



## Monthly Agri-Food News Trend Analysis



This summary highlights agri-food news trends on a monthly basis, providing an analysis and overview of agri-food issues that were of particular interest to the industry.

### September 2006

- **Vietnam Seafood**
- **Organic market growth and label regulations**
- **Government food safety measures**

**September news stories highlighted both Vietnam's seafood import setbacks and considerable industry growth.**

- **Pressure to increase US quality norms for Vietnamese shrimp**  
US-based Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is seeking stricter quality norms for Vietnamese shrimp imported into the US. SSA would like to increase the quantity of shrimp imports to the US that undergo antibiotic testing, which would present a considerable challenge for the Vietnamese shrimp exporting sector.
- **Japan rejects Vietnam seafood consignments**  
A number of Vietnam seafood consignments exported to Japan have been rejected after unacceptable levels of bacteria were found in shipments from several Vietnam producers. It is likely that Japan will begin examining all Vietnam seafood imports.
- **Japan imposes stricter quality norms on Vietnamese shrimp**  
Future tests that revealed high antibiotic residues in four shrimp batches from Vietnam, have led the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare to announce that it would impose stricter quality norms for shrimp imported from Vietnam.
- **Growth and expansion for Vietnam seafood industry**  
Vietnam's dynamic growth in seafood exports, in the first 8 months of 2006, earned Vietnam US\$2 billion. Exports may potentially reach a value of US\$3 billion by the end of the year.
- **High-tech companies capitalize on growing seafood industry**  
Foreign companies, with the high-tech systems needed for Vietnam's marine fishing and fishing fleets, are seizing the development and growth opportunity of Vietnam's seafood sector. In June, a group of Norwegian companies introduced and promoted their technology at the VIETFISH2006 Exhibition.

**Organic agri-food is no longer a trend but an established mainstream market, where there is a need for organic food labeling standards. This market still continues to grow and expand, increasing the necessity for national and international regulations.**

- **CFIA recommends "certified organic" labeling for Canadian farmers**  
A year-end trade deadline from the European Union has led the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to recommend that a "certified organic" label be provided to farmers who adhere to a series of ecologically stable production methods. The labeling aims to clarify and regulate organic foods, and includes production methods such as soil fertility maintenance and forgoing synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

- **Effects of “certified organic” label on Canadian farmers**  
CFIA’s “certified organic” labeling will affect Maritime farmers who will have to adjust to new rules in order to meet national standards for organic crops. While CFIA is tightening current voluntary organic standards, they believe it will aid farmers’ exports to the US and Europe.
- **Concern for devaluation of US organic label**  
US organic farmers and activists are concerned that the US organic label has been devalued and no longer truly reflects food that is produced through environmentally friendly means. There is also concern that big businesses entering the market are further eroding the organic label and any efforts to improve national organic standards and regulations.
- **Italian producers endorse organic labeling and regulations**  
In Italy, organic producers are pushing for organic labeling and regulations which they believe will help support small and medium-sized domestic operations. Such new legislation may create trade obstacles and impede foreign country exports to Italy.
- **Growth in the Czech organic market**  
In the next five years, the Czech organic market is expected to grow 25-30% a year. Annual market growth could be as high as 40% and Czechs may spend approximately CZK1.3 billion on organic products in 2011.
- **Scotland’s first Organic Food Festival**  
The Scottish Soil Association Organic Food Festival (November 4-5, 2006) will be Scotland’s first organic food festival. Organic produce and products from Scotland, the UK, and abroad will be showcased.

***Ensuring food safety and effective traceability was a prevalent government and industry issue in the month of September.***

- **Traceability program for Canadian meat and livestock**  
The Canadian Integrated Traceability Program (CITP) was announced by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. CITP aims to accelerate the creation and integration of traceability systems across the meat and livestock industry.
- **Limited scope of CITP a concern**  
The Canadian Livestock Identification Agency is concerned with CITP’s limited scope, which places priority on cattle and other BSE projects and does not address the needs of all commodity groups.
- **Online tracking system teams up with RFID provider**  
UK-based TraceAll has collaborated with RFID provider, Symbol, to integrate Symbol’s hand-held mobile bar code readers with TraceAll’s online traceability software. The system will be initially available only in the UK, Denmark, mainland Norway and Sweden.
- **Food safety collaboration between New South Wales and New Zealand**  
New South Wales and New Zealand have signed a new agreement to improve food safety by collaborating on policy development, standards and systems, incident response, food science, communications, and compliance and enforcement.
- **Thailand and Germany collaborate on international conference**  
Thailand and Germany will be co-hosting an international conference on food safety and nutrition to assist the creation of new international food standards. Over 100 countries and 38 international organizations will participate.
- **More restrictive US food safety laws**  
After an E coli breakout in the US centered on nine farms in three California counties, the US Food and Drug Administration is looking into the need for tighter food safety regulations.