

FAO-ASEAN strategic planning workshop on harmonization of standards for shrimp export-import

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In the year 2000, global aquaculture production exceeded 35 million metric tonnes with a value of over 52 thousand million US dollars. Although crustaceans represented only 4.8 percent of total production by weight, they comprised almost 21 percent of the value of global aquaculture in 2000. The giant tiger prawn is ranked first by value at over four thousand million US dollars and more recent estimates indicate that white shrimp produced in Asia are making an increasing contribution to the overall production of Asian farmed shrimp.

The USA has been the major market for farmed shrimp over the past few years, and the market condition in the USA is now the predominant factor affecting international market prices. Shrimp is the number one seafood consumed in the USA and imports have now reached 430,000 tonnes per year, worth 3.4 thousand million US dollars, and are still increasing. The Japanese market is also important with 80 percent of its imports coming from Asian countries (particularly Indonesia, Viet Nam and India) in 2002, compared to just 20 percent from Latin America.

The European market is more difficult to penetrate than the United States or Japanese markets, due to consumer pressures that have recently become even more concerned about a range of issues that include sustainability criteria, traceability, contaminants and residues. The issues concerning antibiotics, that led to recent bans on importation and blacklisting of farmed shrimp from many Asian countries, has caused considerable economic losses to many Asian countries.

Part of the problem is due to the disparities in quality control and

inspections standards among ASEAN countries. If it were possible to harmonize these, it would result in substantial savings while contributing to the stimulation of intra-regional trade. Common standards could also enhance the reputation of the region as an exporter of safe products of consistent quality and composition.

To address the critical emerging issues on food quality and safety, and in recognition of the need to raise the profile of these issues at a policy level, the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries meeting in Laos PDR in May 2003 established an ASEAN Task Force to work towards recognition of regulatory inspection and control system of antibiotic residues in cultured shrimps. Thailand was assigned as the lead country. As the lead country, Thailand, through the Department of Fisheries, requested FAO for technical and financial assistance in organizing the first strategic planning workshop of the Task Force which was held at the Chaophya Park Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, from 4 to 6 November 2003. Report of this workshop will be soon available through FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.



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