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Cochran FY 2013 Success Story

Report Categories:

Fishery Products

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

In FY2013, FAS Brasilia selected four Brazilian government inspectors (GOB) to participate in a fishery inspection study tour under the Cochran Fellowship Program. In February 2014, as a result of the knowledge gained and relationships established during the visit, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and FAS Brasilia were able to work with the GOB to negotiate a fish/fishery products health export certificate that meets Brazilian import requirements, opening the door much wider to U.S seafood.

Background:

Brazil is the largest importer of seafood in South America. It imports approximately US\$ 1.4 billion dollars of edible fish and seafood products (Chapters 03 and 1604 of the Harmonized Tariff System - HTS). Major suppliers of fish and seafood products to Brazil are China (about 22 percent of the market share), followed by Chile (19 percent), Vietnam (13 percent), Argentina (9 percent), and Norway (6 percent).

In 2013, Brazil imported 416,624 metric tons (MT) of fish and seafood products. Imports from the United States were 1,653 MT valued at US\$ 2.6 million dollars. Although so far, export volumes is small, the United States is a rapidly growing supplier of fish and seafood products to the Brazilian market.

USDA/FAS is the liaison with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture and the Brazilian Fisheries Department (DIPES) and in this capacity registered 78 U.S. fishery plants during 2012/13. FAS Brasilia also registered 89 labels of fishery products with the Brazilian government authorities in 2013. In January, 2010, the GOB's, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Control published aquatic health regulations concerning fishery products imports. These new regulations are in accordance to World Animal Health Organization (OIE) and World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines which are currently in effect. The purpose of the new regulations is to protect wild and farmed resources and to maintain their health status in order for Brazil to export fishery products to the other countries. The Brazilian regulations request that the export certificates be bilingual with English/Portuguese text and several statements.

Brazil did not have any agreement on a bilingual fishery health certificate with the United States for these products. Exporters and importers needed to provide an official translated version of the health certificate and include attachments with statements required by GOB. The NOAA's Fisheries Seafood Inspection Program (SIP) is the competent U.S. authority for aquatic health certification for wild-harvested seafood exports (live and products) intended for human consumption, as per an MOU between NOAA Fisheries and USDA/APHIS. The NOAA health certificate as it was written was not accepted by the Brazilian authorities until modifications were made based on the product that the U.S. company is exporting. That is, for every shipment, the U.S. exporter had to contact NOAA and request that special attachments be added to the current NOAA certificate.

The purpose of the Cochran group's visit to the U.S. in August 2013 was to facilitate the discussion and to come to an agreement between NOAA and DIPES regarding the bilingual health certificate for fisheries. The Brazilian Cochran delegation included only government inspectors and regulators. The program offered an outstanding chance for both sides to sit down and negotiate a health certificate which allowed for the more expeditious exportation of U.S. fisheries products, allowing U.S. exporters the opportunity to take better advantage of the rapidly growing Brazilian market.

The Cochran Program for Fisheries

General Information:

The Fisheries Inspection Study Tour was overseen NOAA and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and administered by the Cochran Fellowship Program. The program included visits to U.S. fish and fishery plants, most of them located in Seattle and Alaska. The group was accompanied by a NOAA inspector and the FAS/Brasilia Agricultural Specialist.

Dates:

July 28 - August 10, 2013

Participants:

1. Ms. Cláudia Vitória Custodio Dantas, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA), Chief of Inspection Service and Agricultural Livestock, Brasilia, Federal District.
2. Ms. Cristiane Pereira, MAPA, Official Veterinarian Inspector, Joinville, Santa Catarina State.
3. Mr. Lucio Akio Kikuchi, MAPA, Former Chief of Inspection Service for Fish and Fishery Products, Brasilia, Federal District.
4. Mr. Paulo Humberto de Lima Araújo, MAPA, Former Chief of Inspection Service for Fish and Fishery Products, Brasilia, Federal District.

Outlook:

Participants' assessments were very positive. Participants noted that the program increased substantially their overall knowledge on the US. Fishery system/inspections, the difference between voluntary and mandatory standards and the science-based process used to adopt fish standards.

Participants expressed that the Cochran training was critically important in enabling them to perform their duties, providing them with up-to date information on fish and fishery products standards and legislation. In addition, the NOAA meeting, NOAA inspector accompanied visits were crucial in providing information on the way that the audits and inspection are made in the fish facilities/ vessels. The information on fish and fishery products legislation and standards and inspections is being used to train other relevant MAPA staff.

Outcome:

After the Cochran program, FAS Brasilia worked with USDC NOAA to achieve an agreement for the health certificate centered on the bilingual format meeting all Brazil requirements. In January 2014, FAS Brasilia and NOAA received GOB agreement to accept the following final document for U.S. fish

and fishery products that will be exported to Brazil:

Policy: