U.S. Issues New Requirements for Imported Seafood

Exporters of seafood to the U.S. were urged to comply with the new requirements of the U.S. under its Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) beginning this year.

The SIMP establishes for imports of certain seafood products, the reporting and recordkeeping requirements needed to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU)-caught and/or misrepresented seafood from entering U.S. commerce, providing additional protections for their national economy, global food security and the sustainability of their share ocean resources.

The new rule is part of a broader seafood traceability program that covers both imports and US domestic production.

Equivalent information regarding harvest, landing and chain of custody of U.S.-produced seafood is being collected pursuant to various other Federal and state requirements.

Aside from Abalone and shrimp, the other seafood species that are covered by the new rule effective January 1 this year include:

- Atlantic Cod
- Blue Crab (Atlantic)
- Dolphinfish (Mahi Mahi)
- Grouper
- King Crab (red)
- Pacific Cod
- Red Snapper
- Sea Cucumber
- Sharks
- Swordfish and Tunas (*Albacore, Bigeye, Skipjack, Yellowfin, and Bluefin)*

Compliance date for shrimp and abalone is phased in at a later date.

Over the past year, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other U.S. government agencies have provided information to exporting countries through webinars, written materials, and in-person technical meetings. NOAA will continue to work with producers, processors, exporters, and importers to support and enforce compliance.

The Seafood Import Monitoring Program establishes permitting, data reporting and recordkeeping requirements for the importation of certain priority fish and fish products that have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to IUU fishing and/or seafood fraud.

Traceability measures like the ones SIMP establishes are an internationally accepted method for combating IUU fishing and seafood fraud, and will help facilitate legal trade for law-abiding fishers and seafood producers in the U.S. and abroad.

Traceability can significantly improve information about harvesting levels that can be used to strengthen sustainable fisheries management.

Additional Information can be found at the following websites:

1.   Final Rule Federal Notice:

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/12/09/2016-29324/magnuson-stevens-fishery-conservation-and-management-act-seafood-import-monitoring-program

2.   General Information

http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/RecommendationsandActions/RECOMMENDATION1415/FinalRuleTraceability.aspx

3.   Compliance Guide

http://www.iuufishing.noaa.gov/Portals/33/SIMPComplianceGuide2017.pdf?ver=2017-08-23-172430-060