

# News Round-up

## **Sardines in**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is lifting the ban on imports of Peruvian canned sardine (*Sardinops sagax*) to the **European Union** (EU).

This is regarded as a much-needed boost for the sector, as Peru hasn't been able to trade its canned

products since the EU ban.

Deputy Minister Alfredo Ferrero told *Gestión* that the WTO decision "brought a great ray of hope, since the EU represents a very important market for our seafood".

The authorities had filed a claim with the WTO because of the less favourable treatment applied to Peruvian products compared with similar European products, produced with the *Sardina Pilchardus* species.

It took the WTO over a year to disclose the

report by the Special Review Team analyzing the issue.

## **Shellfish grows**

The World Wide Fund for Nature, **Scotland** (WWF Scotland) and the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers (ASSG) have signed a "historic agreement", committing themselves to co-operation on issues of joint concern.

The agreement, signed in October, is a fresh alliance between environmentalists and the shellfish industry. It is aimed at the long-term sustainable development of both the aquaculture sector and rural coastal communities.

According to the ASSG, shellfish farming has a much smaller impact on the delicate West Coast marine environment than its cousin, the fish farming industry.

## **Chinese plea**

**China** has urged the WTO to authorize continued subsidies for aquaculture, responsible for 35 per cent of the global fish production. Chinese delegates at a WTO

meeting on fishing subsidies called for an exemption of fish farming from any decision to reduce government support for the fishing industry.

They said that in developing countries aquaculture is a major contributor to food security and employment.

Negotiations are under way on reforms to trade regulations, including those governing fishing subsidies, that were approved at a WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha in November 2001.

## **Video salmon**

An anti-salmon video, allegedly funded by US environmental groups and the British Embassy in **Chile**, has aroused controversy.

The video, titled *Infinite Growth: The Myth of Salmon Aquaculture in Chile*, alleges environmental and human rights

violations in the Chilean salmon industry and could cause considerable damage in the North American and global salmon market.

## **Smoky fish**

In **Ghana**, the GRATIS Foundation, through the Tema branch of the Intermediate Technology Transfer Unit, has developed an advanced technology for smoking fish that could preserve it for as long as six months without applying any chemical or using the refrigerator, reports the *Accra Mail*.

Fish smoking, drying and salting are old practices. But smoked fish must be consumed within three months because the humid conditions in Ghana make them mouldy.

Ghanian women normally depend on the traditional method of smoking fish using firewood. But with depletion of forests, it has become increasingly difficult for them to get firewood.

Fish smokers now have to travel long distances for firewood or have to buy it at exorbitant prices.

The traditional method is not energy efficient as the fires are burnt openly and the smoke poses health hazards. The new technology has, therefore, been welcomed by the women.

### **EU baits**

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The European Union (EU) has signed a deal with **Mozambique** allowing EU ships to catch tuna and shrimp off the African country's coast for the next three years, reports the BBC.

Prompted by dwindling fish stocks in its own waters, the EU has now bought fishing rights from 15 African countries.

Under the current agreement, the EU will pay Mozambique around US\$4 mn.

In return, 10 European vessels will be allowed to catch up to 1,000 tonnes of shrimp a year for three years.

Forty-nine European vessels will be allowed to fish for tuna, with no limit on the catch.

The EU has rejected claims that the deals will deplete fish stocks vital to poor African coastal communities.

It insists that the cash will help promote sustainable fishing in the region.

### **Mangrice**

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Scientists in **India** have introduced salt-tolerant genes from mangroves to rice and mustard, and the varieties are currently undergoing tests in laboratories, reports the Press Trust of India.

The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation has mapped the

genome of some mangroves and introduced salt-tolerant genes to these plants.

These genetically modified plants are being tested in greenhouses and will become available for farmers in about five years.

### **Ban soon?**

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**Tanzania** risks being banned from exporting fish fillets to the European Union (EU) should the proposed Food, Drugs and Cosmetics Bill sail through in the National Assembly, reports *The Guardian*.

This is likely to cause a crisis for the 2 mn people whose livelihoods depend on the fish industry. The Lake Victoria Fish Processors

Association says that should the Bill be approved by the parliament, EU would reduce Tanzania from List One country to a list of non-compliant countries. That is equivalent to a ban.

The EU wants a traceability regime for fishery products and a quality assurance system for fishing, transport of fish and fish processing. The EU represents over 70 per cent of the market of fresh fish products. The last ban to be imposed on East African countries was in 1999 due to allegations that fishermen were using pesticides to fish.

### **Thai quality**

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The first international-standard seafood trade centre in **Thailand** will open next month in Samut Sakhon province, one of the country's best-known seafood trading areas. It will be the country's biggest seafood trade centre and will guarantee quality and rules on origin and processing. Special chemical-residue detection equipment required by the EU has been installed at the centre. Trade volume at the centre is expected to be 4,000 to 5,000 tonnes per day, with a total capacity of 10,000 tonnes. Thailand uses as much as 1 mn tonnes of raw material for processing seafood

products annually. Its annual seafood exports are worth around US\$4 bn.

### **Freed**

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**Pakistan** has ordered the release of 216 detained Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture, reports PNS. Their boats need to be repaired and it may take some time before they can leave, according to a statement issued by a spokesman of the Pakistan Fishermen Co-operative Society.

India may also announce the release of 32 Pakistani fishermen held in India's prisons. The fishermen were detained over the past year while plying in Pakistani waters off Karachi. The spokesman said the Indian fishermen

would have been released earlier had border tensions between Pakistan and India not escalated late last year after the December 13 attack on New Delhi's parliament. Karachi's Landhi Prison currently holds 270 Indian fishermen, most of whom have been detained in the past 12 months.