

PRESS RELEASE

Bord Bia and Irish seafood exporters display sustainability credentials at Asia`s biggest seafood trade fair

Bord Bia and fourteen Irish seafood companies are in China this week, securing new export opportunities for sustainably produced Irish seafood at Asia`s premier seafood event, the China Seafood and Fisheries Expo in Qingdao. Bord Bia`s Origin Green pavilion will provide the launch pad for the Irish contingent to target buyers at this year`s event which is the largest ever with over 1,300 companies from 45 countries exhibiting, and over 25,000 visitors from almost 100 countries in attendance.

Speaking at the event, James O`Donnell Bord Bia`s Director for Asia said that they have a two-pronged approach to attracting new business:

“In the build-up to this event we have built trade awareness events in Beijing and Shanghai, designed to draw increased numbers to the Irish Origin Green Pavilion. In addition to promoting our well established products we have concentrated of new species from Ireland such as brown crab and Irish prawns. We have been educating Chinese consumers through a programme of in-store tastings in a number of supermarket retail chains as well as targeting premium chefs and media outlets through recipes and promotional videos.

Secondly we have invested over recent years in encouraging high-end Chinese retail and foodservice customers to visit Ireland to meet with Irish seafood processors on a one-to-one basis and to see first-hand the excellent environment in which Irish seafood is produced. These visits are very effective in providing a guarantee to Chinese customers on traceability, sustainability, and food safety, all of which are key concerns of the Chinese middle class consumer. Over the past four years we have welcomed more than fifty Asian customers to Ireland on customised itineraries which have directly led to firm orders for Irish seafood processors”.

Market Potential

China continues to be a growing market for Irish seafood showing value growth of over 400% between 2011 and 2014. This strong trend is continuing in 2015 with sales for the first 8 months of 2015 up 11% compared to the same period in 2014.

While the Chinese market has traditionally been important for the sale of pelagic species by Irish seafood producers, in recent years significant effort has been invested by Irish processors and Bord Bia to identify and develop opportunities for premium shellfish, notably for shellfish such as live and processed brown crab, langoustines, scallops, and razor fish. Considerable success has been achieved by a number of the leading Irish shellfish processors in penetrating this market as demonstrated by the strong growth in the value of exports to the region. Exports of Irish shellfish to China, increased in value by 132% between 2012 and 2014 and by 157% to Hong Kong.

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In addition to participation in trade shows, Bord Bia's support for the seafood sector also involves organising trade and media events which build awareness at consumer level, and online sales promotions (TMall & JD.com) which generated additional sales of €250,000 for the sector in 2014.

Future Growth

Bord Bia has ambitious plans to further grow the share of Irish seafood into China and has a number of programmes in place to assist Irish seafood processors in identifying, profiling and targeting new customers that are willing to pay a premium for quality seafood from Ireland.

At Bord Bia's Marketplace International event, which was held in March 2015, some 45 international seafood buyers participated in 3 separate seafood specific itineraries, meeting primary producers and seafood processors in their area of interest. This was followed by one-to-one meetings between suppliers and buyers at the Marketplace International event itself.

Notes for Editors

When the inaugural China Seafood and Fisheries Expo was held in 1996, China's total international seafood trade was worth under €3 billion. In 2013, China's seafood trade has already surpassed €20 billion in value, cementing China's position as the world's leading seafood trading country. Growing incomes and increased urbanisation in the world's second biggest economy have helped fuel a massive growth in demand for imported seafood. The United Nation's FAO projects that China will need an extra 16 million metric tons of seafood by 2020 to meet this growing demand from a swelling middle class, which is expected to reach 500 million by 2020.

Accounting for one-quarter of the world's seafood consumption, China is not only the largest market for seafood but also the largest producer, accounting for 40% of global seafood production and 60% of global aquaculture production. China's staggering growth in per capita seafood consumption rose from 10kg in 1990 to 30kg in 2009, and with its rapidly growing middle class these figures will continue to rise. Irish seafood exports to China & Hong Kong grew by an impressive 49% in 2014 to reach €27m. China plays an important role in maximizing returns to producers, particularly for shellfish as peak season consumption periods differ from Western markets.

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