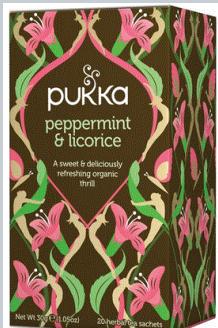


## PUKKA FAIRWILD HERBAL TEAS



Lemon, Ginger & Manuka Honey  
herbal tea with FairWild ingredients

CREDIT: Pukka Herbs



Peppermint & Licorice herbal tea  
with FairWild ingredients

CREDIT: Pukka Herbs



Clean green herbal tea with  
FairWild ingredients

CREDIT: Pukka Herbs



CREDIT: Perenve Agency®

## Implementation of FairWild certification scheme in the United Kingdom

**BACKGROUND** Pukka Herbs Ltd. is a UK-based manufacturer of a wide range of organic herbal supplements and herbal teas. The company was founded in 2001 and now employs 75 staff in Bristol, UK, generating employment also for herb farmers and collectors around the world. Pukka Herbs' mission is to connect people with plants, and to do so in a way that benefits producers, consumers and the environment. The herbal industry is responsible for improving the health of countless people; however, the remarkable growth in demand for herbal products has also led to over-exploitation of many valuable plant species in their natural habitat.

### HOW AND WHY THE COMPANY ENGAGED WITH THE FAIRWILD STANDARD

One of Pukka's core policies is to ensure that all herbs are procured from a sustainable source. Initially, Pukka Herbs' focus was on developing methods for cultivating species that are normally collected from the wild. This remains an important conservation strategy, as some species are very difficult to sustainably collect from the wild, and some species, for example, those listed in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – can in some cases only be exported if they have an official 'certificate of cultivation'. Since the creation of the FairWild Standard, however, the company has also considered sustainable wild collection as an equally important strategy for ensuring protection of threatened species. The FairWild certification scheme not only provides a guarantee that plants have not been over-harvested, it is also proving to be a powerful tool for driving and supporting biodiversity conservation by providing local communities with financial incentives to sustainably manage habitats in which the herbs grow.

All Pukka Herbs' products are certified organic, and many are also FairTrade certified. FairWild includes elements of organic and fair trade but is unique in its focus on wild plants. FairWild certification not only provides a guarantee that herbs are from a sustainable source, it also gives the opportunity to engage the public in a very important discussion about where the herbs come from. Relatively few people are aware of sustainability issues surrounding wild collected plants and FairWild is an excellent mechanism through which to raise awareness.

**FAIRWILD** Pukka Herbs have been closely following the development of FairWild since its formal establishment as an organisation in 2008. In 2012 Pukka launched the first FairWild-certified tea in Europe: Peppermint and Liquorice tea. The tea contained FairWild-certified liquorice from Kazakhstan, and its launch was inspired by the selection of liquorice as "Medicinal Plant of the Year 2012"\*, to raise awareness of the plight of liquorice being unsustainably harvested from the wild. Pukka Herbs now has 12 FairWild-certified herbal teas using five different FairWild ingredients: Licorice, Elderflower, Limeflower, Nettle and rosehips. The ingredients are sourced from projects in Kazakhstan, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland and Spain.

Since 2011 Pukka Herbs have also been working successfully with partners in India to develop a FairWild supply chain project for sustainable collection of two species of wild fruit: *Terminalia bellirica* and *Terminalia chebula*.



Rosehip of the Dog Rose *Rosa canina*, one of the FairWild-certified ingredients used in Pukka's herbal teas, CREDIT: Corvinus University/Peter Radacs

\* Chosen by a panel from the University of Würzburg, WWF and TRAFFIC

This project is being implemented in India's Western Ghats by the conservation organisation Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF), supported through the projects in partnership with Durrel Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), TRAFFIC and Pukka Herbs, with a primary motive to use the FairWild Standard to support their ongoing conservation initiatives and engagement with local communities.

## HOW THE DECISION TO SWITCH TO FAIRWILD WAS MADE AND HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

Pukka Herbs has established a policy to use as much FairWild-certified material as possible in existing and future products, Peppermint and Licorice. It was developed specifically to maximise the use of FairWild-certified ingredients.

The assessment of which ingredients should be FairWild-certified is based on several factors:

- a) the existence of a reliable organization or company who is genuinely interested in developing a long-term commercial relationship;
- b) the availability of the species in the project area; and
- c) the plant or part of the plant should be easy to harvest sustainably and monitor (for example, leaves and fruits regenerate much more easily than roots and bark).

As with any pioneering project, there always seem to be challenges in the beginning. As a manufacturer of FairWild-certified herbal products, perhaps the biggest risk is the lack of back-up suppliers in case there is a shortage or quality issue. Once the FairWild logo is on the design mark packet, the company is committing to only using certified supplies of that ingredient.

## FUTURE VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pukka Herbs' FairWild-certified teas have been very successful in the market; in 2012 the Peppermint and Licorice was the fastest selling newly launched tea that year. It is difficult to know the extent to which this was influenced by the FairWild certification. However, as customers learn more about how company ethics and values are implemented, Pukka is confident that FairWild is a valuable marketing asset which can only help to boost the brand reputation and increase sales.

Ultimately, Pukka Herbs would like all of its wild plant ingredients to be certified FairWild. This will take time, as many suppliers will need support in implementing the FairWild Standard. For example, conducting resource assessments requires mapping and report writing skills, that a supplier may initially need help with. It can take time to prepare all the initial documentation; however, once this is done it is relatively straightforward to maintain.

FairWild is still in an early phase but Pukka Herbs believes that this is the beginning of something significant. Demand for herbal products is enormous, and the narrative around the provenance of raw materials used in the herbal industry is just beginning to gain momentum. Starting with implementing even some key aspects of the FairWild Standard will benefit everyone involved, and will ultimately put companies involved in a strong position in the market.



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This factsheet is compiled by Anastasiya Timoshyna, TRAFFIC, based on an interview with Ben Heron, Pukka Herbs (March 2015).



## CHALLENGES

Another potential obstacle is the shortage of trained FairWild inspectors outside of Europe. The certification bodies may not be willing to train inspectors unless there is high demand as it is not cost-effective, but on the other hand, there is unlikely to be high demand until there are more inspectors.

In the project in India, for example, the biggest obstacle was the fact that there were no local certification bodies accredited to conduct FairWild inspections, and it would have been prohibitively expensive for European inspectors to visit every year. In the case of the FairWild certification project in India, Pukka Herbs has been involved in two years of planning with the certification bodies to figure out a way of training Indian inspectors so that FairWild certification could be more affordable for Indian companies. Eventually funds were raised for IMOSwissAG (Switzerland), the approved certification body for FairWild, to train inspectors of ECOCERT India, and in January 2015 the first FairWild audit and training were successfully conducted in India.

This has made the project a much more viable undertaking and has opened the doors for other wild collection projects in the region to follow suit.