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Matsutakes way to a new commercial mushroom in Finland

In the year 2004 the Ministry of Trade and Industry established a work group to prepare new legislation for vegetablers, fruits and mushrooms. Arctic Flavours Association has a member in the group and collected information concerning possible new commercial mushrooms and other NTF-products. Researches, inspectors, advisers, vocational schools and projects suggested about 15 new mushrooms to be named commercial mushrooms in the new law. Arctic Flavours Association asked opinion of member firms and suggested only matsutake to be elected a new commercial mushroom.

Ministry of Trade and Industry made the new mushroom law and it became valid at the end of 2006. The new law changed the permission to name new commercial mushrooms from the Ministry of Trade and Industry to the Finnish Food Safety Authority. That authority gave matsutake the commercial mushrooms status 16.4.2007.

Matsutake is the mushroom of the year 2007

Arctic Flavours named matsutake the mushroom of the year 2007 and delivered 60 000 matsutake postcards in July to Finnish consumers together with organisations and Finnish restaurants and canteens. Our association also printed 10 000 leaflets of the mushroom and delivered them at the beginning of last summer to the advisers, shopkeepers, teachers, schools and mushroom buying firms around Finland.

Summer 2007 was very rainy and matsutake was growing rather well in Finland. Our association got hundreds of contacts and information about the mushroom. Most contacts we got from Northern Finland. The best pickers can pick matsutake 40-50 kg/day in Lapland and 4-5 kg/day in Kainuu and Oulun region. In southern and middle Finland we got also contacts but pickers found only few mushrooms. The crop season is mainly over. Mushrooms are not anymore as available as one month ago, but still some pickers find few of them.

Our experiences are that it's possible to establish commercial network to buy matsutake in northern Finland. Hundreds of pickers took part the training days in Lapland, Kainuu, Oulu and North Karelia region. They are willing and very eager to seek matsutake. Matsutake is growing in the north and that's why some southern firms had difficulties to buy it.

Mushrooms are low-energy food

Mushrooms are low-energy foods, their energy varied from 27 to 30 kcal/100g. They contain large amounts of carbohydrate and dietary fiber and are good sources of protein compared with vegetables. Compared with vegetables, mushrooms are also good sources of many mineral elements e.g. the contents of K, P, Zn and Cu. Some forest mushrooms have also high content of Selen.

