



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2004

CONTACT: Deborah Regan, National SSA
Spokesperson, 919.361.0273

ITC: U.S. Shrimp Industry Injured by Unfair Trade

Washington, DC – Today the independent International Trade Commission (ITC) unanimously found that there is a reasonable indication that the U.S. shrimp industry is materially injured by the dramatic increase in dumped shrimp imports over the past three years from six countries: Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam. The finding is a preliminary determination set in motion by antidumping petitions filed on December 31, 2003 by the Shrimp Trade Action Committee, an ad hoc group of shrimp fishermen and processors from eight southern coastal states. The U.S. shrimp industry has been alarmed by the unfair pricing practices of the six countries that have caused thousands of job losses and hundreds of companies to close.

“It is not surprising that the ITC found compelling evidence that shrimp fishermen and processors are injured by dumped shrimp. Demand for shrimp is at record high levels, surpassing tuna as the number one seafood consumed in the United States. Yet, U.S. shrimpers and processors are not able to make ends meet due to the increasing amount of unfair trade,” said John Williams, a shrimp fisherman in Tarpon Springs, FL and an officer of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. “If the dumping of shrimp continues, many more family businesses will fail, thousands more employees will be out of work, and many coastal communities will be devastated.”

The National Marine Fisheries Service data proves that shrimp is the most valuable U.S. domestic species landed each year. According to NMFS, the value of the U.S. shrimp harvest plunged over 50 percent (\$690 million) between 2000 and 2002. While the wholesale value of shrimp has dropped to the lowest levels in 40 years due to unfair trade, the Wall Street Journal reported that the average price for a shrimp entrée at major restaurant chains actually *increased* by as much as 28 percent. Consumers have not benefited from the low prices that have injured shrimp fishermen and processors.

“We now look forward to the Commerce Department ruling on the petitions. The evidence that countries sell shrimp in the U.S. at prices lower than in their home or third markets is overwhelming. We’re confident that Commerce will find dumping and order appropriate remedies to unfair trade,” stated Williams.

A variety of financial incentives provided by national governments and international institutions over a number of years have over-stimulated the infrastructure and production of farm-raised shrimp in many of the targeted countries. This overproduction, coupled with import tariffs, controls, and occasional shrimp import bans by the EU means that ever-increasing volumes of foreign shrimp are entering the U.S. market at ever-lower prices.

The Commerce Department is expected to make a preliminary determination regarding dumping on June 8, 2004.

While the U.S. shrimp industry pursues its rights under U.S. trade laws, the Southern Shrimp Alliance is developing a quality certification program and marketing campaign to secure a niche market for U.S. wild caught shrimp.

-SSA-