

Indonesian government will withhold certification from companies transshipping shrimp

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JAKARTA, The government said it will punish fish exporters involved in circumvention and transshipment of shrimp from six countries imposed with anti-dumping sanctions by the United States.

The government will not issue quality certificate for exporters found re-exporting shrimp imported from China, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Brazil and Ecuador, Fishery and Maritime Minister Freddy Numbery said.

The United States has suspected Indonesian suppliers of transshipment of shrimps and re-exported them as Indonesian commodity to the U.S. market.

The United States has threatened to take action and a U.S. team visited the country last month to investigate charges against a number of Indonesian exporters.

Freddy said the practice could hurt the entire Indonesian fishery industry.

Florida state government supports expanded fishing ban near Tortugas

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS [The Miami Herald] August 11, 2005, Wednesday By Marc Caputo

TALLAHASSEE -- As the world's third-largest barrier reef continues to decay, the Florida Cabinet on Tuesday unanimously approved a plan to ban fishing in a new ecological zone in the most pristine of emerald and azure waters 70 miles west off Key West.

But before the new 46-square-mile Dry Tortugas research reserve becomes reality, the plan will be reviewed by Florida's wildlife commission and then head back to the Cabinet in the coming months -- drawing fire along the way from one of the state's most influential environmental lobbying groups, the Coastal Conservation Association.

The 10,500-member association of Florida saltwater anglers is the only group vocally opposing the so-called 'no-take zone.' On the other side, scores of government agencies, fishermen, divers and environmentalists laud the plan as a reef-saver.

The new reserve, along with two other existing no-take zones, would block spear and rod-and-reel fishermen from only six percent of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Sanctuary superintendent Billy Causey said studies indicate that fish stocks improve in the no-take zones.

A sanctuary status report submitted to the Cabinet noted that between 2003-04 hard corals significantly decreased and now cover only 6.8 percent of the reef -- despite sanctuary efforts since 1996 when hard corals covered 12 percent. Bad water quality and global warming are most likely to blame, though sanctuary supporters also claim that over-fishing is harming the reefs.

Such apparent anti-fishing sentiment, when combined with the new no-take zone, has fed the fears of the Coastal Conservation Association's executive director, Ted Forsgren.

'We don't think it's necessary to prohibit any and all fishing in the area,' he said. 'There are types of fishing that can be done that will have no impact at all on the resources that they're trying to protect there. The best example would be catch-and-release fishing for tarpon and permit.'

Even if such recreational sportfishing were allowed, Forsgren said, the association still might oppose the new reserve's 'no-take' provisions. Commercial fishing already has been banned in the area.

Forsgren's intransigence irritated the reserve's backers, who pointed out that the association refused to participate in group talks over the no-take zone. 'It's like the NRA refusing to sit down and talk about cop-killer bullets,' said Ocean Conservancy director David White. 'It's an extremist position.'

Forsgren said there was no reason to bargain away his group's right to fish.

In agreeing to create the Dry Tortugas Ecological Reserve, the Cabinet took a novel 'agree-to-disagree' approach with the federal government. The two entities have a long-standing underwater turf war over who owns the ocean bottom in the Dry Tortugas National Park, which is encompassed by the marine sanctuary.

The sticking point, involving legislation more than 180 years old, surfaced just as the state and federal governments in 2001 set aside two vast no-take zones totaling 151 square miles just outside the park. Inside the 100-square-mile park, recreational fishing was permitted.

Under the new plan, noncommercial fishing would still be allowed in 54 percent of the park's waters.

Gov. Jeb Bush noted before Tuesday's vote that there was a 'second conflict:' Who would approve the management deal, the Cabinet or the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, whose seven members are appointed by the governor? The CCA argues that

the wildlife commission are the experts who need to be consulted.

Just minutes before Tuesday's meeting, proponents of the reserve fretted that Attorney General Charlie Crist, a Republican gubernatorial candidate for 2006, was tilting away from them.

Crist read aloud Article IV, Section 9 of the state Constitution, which gives the commission executive and regulatory authority over wildlife in the state.

'I don't really understand why the Cabinet's being asked to do their jobs,' Crist said.

Forsgren said he was pleased that the Cabinet recognized the wildlife commission had a role in the process. His group is experienced at working the halls of power, having successfully backed a 1994 ban on gill nets and a 2004 law that could allow for faster boating speeds in some manatee zones.

Forsgren also urged the Cabinet to review regulations for Yellowstone National Park, where catch-and-release fishing is permitted everywhere except near bridges or places where bears could attack.

Joked Bush: 'So your proposal is that fishing should be allowed in this place unless you have a chance of being attacked by a bear?'

