

With support from industry, Brazil seeks to strengthen the sardine industry

The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA) is committed to implementing public policies to strengthen the national sardine industry, with support from segments of the production chain.

In order to promote this initiative, the MPA organized two meetings with the sector in November and December last year, aimed at workers in the fisheries sector, shipowners and representatives of processing industries.

"Our main focus is to prioritize the domestic production of sardine through a permanent dialogue with the industry and measures to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks and food security for the population," explains Luis Sabanay, head of MPA's Strategic Affairs and Institutional Relations.

Sardine is one of the most popular and most consumed resources in Brazil and other countries. Specifically, *Sardinella brasiliensis*, is listed among the nine species of sardine with highest commercial interest worldwide.

This fish is found in the Brazilian coast, between the states of Rio de Janeiro (Cape São Tome) and Santa Catarina (south of Cape Santa Marta), along 1,000 kilometres of coastline.

Based on what was agreed at the sectoral meetings, the MPA decided to track sardine populations in the coast more closely and continuously. The work is conducted by MPA's Department of Monitoring and Control (SEMOC).

The Ministry will promote a new meeting in April with the sector in Brasilia to present new data on fish stocks and together evaluate the market conditions.

Moreover, the Foreign Trade Chamber (CAMEX) published last December a resolution regarding the tax on frozen sardine importation, reducing the tax from 10 per cent to 2 per cent, considering a quota of up to 30,000 tonnes.

In addition, the deadline for reduced import duty is 30 April 2014.

The industry of canned sardine is one of the oldest and most traditional in Brazil. Currently, there are six processors that employ 20,000 people directly and indirectly, which have a turnover of around BRL 1,240 million (USD 524.6 million).

Due to sustained domestic high sardine consumption, industries plan to invest approximately BRL 400 million (USD 169.2 million) to expand their operations in the next five years, according to the MPA.

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