

SEAFOOD BUSINESS NEWS

Seafood Industry Reclaims Domestic Market

(NAPSA)—The new Gulf Coast Seafood Pavilion is strategically positioned to offset encroachment by imported seafood into the U.S. market. Louisiana seafood and hospitality industry leaders are breaking new ground to meet this challenge. They're constructing the first-ever trade event to showcase domestic product.

U.S. consumer demand for seafood continues to rise, up 25 percent since the 1980s. Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in fact, ranks the U.S. as the third largest consumer of seafood in the world. However, 77 percent of the seafood here is now imported. Unfortunately, imports are

- frequently farmed,
- not always held to the same public health standards as U.S. products,
- sometimes illegally dumped in this country,
- and often cheaper—driving U.S. seafood out of their own markets.

"Exhibiting in the Gulf Pavilion is very straightforward," says Ewell Smith, executive director of the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. "If your seafood is harvested from U.S. waters, you're in."

The Board is partnered with Southwest Airlines Cargo and the Louisiana Restaurant Association (LRA) and is scheduled to unveil the Pavilion at the prestigious LRA Louisiana Food Service Expo in July 2004 in New Orleans. Jim Funk, LRA CEO, is optimistic: "I believe the Pavilion has the poten-



Source: Sara Ann Harris

Hardworking American fishing families are being forced out of business by seafood imports.

tial to grow into a major seafood event, to be held annually in conjunction with the Expo."

The Expo already provides one-stop shopping for over 16,000 qualified buyers and the 2004 show is expected to break records. The Louisiana Board's aggressive promotion campaign is inviting thousands of seafood buyers and executive chefs from across the country via trade journals and direct mail.

To reserve exhibit space for the Gulf Coast Seafood Pavilion, seafood producers are contacting Sandy Riddle, LRA vice president of conventions and exhibitions at 800-256-4572 and visiting www.GulfCoastSeafoodExpo.com.