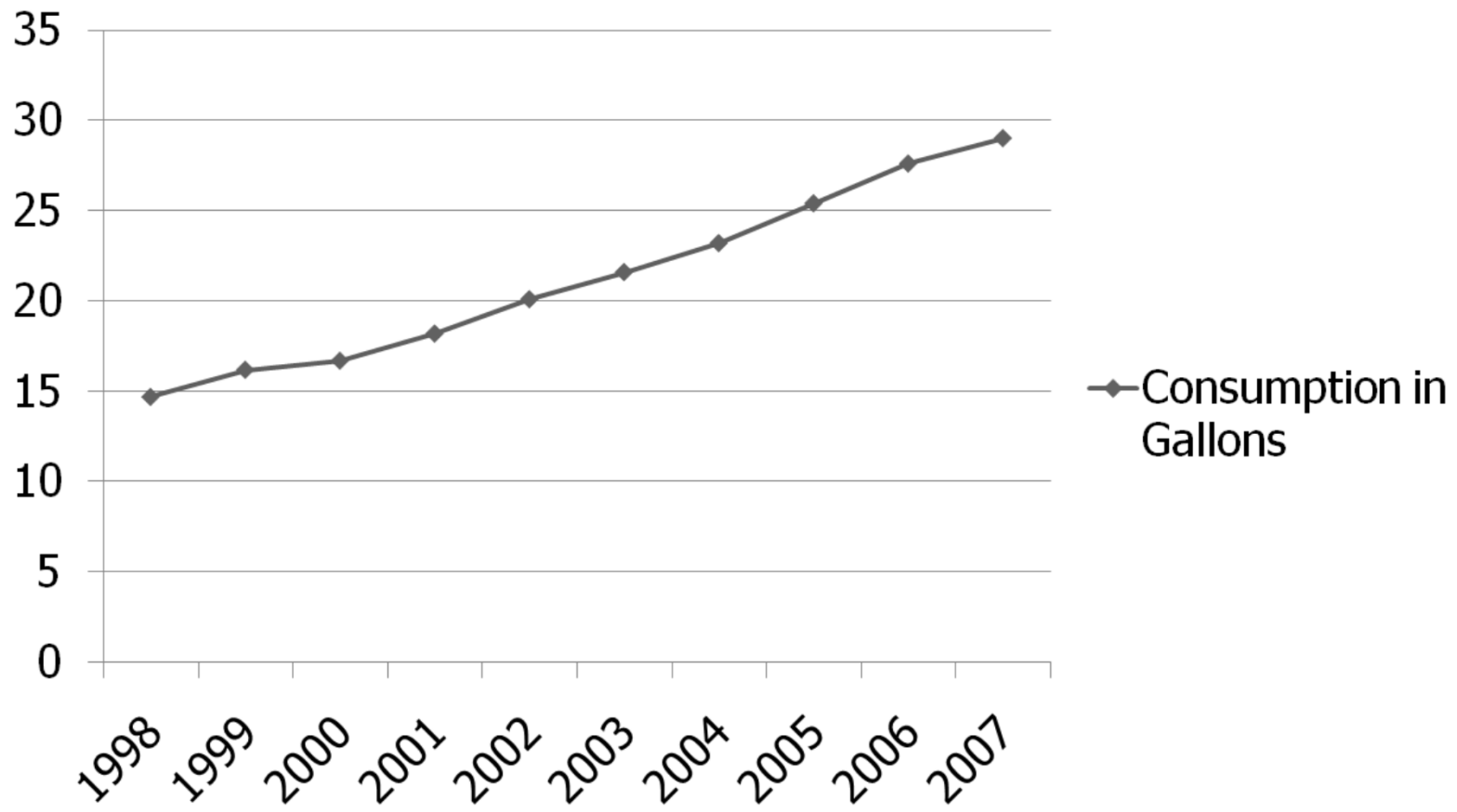
Current per capita Consumption Soft Drinks



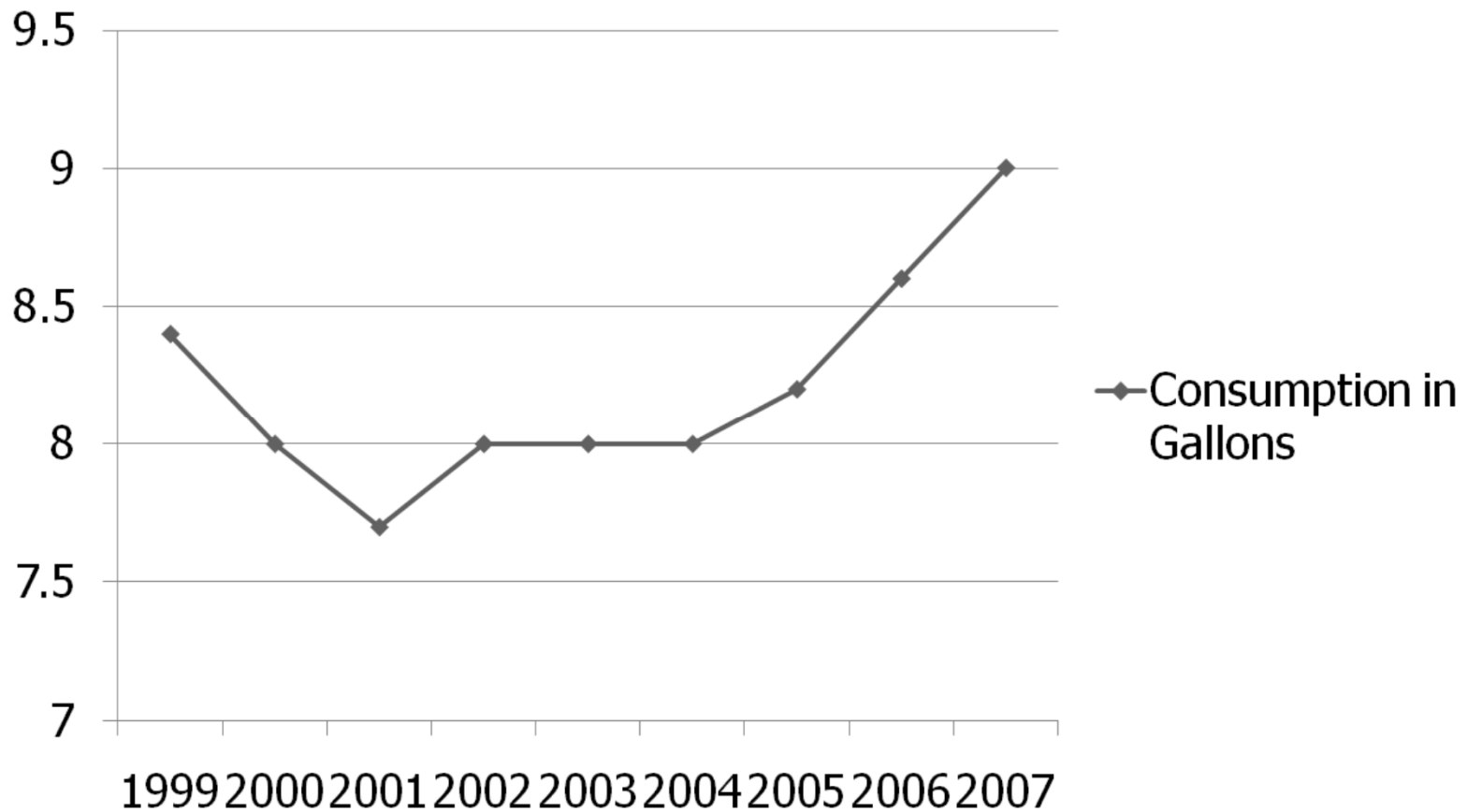
Current per capita Consumption Coffee



Current per capita Consumption Bottled Water



Current per capita Consumption Tea





Consumers View Tea very Positively in North America

- Well over 80% of consumers associate tea with a great many health benefits
- The Tea Council of the USA estimates that over 1 billion media messages regarding Tea & Health are generated each year
- Prior to the recession, Tea pound volume was growing in excess of 3% a year
- Despite the recession overall pound volume is still positive

Growth is Not Guaranteed!

- Concerns with:
 - Chemical Adulterants
 - Food Safety
 - Social Welfare Issues
 - Concerns for the Environment





What do Consumers Expect From Tea?

- Satiates Thirst
- Calming Benefits
- Refreshment/Invigoration
- Health Benefits
- Social Aspects
- Trendy



The Evolution of Marketing Tea in North America & Europe

- 20 years ago tea was languishing
- Low retail price points limited marketing
- Beverage competition was Fierce
- A creative approach was necessary
- Fear of going too far re health position
- Concept spread from USA to Canada & Europe & ultimately the World



Tea & Health Has Been A Very Effective Marketing Tool

- The FAO has helped to support the concept as has the Common Fund for Commodities
- The number of scientific studies has grown from a handful to over 300 a year globally
- Tea has served as a model for several other industries including; chocolate, cocoa, coffee, wine, bottled water & juice

Success Breeds Vulnerability

- The success of the Tea & Health initiative leaves the Tea Industry vulnerable to any number of issues
- Each issue is capable of undoing all the gains achieved





Exposing the Tea Industries Vulnerabilities

- The presence of agricultural chemicals on the Tea leaf is of immediate concern



Responsibilities of Tea Producers

- Use of best chemicals available
 - Efficaciousness & Safety
- Proper application (safety, timing, amount)
- Concern for the environment
- Water insolubility when available
- Awareness of customer needs
- Monitoring finished products



Responsibilities of Tea Consuming Countries

- Coordinate efforts to secure MRL's
- Communicate with producers
- Provide early alerts re anticipated bans
- Seek harmonization whenever possible
 - By the substance
 - By the tolerance level
- Share test information
- R



Exposing the Tea Industries Vulnerabilities

- Controlling moisture levels to minimize bacteria, molds, & yeast spores
- Attention to sanitation



Broader View of Concept of Safe Tea

- Concerns with Bioterrorism
- Affect of Tea growing & processing on air, land & water resources

Bad News Travels Infinitely Faster than Good News

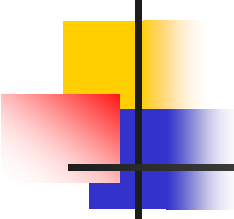
- It takes decades to communicate good news & build a positive perception
- It takes a tiny fraction of that time to broadly disseminate bad news





Conclusions

- We cannot take future success for granted
- While the future for increased consumption of tea is very promising, the industry remains vulnerable
- The need for vigilance is apparent & critical



Tea delivers so many benefits from a consumer sensory satisfaction & health benefits to worker security & foreign exchange contributor.

We must all work together to ensure that nothing gets in the way of the increasing popularity of this amazing beverage!



Thank You

Organic tea garden in Darjiling, India
Photograph by Bob Sacha

