



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Notice to Exporters of Fish Products

November 2004

For Immediate Release

UNITED STATES INTERIM FINAL RULE ON MANDATORY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING OF FISH AND SHELLFISH

The United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA AMS) published the interim final rule on September 30, 2004 for *Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling of Fish and Shellfish*, under the U.S. Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (U.S. Farm Bill). The interim final rule will become effective April 4, 2005 and will affect the Canadian domestic industry involved in exporting fish products intended for retail sale in the U.S.

Under the interim final rule, farm-raised and wild fish and shellfish sold by U.S. retailers must be labelled to indicate their country of origin and method of production (wild and/or farm-raised). U.S. retailers are those enterprises that sell more than \$230,000 worth of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables annually. The rule also outlines the criteria which must be met to label products as country of origin "United States" and the record keeping requirements for retailers and their suppliers.

Food service establishments are excluded under this rule as are fish and shellfish which are ingredients in a "processed food item." Examples of "processed food items" include cooked, canned, cured, smoked and restructured fish or shellfish. Additionally, frozen fish or shellfish caught or harvested before December 6, 2004 are exempt to allow for utilization of existing inventory.

To obtain a copy of the interim final rule or for the latest information from the USDA AMS on this matter, please refer to the following website: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool>. Specific information concerning the export of fish products to the U.S. can be found on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/fispoi/export/cert10/unietae.shtml>.

The USDA AMS has opened a 90-day comment period, which will conclude on January 3, 2005. Fisheries and Oceans Canada is leading in the coordination and submission of Government of Canada comments on the rule. If you wish input into the Government of Canada's comments to the USDA AMS, please provide your suggestions by December 8, 2004 to Denise Climenhage by e-mail at climenhaged@dfm-mpo.gc.ca, or by fax at (613) 990-9574. For further information, Ms. Climenhage can be contacted at (613) 990-3682.