USAID project to boost Bangladesh shrimp exports through certification, Darden has signed on as buye

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS By Afzal Khan (US State Dept.) August 11, 2005 -- Washington ? Bangladesh, working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and several American companies, aims to increase its exports of shrimp fivefold in the coming five years. Second only in value to its ready-made garment exports, shrimp exports from Bangladesh have been earning \$300 million annually. Now a project funded by USAID has the potential to increase the value of shrimp exports fivefold to \$1.5 billion by 2010.

The United States and the European Union (EU) each import 40 percent of the shrimp, with the remaining 20 percent going to Japan. Bangladesh is already among the top 10 exporters of shrimp in the world and accounts for some 3 percent of global production.

The project, known as Shrimp Seal of Quality (SSOQ), is a major part of the second phase of the "Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDP II)" managed by the Louis Berger Group, a global consulting firm that won a \$10-million contract from USAID in 2001.

That contract has since been supplemented by a \$5 million input from the Bangladesh government for mostly training purposes. Other project partners are Cargill Technical Services of Cargill Inc., an agribusiness company, and Land O' Lakes, a dairy farm cooperative, both based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

ATDP II, scheduled to end in December, is providing technical assistance to selected agribusinesses dealing with shrimp, fish, poultry, livestock, grains, fruits and vegetables.

Set up in 2003, the \$3-million SSOQ program aims to raise the volume and value of Bangladesh shrimp exports. This effort to impose uniform quality standards became necessary after the EU imposed a ban on Bangladesh shrimp imports in 1997 because of a failure to comply with EU quality regulations in shrimp processing plants in Khulna and Chittagong. At the same time, the Bangladesh government realized that up-to-date scientific methods were needed to maximize shrimp production for export.

A major thrust of the SSOQ program is to get rid of a wide-spread viral disease that has been responsible for declining production since the early 1990s of the marine shrimp known as "Black Tiger," which dominates the export market. The other main variety of Bangladesh shrimp is actually a giant fresh water prawn which is immune to this viral disease. The Black tiger proliferates in tidal basin areas along the Bay of Bengal coastline in brackish water, while the freshwater prawns can flourish farther inland in ponds.

The disease known as White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV) was detected through tests in a laboratory set up by the SSOQ program. The tests found the incidence of WSSV at over 70 percent.

Although WSSV is harmless to the human consumer, it cuts down shrimp production in the farms drastically. The laboratory in Cox's Bazar, at the southeastern tip of Bangladesh, screens shrimp fry, or larvae, for the disease from four designated hatcheries.

The fry are then put in plastic bags of saline water and transported by air to designated nurseries in Khulna in the southwestern part of the country for storage. Then the mature larvae are distributed to shrimp farmers participating in the SSOQ's Farm Management Program.

So far, only 4 percent of the total larvae used in shrimp production are screened by this laboratory.

In addition to screening for WSSV, the SSOQ program seeks to put into practice shrimp farming techniques to improve yields, while decreasing the risk of the white spot virus spreading. Demonstration farms and field schools disseminate information about best management practices while providing training and consulting services to shrimp farmers.

Finally, the SSOQ, through its voluntary certification program, aims to assure buyers overseas that the Bangladesh shrimp industry has met international food safety standards, has addressed global environmental concerns, and has followed to international labor practices.

By adhering to international food safety standards, Bangladesh is able to assure overseas buyers that the shrimp are free from disease and harmful chemicals and additives that are sometimes used to reduce spoilage. Global environmental concerns address the depletion of valuable mangrove swamps brought about by indiscriminate shrimp farming. International labor standards include banning of child labor and ensuring fair treatment of seasonal workers.

"The SSOQ program is a very holistic approach and it can serve as a model for certification of other exports such as fruits, vegetables and other fish." according to McDonald Homer, the team leader of Enterprise Development at the USAID Mission in Dhaka, the Bangladesh capital.

Homer stressed that the SSOQ program is a "partnership between the private sector and the government of Bangladesh" and that "USAID's role is that of a catalyst."

Louis Berger's Ron Gillespie, who heads the company's Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project in Bangladesh said the SSOQ program is part of a broader effort in Bangladesh to raise the quality of food produced in the country.

According to Gillespie, the focus on seafood has come at the right time for Bangladesh. "Compared with other shrimp-exporting countries such as Thailand and Vietnam, Bangladesh has a comparative advantage in cheap labor and ample water resources that will stand in good stead in the future if the shrimp export market tightens," he said.

According to Quazi Kudrat-e- Kabir, SSOQ's regional director in Khulna, Bangladesh, the shrimp industry benefits three to four million "mostly poor" Bangladeshis while providing livelihood directly to 142,000 farming households numbering some 600,000 people. Kabir said that over 200,000 hectares are now under shrimp farming.

