

Growing the FairWild Standard

In 2013, we shared news from the FairWild certification scheme—stories of wild plant collection companies working hard to put principles of sustainable harvesting, social responsibility and fair trade into practice. This article shares progress with industry adoption of sustainable sourcing practices; developments with the certification framework itself; and further news of initiatives supporting implementation of FairWild principles, including through driving regulatory and policy change.

Sustainable sourcing—industry rising to the challenge

The number of FairWild products on the market has continued to grow. In 2014, UK manufacturer Pukka Herbs rolled out use of certified ingredients across its range of herbal teas, and Neal's Yard Remedies also introduced a new "Refreshing Tea" with FairWild liquorice. Combined with Traditional Medicinals' range of medicinal teas, FairWild ingredients are starting to make quite an impact in this sector. Other recent milestones include the first certification project in South Asia, as reported in this issue (see pages 8–10). At the time of going to press, 12 operations were certified, including the new producers in India and Georgia.

FairWild principles have been introduced through industry meetings in important source and consumption regions for wild-collected ingredients, including workshops in Japan, China, Germany and the UK. Through events and dialogue, FairWild Foundation and partners aim to bring trade chain actors together, to share experience and foster shared commitment to sustainability.

One such session was held in February 2015 at the BioFach organic trade fair in Germany. With a focus on "building sustainable supply", certification scheme members such as the Organic Herb Trading Company (OHTC) shared challenges faced in implementation, as well as advice on how to engage suppliers. The event contrasted with that of the previous year, which explored opportunities to market FairWild and engage consumers with stories of sustainable harvesting.

A number of new tools and platforms are being developed to support these efforts, such as the *Traditional and wild* toolbox developed as an outcome of TRAFFIC's project in Central Europe. The interactive website continues to attract a lot of visitors.

As industry awareness builds, the efforts of companies rising to the challenge are being acknowledged. In July 2014, Pukka Herbs won a second 2degrees *Sustainability Champions* award, thanks to their efforts in supply chain management. Neal's Yard Remedies also picked up an award at the Sustainable Cosmetics Summit in Paris, October 2014, taking second place in the *Sustainability Pioneers* category for progress in supply chain certification, as well as carbon-neutral retailing.

FairWild certification: evolution of the framework

The certification system itself continues to improve. In July 2014, FairWild Foundation published new Trading Rules and revised Labelling Rules, covering:

- Clarification of chain-of-custody requirements
- Fair trading obligations for first buyers of ingredients
- Introduction of a Trader Registration system
- Revision of labelling rules on use of the FairWild® mark

The new Rules build on experience gained since the start of certification operations in 2007 and provide a sound basis for future expansion of the scheme. To help implement FairWild on the ground, guidance manuals have also been published on Social and Fair Trade aspects, and Species-Area Management Planning for Low Risk species.

Frameworks and actors for sound resource management

The FairWild Standard and certification system is proving a valuable framework by which to verify sustainable production practices undertaken by the private sector on a voluntary basis. But the responsibilities of the resource users are only one part of the story. For wild harvest to be sustainable and well managed, an overarching framework for resource management needs to be in place, with the responsibilities of all parties clearly articulated.

The FairWild principles have proved a source of inspiration in establishing working models at different scales, ranging from local, national to international. In Viet Nam, a community-based initiative is providing technical support to harvesters, fostering links with responsible industry partners in Hanoi and beyond, and examining the applicable policy, legal and regulatory framework together with local government agencies. With activities at site level under way since 2011, the project has recently been awarded a further three years of funding through the UK DfID/Defra Darwin Initiative.

At the industry sector level, a project in China is activating industry leaders, sector associations and government agencies to improve the sustainability of the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) sector, as well as establishing site-level pilots of sustainable harvesting. Sector engagement is also planned in India, building on the successful pilot in North Western Ghats.

At national scale, a UNDP-GEF project introduced FairWild principles to aid the development of Morocco's national resource management plans for medicinal and aromatic plants, and provided direct support to the private sector in sustainable production, value-addition and access to export markets. In an initiative now under way in Kosovo, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) is supporting the government in the development of a national strategy for non-wood forest products. The FairWild Standard is being drawn upon in establishing the resource management framework, including regulations and a permit system for resource use.

International agreements also provide key mechanisms for improving the sustainability of trade. Experience in creating the FairWild Standard has also informed development of guidance for conducting CITES Non Detriment Finding procedures for perennial plants. The methodology has now been shared through workshops in Mexico and Viet Nam.

Notwithstanding the considerable pressures that wild plant resources worldwide still face, the initiation of such holistic approaches to improve the sustainability of harvest and trade—involving governments, civil society, industry and communities—bodes well for the plant populations and all those that rely on them.

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