



Pangasius buyers too focused on price, not quality

Importers and distributors need to understand the instability of pangasius quality is avoidable, inspection expert tells **IntraFish**.

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Published: 29.10.2014 14:10 Updated:
29.10.2014 13:24

One of the major problems with the pangasius industry is that importers and distributors do not consider quality as an important issue when making purchases, because they do not receive complaints from the market, Jean-Charles Diener, director at seafood inspection and market intelligence company OFCO told **IntraFish**.

Even though many importers are aware of the issues surrounding quality of pangasius products -- whether it be fillets, steaks or HGT -- they know they will probably not receive complaints from their buyers and are therefore not interested, he said.

"Even very big importers are aware about the quality problems around pangasius, but they do not think it necessary to secure the correct quality because even if a part of the product has a significant quality issue or the average quality is not very good, they know that they will probably not receive complaints from their market," Diener said.

To improve the overall image and market situation for pangasius, Diener said importers must first of all focus on sourcing quality fish.

"Final consumers usually do not complain if they do not like the pangasius product they purchased because it is a cheap product with a bad reputation and they don't expect much from it," he told **IntraFish**.

However, according to Diener, what importers and distributors often forget is that to maintain and develop a market, it is necessary final consumers appreciate the product enough to buy the same brand again, and without needing to bring down the price.

In most of the markets, the quality for pangasius keeps falling and distributors need to keep making more effort with lower margins to keep the same volume of sales, he said.

"Importers and distributors for pangasius need to understand that it is necessary instead to focus on quality before they receive negative complaints from their market because those complaints may arrive too late or most probably will never arrive," said Diener.

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In reality importers are well aware of the quality problems but they believe it is unavoidable and they must accept it.

"They observe the quality going down, they observe the quality being unstable but they are persuaded that it is the only option to keep their markets," he said.

But by focusing on quality, importers will find that sales will ultimately increase as will their market share.

"Their brand will become recognized and they can also increase margins and still offer better satisfaction to their clients," he said.

"By securing their purchases properly, they will gain the loyalty of their clients and do what importers want which is to develop a healthy market strategy...and stop the uninteresting strategy which consists of fighting to be always two cent cheaper than the competition, which unfortunately it is the main tendency nowadays."
