Organic wild collection in forests

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**Implications**

The wild collecting products from the nature are favorable, sustainable raw materials, because they grow without inputs. In addition being nourishment, they will be a source for innovative raw materials for, among others, the welfare products and cosmetics. The wild forest raw materials and products are allowed to market as organic when the whole production chain follows the organic supervision.

**Background and objectives**

In Finland there is about 26.2 million hectares of forestry land (Metsäntutkimuslaitos 2014)where berries, mushrooms, herbs and other non-wood forest products (NWTP) can be collected. Nearly half of the area, about 13 million hectares, are certified as organic picking area. In future the organic forest area can be increased by double, because of the extremely low use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides in Finland.

In Finland lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) are the most important commercial berry species (Kurppa et al. 2015). Only a few species of mushrooms are collected commercially. The commercial collecting of berries and mushrooms is registered statistically (Maaseutuvirasto 2016). Many other wild collecting products, such as wild herbs, birch sap and resin could be collected and used as native products and for further product development in considerably higher amounts.

At the moment the bulk of the organic picking area is located in the Northern Finland. The growth and productivity of berry crops vary greatly during different years depending on the growth area(Turtiainen et al. 2011). It is important to bring more organic picking areas also to the southern part of Finland in order to fill the possible gaps in the supply of the organic products. Organic certification label in collecting products is appreciated especially in the export market. It guarantees the quality and the origin and its significance will further increase with emerging food forgeries.

The present study produces information concerning the significance of the organic certification of collecting of the wild collecting areas. It also compares different operation models and clarifies the opportunities for cooperation with companies and forest owners based on organic certification.

**Key results and discussion**

The study is at the initial stage and the results will be available in future. Inquiries, focus group- and expert interviews will be used as research materials.

Kurppa S, Kotro J, Heikkilä L, Reinikainen A, Timonen K, Peltola R & Manninen O 2015. Arktinen ruoantuotanto: taustaselvitys ja kiteytysmatriisi. <http://jukuri.luke.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/519271/luke-luobio_47_2015.pdf?sequence=4>

Maaseutuvirasto 2016. Marsi 2015 - Luonnonmarjojen ja -sienten kauppaantulomäärät vuonna 2015. <http://www.mavi.fi/fi/tuet-ja-palvelut/viljelija/Documents/Marsi-2015-raportti.pdf>

Metsäntutkimuslaitos 2014. Metsätilastollinen vuosikirja 2014: <http://www.metla.fi/metinfo/tilasto/julkaisut/vsk/2014/index.html>

Turtiainen M, Salo K & Saastamoinen O 2011. Variations of Yield and Utilisation of Bilberries (Vaccinium myrtillus L.) and Cowberries (V. vitis-idaea L.) in Finland. Silva Fennica 45(2):237–251. <http://www.metla.fi/silvafennica/full/sf45/sf452237.pdf>