



Wild fruits – innovative supply chain

Wild Fruits is an Operational Group from Germany working on the production and processing potential of wild fruits such as chokeberries (*Aronia spp.*), roses (*Rosa spp.*) and flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles spp.*). There is a high market demand for these fruits which are considered health products, however there are very few local producers.

Wild, specialised, unusual fruits refer to berries and other fruits which are not traditionally grown locally and which are high in vitamins and antioxidants. In spite of a growing demand for this type of fruit in Germany, there are still very few producers and therefore consumers have to buy imported products.

One farmer, Frank Spaethe, in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania was growing sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), selling to local companies who produce juices and jams. Noticing that the demand for unusual and rare fruits was increasing, he decided with his agricultural adviser that it would be interesting to experiment this type of supply chain further. Teaming up with a university, a research centre and a marketing company, they set up the Operational Group **Wild Fruits**.



A new opportunity

The aim of this Operational Group (OG) project was to start cultivating several new fruits and to look at every part of the supply chain, from plant to consumer.

Sara Mosch, who works for the OG lead partner LMS Agrarberatung GmbH agricultural advisory service, says: "Consumers are becoming more and more interested about what they eat and where their food comes from. To create a supply chain from the farmer to a regional supermarket or restaurant is the best answer to this, to have a regional, environmentally friendly and transparent product."

Frank Spaethe explains that from the grower's point of view diversification of cultures is important, it can help optimise the use of farm resources and ensure a fall-back option in case one crop fails: "It is always interesting to try new things. And as a result, you also have an opportunity to maximise the economic results of the company/farm. For example by using machines at a time you usually don't because other fruits will be ripe at another time of the year. Also it is good not to be dependent on only one kind of fruit so as to minimise the risk of partially or complete crop failure. And of course improving the results by selling a new product."

Innovative fruit

Frank Spaethe is now growing three fruits under organic conditions: chokeberries (*Aronia spp.*), roses (*Rosa spp.*) and flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles spp.*) and is carrying out field trials supported by the agricultural advisory service. Another partner, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Research Centre for Agriculture, is also growing these fruits under conventional conditions in a different part of the region on their experimental farm. The partners are testing how successfully the fruits are growing under the two different growing conditions.

Marketing strategies

At the same time, the marketing partner Baltic Consulting and the Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences are looking at the other end of the supply chain: the marketing opportunities. They have contacted small companies in the region which may be interested in buying and producing these products. But this is not just about the fruit themselves. The wood could also be given value. Some companies have also shown an interest in the leaves of the plants to make fruit teas or fruit powders. Some companies are interested in the juice and others in the by-product from the juice-making process to create new products such as crystallised fruit and snack products.

Future steps

The OG is monitoring how the three fruit cultures are reacting to the climate and analysing which kind of diseases they have been susceptible to so far. The OG will try different mechanical procedures for harvesting the fruits and document the development of the plants. Their first fruit harvest was last year, and they will soon have the results from a pruning trial they have been running.

Sara continues "The Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences is analysing first results about different content of the fruits such as the levels of vitamin C and different phenols such as anthocyanins and other colouring agents. This could broaden the ideas for their use."



EIP-AGRI Workshop: Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together

Sara Mosch recently represented Wild Fruits at the EIP-AGRI Workshop 'Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together' in Lyon in February 2018. "The most interesting thing about the workshop was to see what other projects are working on; all the different types of topics being dealt with. It was great to talk to other Operational Groups and see how they are organising their work."

Wild Fruits met with French OG 'Aronia and other organic super berries in Centre-Val de Loire' and Estonian OG 'Development of cultivation, harvesting and processing technologies for new fruit and berry cultures' working on a similar subject to theirs. "We exchanged contacts and we have been in touch since the event. We are finding out in more detail what each of our groups is working on, this is really enriching for our work." The OGs are hoping to travel and visit each of the other projects in the near future.

Wild Fruits Operational Group partners

- Lead partner: LMS Agrarberatung GmbH, Centre of Agricultural Advice Service, Rostock, Germany
- Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Research Centre for Agriculture
- Baltic Consulting, Stäbelow, Germany (Marketing Company)
- Sanddorn Storchennest GmbH, Ludwigslust, Germany (Fruit grower)

Contact and further information

[EIP-AGRI Workshop: Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together](#)

[Publication with the projects represented at the EIP-AGRI workshop](#)

Photos: Wild Fruits