

To US Shrimpers, Free Trade Means End of an Era May 13, 2003

Although shrimp consumption in the US has reached an all-time high, shrimpers sense that their traditional way of life could be coming to an end. According to a recent Christian Science Monitor article, cheap foreign imports and environmental regulations are making it increasingly difficult for the US shrimp industry to benefit from Americans' growing appetite for shrimp.

Rising consumption is due in part to the low prices that have resulted from foreign companies dumping shrimp into the market below cost. Today, Asia and Latin America provide 88 percent of shrimp consumed in the US. New regulations, such as those that require increased measures to protect turtles, have also increased shrimper's costs. Though Congress is trying to offset these challenges through subsidization, many family-operated businesses believe they face an uphill battle.

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