

New agreements with China will aid Chilean seafood exports

Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism José Ramón Valente and Minister of Customs of the People's Republic of China Ni Yuefeng signed two protocols that will contribute to the commercial exchange and shipment of fish products to the Chinese market.

The meeting was held last Friday, in the framework of the official visit of the Chinese authority to Chile, and it was also attended by SERNAPESCA national director Alicia Gallardo and Chinese ambassador Xu Bu, among other authorities.

During the meeting, the Chinese minister indicated that the settlement of these agreements takes place within the framework of good political and commercial relations between both countries. "Before coming, I studied the situation of bilateral trade between China and Chile, and the shipment of aquaculture products has increased by 60.6 per cent, which is a brilliant result," he said.

He also highlighted the quality of Chilean food that is exported to China, and indicated that his Government wants to provide healthy products that contribute to the Chinese life quality. In this regard, he expressed his country's interest in "maintaining and improving work processes to ensure the continuity of bilateral trade between the two countries."

For his part, Economy Minister José Ramón Valente stressed the importance of signing both agreements, indicating that China is one of Chile's main trading partners.

"Chile has enormous advantages in the production of food both in the agroindustry and in fisheries, and therefore, having access to the Chinese market for these products has key importance," he said. In addition, he expressed his hope that the same success as the Chilean cherries, which are massively consumed in China, could have fishing and aquaculture products from Chile.

The first memorandum signed between the two ministerial authorities marks the beginning of joint work to establish electronic certification for the shipment of aquaculture products to China. "This is part of a plan that we generated together with the Chinese Authority, in a visit that took place in August of this year and whose objective is to



implement the electronic certification by 2019," explained SERNAPESCA national director.

Gallardo also highlighted the advantages of electronic certification with respect to the current paper certification, since the digital alternative eliminates the risks of counterfeiting, allows traceability of the product from its export until it reaches its destination, reduces processing times, among others.

Rolando Ibarra, head of health and safety at SalmonChile - Intesal, praised the settlement of this agreement "given that it is very important for both China and the other emerging markets in Asia to have fresh products as soon as possible" and this increases Chile's comparative advantages over its competitors. "Being able to offer a product having the quality of Chilean salmon, coupled with having it in an expeditious manner is very important for the industry," he said.

The second agreement will open the Chinese market to the entry of fish oil for human consumption.

"This is a historic milestone for the sector, as it is a long-awaited wish expressed by the national producers," Gallardo said. Approximately 12 producing companies will benefit from this agreement, which should start shipping during next year.

SONAPESCA general manager Héctor Bacigalupo welcomed the settlement of this agreement, which he said had been waiting for some time and which he considers is a recognition of the high standard of the country's processing plants.

Finally, SERNAPESCA director expressed confidence that the settlement of these agreements favours seafood export growth, especially that of fresh salmon.

"We believe that this is an opportunity for mutual benefit because it allows us to offer healthy and good quality products such as our salmon, and for that reason we will continue working permanently." We invited them to come and see our quality control systems in the field, which contribute for our fisheries and aquaculture products to have the highest quality standards worldwide", concluded Gallardo.

China is the fourth most important market for Chilean fishing and aquaculture exports, with shipments that reached USD 425.7 million last year.