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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Thai Shrimp Goes Green**

Thai Delegation to Promote Sustainable Shrimp, Discuss Seafood Quality and Safety at Boston's International Seafood Show in March

BOSTON – March 10, 2010 -- America's top shrimp supplier wants to turn your shrimp green.

Thailand, supplier of one-third of U.S. shrimp imports, is bringing sustainably farmed, environmentally friendly shrimp to American consumers. The result? The same tasty white shrimp Americans love, with a "green" history they can feel good about.

"Everyone knows that Thailand is one of the largest shrimp exporters in the world. We want to show the American consumer that we are also leaders in sustainability, safety and human rights," said Rapibhat Chandarasrivongs, Minister for Agriculture and head of the Thai government's Office of Agricultural Affairs.

#### **International Boston Seafood Show**

"Thailand has been exceeding global aquaculture standards while making human rights our priority for years. And although we've been well accepted internationally, we've never stopped improving," said Chandarasrivongs, who will be at the International Boston Seafood Show in Boston from March 14 to 16 to discuss not only sustainable shrimp, but the Thai's commitment to quality, safety, and human rights.

Chandarasrivongs will be joined by several senior-level Thai officials at the Seafood Show, including the Thai ambassador to the United States and the deputy director general of the Department of Fisheries. The delegation will be hosting "Thai Quality Shrimp & Traceability," a seminar on quality and the production process on March 15 at 2 p.m., in Room 225 of the Boston Conference and Exhibition Center. A 10-minute VCD on the subject will be shown, followed by a 4 p.m. reception at Thailand's booth, # 2047, where visitors can nibble on some delicious samples of Thai shrimp and tilapia.

#### **Quality + Sustainability = Popularity**

Thailand exports almost 400,000 tons of shrimp globally each year -- roughly \$2.7 billion worth. Thirty percent of all imported shrimp in the United States is from Thailand. Despite the competition from other producers, Thai shrimp remains exceedingly popular because of its consistently reliable freshness, high quality, and the Thai shrimp industry's renowned efficiency.

Responding to today's international demand for sustainable produce, Thailand's shrimp industry is following strict environmental requirements, complying with the country's Clean and Green standards by minimizing waste, recycling, building solid waste disposal facilities, and following tighter water pollution requirements. The industry works with the Thai government as well as global and regional organizations to make environmental, social, human and animal welfare a top concern in shrimp production.

## **Exceeding U.S. and Global Standards for Quality and Safety**

In the past 10 years, Thailand's Department of Fisheries has worked consistently on aquaculture standards for quality, safety and sustainability. Before a shrimp farmer can export its goods, The Department of Fisheries must certify that it meets Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP) and adheres to Thailand's Code of Conduct for Responsible Shrimp Aquaculture, both of which were developed using international standards such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Code of Conduct for Responsibility Fisheries (Article 9), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 which addresses environmental management systems, and the aquaculture part of the FAO's CODEX. All Thai shrimp farmers are encouraged to improve their farms based on these production, quality, food safety, environmental, and traceability standards, which are recognized by major importing countries such as the United States, E.U., and Japan.

A sophisticated traceability system allows the government to quickly detect and prevent any possible contamination.

"When the FDA visits Thai fish farms, they never find any problems," said Chandarasrivongs. "They leave knowing they can trust our produce."

Thailand's Department of Fisheries consistently updates its GAP standard to align with the current international standard. It has been consulting with experts from the FAO on the current revision, which includes safeguards on environmental, social, and animal welfare.

## **Global Recognition**

Several organizations in the United States and the international aquaculture community have bestowed their seal of approval on Thai shrimp, including the Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Food Standard, British Retailer Consortium, Global Food Standard, U.S. Occupational Health & Safety System, Halal and The Aquaculture Council.

## **Third-Party Certification: the FDA Pilot Program**

Thailand's high standards have also been recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which selected Thailand to participate in its pilot program for third-party certification of imported aquacultured shrimp. FDA officials are working with Thai fisheries officials to design inspection procedures that mirror those of the U.S. government, and will conduct training sessions for Thai inspectors. Under this arrangement, Thai shrimp inspected and approved by Thai fisheries personnel would be pre-qualified to enter the United States.

## **Human Rights a Top Priority**

Nearly one million Thais work in the shrimp processing industry. Human rights, and particularly children's rights, are of the utmost importance to the Thai government. Thai shrimp producers are required to follow strict federal laws prohibiting the hiring of illegal immigrants, children, and forced laborers.

Among many efforts in this area, the government established the Commission for Protection of Child Labor in 1987; mandated the inspection of sites for worker safety via the Labor Protection Act of 1998; ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention on the Elimination of All Worst Forms of Child Labor in 2001; and adopted a new constitution providing for the promotion and protection of children's rights (2007).

To combat child labor violations and human trafficking, the Thai government has worked closely with international agencies, including ILO, International Organization for Migration, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the United Nations.

### **Vision for the Future: Organic Shrimp**

In addition to becoming leaders in environmentally sustainable shrimp production, Thais are also beginning to raise and export organic shrimp. A few select farms are raising organic shrimp in an environmentally friendly fashion that includes a fully closed water system, water recirculation canals, and an organic water treatment pond. No waste material is discharged into the surrounding ecological system. Naturland, a German-based international organic certifying organization, certified Thai black tiger prawns from these farms as organic. With very high standards that few shrimp producers internationally will be able to meet, Thai organic shrimps have become very popular in Europe and Japan, and the Thais will soon be bringing these delectable shrimp to the U.S. as well.

For more information, please contact Media Sales International.

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