

# Consumer Corner

## A Jumbo Fight Over Shrimp

by Elaine Knight

(NAPSA)—There is no question about it—the warm Gulf and Atlantic waters of the U.S. produce some of the most succulent, sweetest shrimp ever eaten. However, all shrimp are not alike in taste, texture, safety and price.

Today, much to the surprise of many consumers, as much as 85 percent of the shrimp we eat is an imported product sold at premium prices. And a majority of these shrimp originate from foreign pond farms that do not have to comply with our strict environmental laws.

Most importantly, on March 3, 2004, the General Accountability Office, the investigative arm of the Congress, found that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had only the resources to test just over one percent of the imported shrimp that ends up on our dinner plates for contaminants, including illegal chloramphenicol antibiotic residues.

Consequently, consumers are unwittingly paying top-dollar for what they believe to be wild-caught American shrimp when, in fact, the product is likely to come from ponds halfway around the world. Due to scarce FDA enforcement resources, consumers have no way of knowing whether the shrimp is contaminated or not.

According to an August 19, 2004 report from the National Marine Fisheries Service, shrimp prices declined 27 percent in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fisheries between 1997 and 2002, as imports increased 300 percent. The result of this marketing “flimflam” is that the price U.S. shrimpers are paid is the lowest since the industry started keeping records, while



**Now shrimp lovers can ask for the high quality Wild American shrimp for real value and taste.**

restaurant prices have actually increased. So it comes as no surprise that, in spite of using modern, environmentally sound technology and harvesting techniques, American families who have shrimped for generations are on the brink of economic destruction.

Consumers do have a powerful weapon to get the quality they expect when buying shrimp. They can vote with their wallets and purses. To get sweet, tender, naturally harvested shrimp, rich in omega 3 essential fatty acids, make sure you ask for Wild American shrimp and look for the country of origin label and the Wild American shrimp certification. In doing so you will receive the very best value for your purchase and help preserve a salty way of life that defines entire communities throughout the Gulf Coast and Eastern Seaboard.

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