Policy for Wild-Collected Species

1. Introduction

Wild collection refers to gathering raw materials directly from their natural habitats. Under the Regenerative Organic Certified®, these materials can include plants, fungi, and other natural resources that grow or exist in the wild. This practice is often utilized for traditional medicine, food, cosmetics, and scientific research.

Wild collection must balance the demand for natural resources with conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem health. Overharvesting and habitat destruction are significant concerns that need to be managed through careful planning and adherence to sustainable practices.

Wild collection sites, with their ecological, economic, and cultural significance, are invaluable. They provide essential resources for local communities and industries, contributing to the overall health and diversity of ecosystems. The effective management and conservation of these sites are not just important, but vital for maintaining their long-term viability and the services they provide to both humans and wildlife.

2. Wild Collection and the NOP

The wild crop harvesting practice standard (§ 205.207) was published in December 2000. Before 2011, no further guidance was provided to organic producers or certifying agents regarding organic system plan (OSP), certification, or inspection requirements. In October 2010, the NOP published draft guidance. Based on comments received, the final guidance was published in May 2011.

As the Regenerative Organic Certified® builds up on the NOP, the same requirements regarding the management practices, description of the natural environment of the harvest area, description of the ecosystem management and harvesting practices, monitoring systems, threatened species, and other items listed in § 205.207 must be taken into consideration.

Under this policy, only applicants with a valid NOP certification for the scope of Wild Crops are eligible for Regenerative Organic Certified®.

3. General Conditions

3.1. **Studies and Records** demonstrating regenerative wild collection practices: Characteristics of wild collection sites are identified using field observations, existing studies or local knowledge. Studies can be created by the operator if signed by a specialist and referencing official and academic studies.

    3.1.1. Information is available on the status of the wild-collected species within the wild collection site.

    3.1.2. Wild collection practices are based on scientific information or local knowledge to avoid negatively affecting the long-term survival of the population of wild-collected species or its interdependent species

3.2. **Wild Collection practices supports Ecosystem Conservation** by ensuring that the harvesting is conducted sustainably, maintaining populations and species over time.

    3.2.1. Wild Collection practices and management ensure a neutral or positive impact on the collection area and the broader landscape. They actively avoid negative effects and promote, as much as possible, the conservation of other species, habitats, and the overall ecosystem.

    3.2.2. Wild collection practices are annually assessed for performance and impact and adjusted with a view to continuous improvement, changing conditions and/or addressing unintended negative effects.

3.3. **Harvesting and trading of wild-collected species are conducted in full legal compliance.**

    3.3.1. Wild harvesting and trading of products adhere to legitimate tenure arrangements and comply fully with all relevant local, national, and international legal and regulatory requirements.

    3.3.2. Collection rights over the Wild Collection Site are available and compliant with local, national, and international laws. If needed, government permits must be available.

3.4. **Wild collectors are treated fairly** and in accordance with internationally accepted labor standards and all contracts and arrangements between operators, wild collectors, and workers are equitable. Contracts and hiring practices must be fair and according to the ROA Framework criteria.

    3.4.1. Collectors and workers are provided with a safe and healthy work environment. During the audit, the training and use of applicable individual protective equipment must be demonstrated.

    3.4.2. Training records for the wild collectors must be available, evidence that they have been trained in Health and safety, conservation, and sustainable harvesting.

4. Terms & Definitions

Wild Crop

Any plant or portion of a plant that is collected or harvested from a site that is not maintained under cultivation or other agricultural management.

Wild Collection Site

A wild collection site is a specific terrestrial or aquatic area where the wild collection of natural raw materials takes place. These sites are characterized by the presence of naturally occurring species that are harvested for various uses. The management and conservation of wild collection sites are critical to ensuring the sustainability of the resources they provide.

Wild Collector

The individual who engages in gathering natural raw materials from their natural habitats. Collectors play a crucial role in wild collection, ensuring that the harvested materials meet the necessary quality and sustainability standards.

Ecosystem conservation

It involves protecting, managing, and restoring natural habitats and the ecological processes within them to maintain biodiversity and ensure the sustainability of ecosystem services. This approach aims to preserve the complex interactions among species and their environments, preventing habitat degradation, species extinction, and loss of ecosystem functions.

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