

Dear Colleagues,

Late last week the Seafood Inspection Program became aware of proposed new seafood labeling requirement by the European Union through the Department of Commerce Fisheries Representative in Brussels Mr. Stephane Vrignaud.

Mr. Vrignaud reports as follows:

*“The European Council of Ministers agreed yesterday on the EC proposal re-shaping the Common Organization of the Market (CMO). On specific part will affect our industry and that’s the “consumer information” chapter. Concretely, the compromise text clarifies in particular mandatory consumer information on product marking and labeling. Mandatory information includes now the gear type used in wild capture fisheries and the requirement of a more detailed indication of the catch area. A list of gear types has been established at technical level, you will find it on the document below. The Commission is also requested to report on the way forward concerning EU-eco-labels for fishery products.*

*Common Organization of the Markets (Articles 35-39 and Annex III):*  
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st12/st12005.en13.pdf>

*These new labeling requirements will apply as of **December 13, 2014**. Fishery and aquaculture products and their packages which were labeled or marked prior to that date and which do not comply with these requirements may be marketed until such stocks have been used up.*

*In addition to these requirements coming from DG MARE, we have new labeling rules coming from DG SANCO regarding the “freezing date” and more specifically the ‘date of first freezing’.*”

This rule, if adopted will probably have a major impact on companies that export fish and fishery products to the European Union. The Seafood Inspection Program will be submitting comments on this proposal and invite the industry to submit your comments to us so we can collate them into one package and properly represent any concerns that you may have with this proposal. We will need your comments no later than November 15, 2013. Please send them directly to me at [timothy.hansen@noaa.gov](mailto:timothy.hansen@noaa.gov).