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Press Release

Nov. 8, 2012, 11:01 a.m. EST

Chinese Activists to Canadian Fishing Industry: Stop the Seal Hunt or Face Seafood Boycott in China



DALIAN, CHINA, Nov 08, 2012 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- On November 6, 2012, the opening day of the 17th China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in Dalian, Northeast China, a large Canadian fisheries delegation met with a strong protest from Chinese activists. More than 30 Chinese activists converged in Dalian from different cities across China, and presented to the Canadian exhibitors an open letter asking the Canadian fishing industry and government to stop viewing China as a dumping ground for the cruel seal products. A huge banner reading, "Canada, Stop Seal Hunt or Face Seafood Boycott in China" caught the attention of hundreds of exhibitors and visitors in the crowded international section of the Expo.

"The Canadian government is making a colossal mistake in promoting seal products in China," said Dan Zhang, a Beijing based activist, upon learning of the protest in Dalian. "China will never become a dumping ground for products of cruelty that have been rejected by Canadians and the world community alike. Given commercial fishermen are killing the seals in Canada, it is not surprising that the backlash against seal product trade in China is now spreading to Canadian seafood. Chinese activists are determined to launch a nationwide boycott of Canadian seafood products unless Canada stops marketing seal products in our country."

The China Fisheries and Seafood Expo is the largest international exhibition event in China. It attracts hundreds of fisheries traders from Asia, Europe and North America. Foreign exhibitors represent some 50% of the attendees. Canada sent a sizable delegation led by the Canadian Agriculture and Fisheries Ministries. Seal meat and seal organs were listed on the product info sheets of some Canadian exhibitors.

According to the Chinese sources, Canada is China's 5th largest seafood supplier. In 2011, China imported over \$352 million worth of Canadian seafood, far outstripping the value of the seal trade between the two countries. "It is terribly unwise for Canada to risk a disruption of the normal trade between the two countries by imposing seal products, which are derived through terrible cruelty to animals, on the Chinese market," said Qin Xiaona, director of Beijing's Animal Welfare Association.

Protesters did not just focus on the Canadian exhibitors. They approached most other foreign exhibitors as well. "We want businesses from other countries to know that the Chinese people are not irresponsible consumers," remarked an activist from Shandong. As a country with spotted seals, a Chinese indigenous and endangered species, the Chinese protesters also feared that Canadian seal trade with China could encourage illegal hunting of the Chinese seals. To Tian Jiguang, director of the Chinese Society for the Protection of the Spotted Seals, Canada has a moral responsibility to be sensitive and not to promote seal trade.

Click here (http://media3.marketwire.com/docs/Photos_of_protesters.pdf) to view photos of Chinese activists protesting the Canadian fisheries delegation at the China Fisheries and Seafood Expo in Dalian, Northeast China. (credit:JGT 2012)

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