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COLLECTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WILD FOREST PRODUCTS IN EUROPE

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Abstract

In most of the European countries the national system for reporting on the marketed wild forest products (WFP) is inadequate and obsolete; official data cannot be considered as representative, as an important share of WFP is traded in informal markets and collected for personal use. Thus, the social and economic importance of WFP is in most cases underestimated. In order to tackle these issues under the EC-financed project StarTree a Europe-wide survey has been undertaken, with a goal of assessing the collection and consumption of WFP. Unit of analysis is the household, where the minimal national sample sizes have been defined with 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval. Categorization and listing of wild forest products has been based on the feedback of experts covering different parts of Europe. The final list of WFP was composed included 45 products for the section on collection and 14 groups of WFP for the section on consumption. The survey was based on panel data design. Distribution of the survey resulted with 19665 respondents, which is almost triple of the minimal sample size. Results show that 32% of all households have collected WFPs during 2015 (17.6% in Italy). The most frequently collected group of WFP is wild berries (77%), followed by wild mushrooms (71%) and wild medicinal and aromatic herbs (53%). Quarter of all the households whose members have collected WFPs during 2015 also are forest owners, and more than half of them have annually went between 3 and 12 times to forest in order to collect WFPs. Fresh or dried nuts is the most frequently consumed group of WFP (72%), followed by fresh berries (59%) and dried, frozen or prepared wild berries (48%).

Keywords : NWFP (Non-Wood Forest Products), wild products, forest economy, Europe