

## Wild harvesting

### *An update on FairWild Standards*

Two years ago TOS covered the efforts made by several diverse organisations to develop standards and a control system for sustainable wild collection. The articles particularly covered the two standards specifically developed to deal with wild harvesting: the FairWild Standard (primarily a social standard with supporting elements of ecological sustainability) and the International Standard for Sustainable Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP); primarily an ecological sustainability standard with supporting elements of economic and social sustainability.

At that time it had already been decided to implement the ISSC-MAP standard through the FairWild Foundation, established in October 2008, and to incorporate this standard into version 2.0 of the FairWild Standard by 2010. Now in 2011, TOS wondered how the project of implementation and certification of the combined FairWild Standard is progressing. To find out TOS interviewed staff from the FairWild Foundation and the Institute for Marketecology (IMO). The latter is currently the only certification body offering FairWild certification.

#### **FairWild Standard Version 2.0**

In August 2010 the FairWild Standard Version 2.0 was published. This new version united all principles, criteria and indicators of ISSC MAP Standard Version 1.0 with the FairWild Standard Version 1.0. The scope of the standard includes ingredients of herbal drugs and other botanical products originating from wild collection:

- Plants, plant parts and plant products collected from natural habitats
- Fungi and lichens collected from natural habitats.

As a result of this merger, the new standard covers all the different aspects of environmental, social and economic sustainability, establishing best practice measures in the following key areas:

- Maintaining wild plant resources.
- Preventing negative environmental impacts.
- Complying with laws, regulations, and agreements.
- Respecting customary rights and benefit sharing.
- Promoting fair contractual relationships between operators and collectors.
- Limiting participation of children in wild collection activities.
- Ensuring benefits for collectors and their communities.
- Ensuring fair working conditions for all workers of the FairWild collection operations.
- Applying responsible management practices.
- Applying responsible business practices.
- Promoting FairWild buyer commitment.

Certification according to the FairWild Standard requires companies to implement a management system for their wild plant collection activities, extending beyond the basic principles of organic wild collection. Fair trade principles are also applied, including both fair prices paid to collectors and

the establishment of a premium fund for community social development projects. FairWild certification is not equivalent to organic certification, although many of the same principles are applied. In practice, many of the FairWild operators also obtain a separate organic certification.

#### **Transition period**

When the incorporation of the ISSC-MAP standard into FairWild was announced, a problem was predicted: those companies already certified to FairWild version 1.0 would have to comply with additional criteria introduced as a result of the merger. The ISSC-MAP standard had not previously been used as the basis of a certification scheme, but rather as a guidance tool for environmentally sustainable wild harvesting.

Bryony Morgan, from FairWild Foundation, explained to TOS that they allowed a transition period for the companies already in the certification system to implement the requirements of the version 2.0. Heiko Schindler from IMO reported that, in general, the transition has been quite smooth. Certified companies had been informed in advance and the certification criteria were applied with some flexibility during the transition period. For example, the time period allowed for companies to obtain herbarium voucher specimens for the target plants was extended. In the end only one company experienced difficulties and decided not to continue with the certification in 2010.

#### **Who can be certified?**

Under FairWild certification, the company collecting and trading the wild plant materials is referred to as the FairWild-certified operator. Wild plant collectors can be individuals (a company or a person who contracts

## News shorts...

### IFOAM WORLD CONGRESS AND GA COMING SOON

The time to celebrate the 17th IFOAM World Congress and General Assembly (GA) is fast approaching. The event is to be held in South Korea; the Congress will be from 28 September to 1 October, and the General Assembly (GA) from 3 to 5 October.

The candidates for the IFOAM World Board are: Juan Pablo Sciarano, Argentina (new candidate); Andre Leu, Australia (Vice-president since 2008); Matthew Holmes, Canada (new candidate); Gabi Soto, Costa Rica (new candidate); James Benjamin Cole, Ghana (new candidate); PVSM Gouri, India (new candidate); Mathew John, India (new candidate); Mohammad Reza Ardakani, Iran (new candidate); Masaya Koriyama, Japan (World Board member since 2008); Suh Chong Hyuk, Korea (new candidate); Ong Kung Wai, Malaysia (World Board member since 2005); Manjo Smith, Namibia (new candidate); Volkert Engelsman, Netherlands (new candidate); Elba Rivera Urbina, Nicaragua (new candidate); Roberto Ugas, Peru (Vice-president since 2008); Jacqueline Haessig Alleje, Philippines (World Board member since 2005); Eva Torremocha, Spain (new candidate); Frank Eyhorn, Switzerland (new candidate); Moses Kiggundu Muwanga, Uganda (World Board member since 2008); Eugene Milovanov, Ukraine (new candidate). ■

For further information see: [www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam\\_conferences.php](http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences.php)

a number of collectors) or can be a group. Heiko Schindler from IMO explained: 'For certification we can only certify legal entities. Thus, a single collector without a company or other registration cannot be certified. However we considered that it will be possible if a collector is registered as a farmer in the country of origin, then he can also be certified.'

In addition to the FairWild certified operators, there are also processors, distributors and sales representatives for the FairWild ingredients. Manufacturers that use the FairWild-certified ingredients in their finished products may display the FairWild logo on the packaging, according to a license agreement and annual fee paid to the FairWild Foundation. Heiko Schindler clarified: 'Sales representatives and finished product manufacturers can only themselves be certified if they are within the same unit as the producer (i.e. FairWild-certified operator). If a separate manufacturer in, for example, Europe wants certification for their own operations, we will refer them to IMO's FairForLife scheme, or another suitable fair trade initiative.'

