

US stricter regulations for Vietnamese catfish

The Fisheries Agency and Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers(VASEP) have expressed their concern over a new rule that the United States will apply to Siluriformes fish, including the Vietnamese pangasius (tra and basa fish).

According to the announcement from US authorities, to be applied as from March 2016, all fish included in the ruling will be under the regulatory jurisdiction of FSIS - Food Safety and Inspection Service- and not the United States Food and Drug Administration(FDA).

This means that suppliers will have to meet new production standards, from farming to processing, in order to sell their products on the US market.

Some seafood exporters believe that it will be nearly impossible to adjust to the new measures within the period laid out by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Conversely, Vo Hung Dung, vice chairperson of Vietnam Pangasius Association, says it will be costly and although farmers are willing to fulfil the rule, there is no guarantee they will pass the US authority's scrutiny, the *Thanh Nien Daily* informs.

The officer emphasized that the US' new inspection rules violate World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations, meaning that Vietnam could bring a lawsuit against the US if catfish exports are affected.

While Le Chi Binh, vice chairman of An Giang Province Fisheries Seafood Association, highlighted that the rules are stricter to protect American catfish producers.

According to VASEP, Viet Nam will earn an estimated turnover of 950 million USD from catfish exports in the second half of this year. With this, the country is expected to make 1.7 billion USD this year, four percent lower than last year.

VASEP added that catfish exports to the US dropped recently when businesses had to pay a high anti-dumping tax of nearly 1 USD per kg, bringing about more complications for Vietnamese exporters and American importers.

Source : <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=81187>