By the end of the project in December, Kabir expects "over 300 shrimp farmer field schools" to sustain the program with 20 technicians trained to provide management advice to the farmers. SSOQ demonstration farms have already produced shrimp yields three to five times the national average yield of 350 kilograms per hectare, Kabir said.

He added that the U.S. Red Lobster chain of restaurants has contracted to buy the first batch of SSOQ program-produced shrimp. The chain's parent company, Darden Restaurants, Inc. headquartered in Orlando, Florida, is already the largest U.S. importer of Bangladesh shrimp.

Texas, California, Massachusetts take top honors in Great American Seafood cooking contest

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS [PRNewswire via COMTEX] - August 11, 2005 - NEW ORLEANS, Hogarth crowns Chef Randy Evans of Brennan's of Houston as the 2005 King at the Great American Seafood Cook Off. Randy's Wild Caught Texas Shrimp with Biscuits and Gravy is quintessential East Texas cooking.

Clearly, local style and ingredients are what make the cook off chefs great. Randy says, 'I'm a big supporter of local farmers, local produce, local shrimp; anything that's local.'

Chef David LeFevre of Water Grill/Kings Seafood took home the Silver for his Slow Poached California White Sturgeon. He says diners are keenly interested in point of origin.

And the Bronze goes to Jasper White of Jasper White's Summer Shack in Massachusetts for his Sea Scallops with Native Lobster Succotash. White says, 'I really base my cuisine on the freshest ingredients and the freshest seafood. For us, anything that's not from the East Coast is an import.'

The governors of seafood producing states chose these chefs and eleven others to compete on August 6 in New Orleans. The Louisiana Seafood Board hosts the event; the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation selects the panel of distinguished judges; National Fisheries Institute oversees the judging and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sponsors the culinary event extraordinaire.

Honored chefs flew in from every coast and one inland state: Lucy Buffett from Alabama, Stefani Mornon from Alaska, Travis Summers & Joshua Butler from Florida, Terry McDonner from Louisiana, Sonny Sweetman from Maryland, Robert St. John from Mississippi, Edwin French from North Carolina, Eric Jenkins from Oregon, Jeff Wirtz from Rhode Island, Hilda Pope from Tennessee, and Simos Marmaras from DC.

The Board appreciates the other generous event sponsors: Louisiana Restaurant Association, Southwest Cargo, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, Tabasco, Wild American Shrimp, Fresh from Florida Seafood, Mississippi Seafood, Loubat's, and Texas Shrimp.

The chefs would probably all agree that the real winner of the event is regional cooking and the Americans who choose domestic seafood. For recipes of America's best seafood chefs, visit www.GreatAmericanSeafoodCookOff.com

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Japan's Inaba develops skin supplement derived from crab and shrimp shells

SEAFOOD.COM NEWS [Asia Pulse Pte Ltd] - August 11, 2005 - TOKYO, Inaba Foods Co., a Shizuoka Prefecture processor of marine products, will fully enter the market for health foods by unveiling a skin-enhancing supplement containing crab and shrimp shell component.

Inaba Foods will sell the product through drugstores and pharmacies and will aim for sales of 600 million yen (US\$5.44 million) after three years.

It will begin marketing the supplement on Aug. 22.

The supplement contains N-acetyl glucosamine (NAG), which is made through the hydrolysis of chitin, a component of crab and shrimp shells. The NAG binds with D-glucuronic acid in the body, forming hyaluronic acid, which is said to help skin maintain moisture.

The firm will offer both a soft capsule and jelly form of the supplement.

A container of 180 soft capsules will sell for 6,000 yen.

Around 1990, Inaba Foods introduced a chitosan supplement designed to control cholesterol. It has also sold tuna products containing docosahexaenoic acid, an essential fatty acid.

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Indonesia's Jayanti sells fishery unit to China's Dalian Changhai

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JAKARTA, The Jayanati Group has decided to sell its money-losing fishery subsidiary PT Daya Guna Samudra to China's Dalian Changhai Ocean Fishery Co. Ltd. for an undisclosed sum.

Most of the assets of Daya Guna, which is based in Benjina on the island of Aru in Maluku, are in poor condition but the Chinese investor agreed to acquire the company mainly because of its airstrip and fishing terminal that still functions well, a company source said.

Daya Guna, which has 35 fishing vessels, has stopped operation since the middle of last year when it laid off 1,875 workers.

The Chinese investor is prepared to invest funds to rehabilitate the assets including infrastructure, Director General for Fishery Product Marketing and Processing Martani Huseini said.

Dalian Changhai has about 40 fishing ships operating in the country, mainly in the Aru sea.