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# Expert: Minimum export price 'essential' for Vietnamese pangasius

Strategy will reduce over-glazing and help fish win the ongoing 'propaganda war.'

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Imposing a minimum price on pangasius exports from Vietnam is essential to improve the quality and image of the fish worldwide, Jean-Charles Diener, director at seafood inspection and market intelligence company OFCO told **IntraFish**.

However it must be done properly and reflect the reality of the sector in Vietnam and on the main markets for pangasius.

Already several actions have being taken in Vietnam to improve the quality of pangasius and restore its image, but “those actions are too weak or/and not adapted,” said Diener.

The Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) "already tried to impose a minimum price but without conviction and proper tools and without the power to oblige exporters to respect it,” he said.

Authorities in Vietnam have also imposed a maximum glazing level of 20 percent, which could be reduced soon to 10 percent, as well as taken action by controlling the level of moisture and phosphate used in the industry.

“But without important means, it is not possible to control glazing, moisture or phosphate level,” claims Diener. “However it is urgent to face the problem and find real solutions to restore the image of this wonderful product.”

Diener and VASEP both agree: the minimum export price is the best first step.

“But acting on the price is not easy," Diener told **IntraFish**. "Vietnamese official authorities must be involved and prices must be established to reflect the reality in Vietnam and on the main markets for pangasius."

Therefore, markets requesting cheap product should be allowed to buy with any glazing level they want, as long as the prices are in accordance with the glazing rate indicated on documents and packaging, which is “very easy to control," he said.

However, on the other hand, by imposing a maximum glazing rate without controlling the price, exporters and importers “do not have any other choice but to under evaluate the glazing rate on document and packaging."

With a minimum price that is respected, importers and distributors will be more confident and more able to develop a decent marketing and sales strategy.

Then, by increasing the prices step by step in accordance with market acceptance, Diener believes this will even help to increase the volume of exports and “everybody will be on the winning side.”

Diener said a minimum price should be fixed for the four main kinds of trimming possible with interleaved packing: untrimmed, semi-trimmed, half-trimmed and well-trimmed. Some minimum extra cost can be expected for more expensive packing, such as IQF or IVP, he noted.

The glazing rate indicated on packaging and documents could help to reduce the price accordingly, offering a fair and healthy competition.

“Once the minimum price is followed, then [...] we could start to develop efficiently some marketing strategies and increase the quality of pangasius,” said Diener.

“Vietnamese farmers, processors and exporters could finally stop to be victims of the strong and wrong propaganda against pangasius and also stop being played by worldwide organizations imposing their certificates which most of the time do not bring any good to the pangasius industry.”

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