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Quality control of goji (fruits of *Lycium barbarum* L. and *L. chinense* Mill.): A value chain analysis perspective

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ABSTRACT

Ethnopharmacological relevance: Goji (fruits of *Lycium barbarum* L. and *L. chinense* Mill., Solanaceae) have been used as a traditional food and medicine for hundreds of years in Asian countries and are now consumed globally. Quality of herbal medicines is critical for safe use and has been shown to be affected by value chains.

Aim of the study: Using a value chain (VC) framework, we aim at understanding the influence of different VC types on goji quality and revenue of stakeholders.

Materials and Methods: Participant observation and semi-structured interviews were conducted during five months of fieldwork in the main production areas in China with a total of 65 stakeholders. Quality of goji, behaviour and financial performance of stakeholders was documented and analysed for different VCs.

Results: Ten different types of VCs were identified. VCs with vertical integration and horizontal collaboration were found to have a more coherent quality control and better goji quality as well as improved stakeholders' financial performance. Vertical integration at different levels was found for independent farmer-based VCs, horizontal collaboration was found in the cooperative-based VCs. Full vertically integrated VCs

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