#### How it works in practice

The FairWild certification system was already established with the version 1.0 of the Standard, but it has now been improved and simplified. It is based on an assessment of the fulfillment of the eleven principles stated above. A number of indicators/control points have been set for every principle, allowing performance to be assessed in detail.

On application to the FairWild certification scheme, wild plant species are classified by the FairWild Foundation as being of low, medium or high risk of unsustainable collection. The classification is based on a range

of ecological features, as well as the harvest methods used in collection. To obtain FairWild certification, the requirements are more rigorous for high risk species. There are, therefore, two sets of performance indicators: one set that applies generally to all target species and collection operations, and a second set that applies additionally to any species considered by the FairWild Foundation to be at high risk of unsustainable wild collection.

Another characteristic of FairWild certification is the rating system, where every control point is scored in the following way:

- 0 = Poor performance / not compliant.
- 1 = Not yet sufficient, but already positive developments towards meeting the FairWild requirements.
- 2 = The norm for sustainable collection for each indicator / control point; adequately meeting the FairWild criterion.
- 3 = Excellent performance: higher than norm requirements.

Under the rating system, a company achieving a score of 2 is considered to be adequately implementing the FairWild Standard for that control point. Lower than that is insufficient, and higher demonstrates best practice. Under the certification scheme companies are able to compensate weak performance in some areas with above average performance in others. However, weak performance is not accepted for those control points with MINIMUM requirements – these must be implemented as indicated. Additionally, the score system has a gradually increasing minimum percentage of Total Norm Points. The minimum percentage of Total Norm Points required for the first year of certification is 60%, increasing to 100% compliance over five years. A total score (100%) is obtained if 2 is

achieved for every control point. For example, the first control point, is the conservation status of target species. Under this criterion the current conservation status of the collected plant can be classified as:

- 0 = status not known / not checked.
- 1 = some information is incomplete or out of date.
- 2 = minimum requirement fulfilled: global and or national / regional status is known and included in resource assessment or plant profiles.
- 3 = operation contributes to regular assessment / re-assessment of conservation status.

### Certifier and standard setter

FairWild certification is a third-party audited scheme. The FairWild Standard is owned and maintained by the FairWild Foundation, and is periodically revised based on stakeholder feedback. Decisions on how the Standard must be implemented within the certification scheme are also made by the FairWild Foundation. Certification of companies implementing the Standard is carried out by a certification body (CB). Right from the beginning it had been planned to permit a range of certifiers to offer this service, but so far IMO is still the only accredited CB. TOS asked why no other certifiers had been approved, and also why it is that the FairWild Foundation has the same address as IMO, in Weinfelden, Switzerland. Bryony Morgan, from FairWild Foundation, explained:

How are different certifiers approved to offer FairWild certification:  
*'FairWild Foundation is currently looking into the feasibility of approving other CBs to offer FairWild certification, and an accreditation scheme will be developed. The intention is still to open the FairWild certifica-*

*tion scheme to other interested and qualified CBs in the future, but this requires measures and training to be in place to make sure that the scheme is consistently applied by different CBs. When there is more information available, it will be published on the FairWild Foundation website. CBs who are interested in becoming accredited in the future should contact the FairWild Foundation to receive updates.'*

On how administration of FairWild works:

*'The governance of FairWild Foundation is separate from IMO. There is a board of 11 trustees who oversee the Foundation's activities. While the charity is legally registered to the same address as the IMO office (reflecting the historical role of IMO in developing the scheme), the staff and functions are now separate. The FairWild Foundation Secretariat is currently hosted by TRAFFIC International ([www.traffic.org](http://www.traffic.org)), which has a partnership agreement with FairWild and supports the development of the charity, FairWild Standard and its certification scheme. FairWild Foundation recently joined the ISEAL Alliance as an affiliate member, and will be working to implement the best practices identified by this community of voluntary standard setting initiatives.'*

Who is certified for FairWild?

*'The names and details of the companies certified to the FairWild Standard are available from the FairWild website ([www.fairwild.org/certification-overview](http://www.fairwild.org/certification-overview)). The number of certified operators is not very large, and most are from Eastern Europe and Asia.'*

Why has uptake has been slow?

Both Heiko Schindler from IMO and Bryony Morgan from FairWild Foundation replied:

**Heiko Schindler:** *'FairWild [certification] can be achieved by any willing company, but the company has to work on it (as with any other standard). So I would not say that it is very difficult to achieve but as always the documentation can be challenging for companies.'*

**Bryony Morgan:** *'A number of pioneering companies have achieved FairWild certification, resulting in an increasing body of knowledge on how to implement the provisions of the FairWild Standard in practice, and laying the groundwork for an expansion of the scheme. Market demand for sustainably produced ingredients is increasing, but it can be difficult to link processing and manufacturing companies that want sustainably sourced material with operators who are ready to start working towards FairWild certification in practice. As familiarity with the scheme grows, we expect to see a steady increase in the number of certified operators, and we are also developing additional guidance manuals to help operators implement the FairWild Standard'. ■*

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*For background information see TOS 96 of April, TOS 97 of May and TOS 99 of July 2009*

**Sources:**  
*Interviews with Bryony Morgan (Executive Officer, FairWild Foundation) and Heiko Schindler (Head of Department Wild Collection, IMO) FairWild website: [www.fairwild.org](http://www.fairwild.org)*

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