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PRESS RELEASE

Boston Seafood 2011: over 500 sea food products certified by Naturland

Organic fish – a boon to mankind and the environment

Graefelfing – Intensive fish farming in cages, the destruction of natural landscapes, the overfishing of our waters and anti-social working conditions are topics raised ever more frequently in connection with the fishing industry. On the occasion of the Boston Seafood Show, which opens on 20th March, Hans Hohenester, an organic farmer and chairman of the Naturland board of directors, states: “Intensive conventional aquaculture, which is increasing rapidly, is unnatural, not sustainable, and contaminates our waters with chemicals and antibiotics. It is imperative that the industry rethink its strategy and adopt the principles of organic aquaculture”. Today consumers the world over can already find over 500 products containing organic fish and organic seafood certified by Naturland. In Boston, Naturland will be presenting alternative concepts for organic and sustainable aquaculture.

Fish stocks and the environment pushed to their limits

Fish and seafood are prized as suppliers of valuable nutrients, vitamins and fatty acids and it is hard to imagine a balanced diet without them. The growing world population and the increased consumption of food of animal origin have, however, pushed fish stocks and the environment to their limits. The current status is that 80% of the economically most important fish stocks have been completely exploited, overfished or exhausted, according to FAO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. Aquaculture, too – often lauded as the “blue revolution”, with enormous growth rates – is confronted with various problem areas: industrial fish farming with excessively high stocking rates, which need to be corrected by the massive use of chemicals and veterinary medicines, are the order of the day. The destruction of natural habitats, and the anti-social working conditions in some southern countries, are further problem areas which cause the consumer to hesitate before purchasing farm fish.

An alternative with a future: organic aquaculture and sustainable fisheries

It is almost 15 years now since Naturland developed its organic principles for aquaculture and played an important role in the drafting of the EU eco-regulation on aquaculture. Strict standards and certification procedures ensure organic and sustainable production. Among the criteria are, for example, low stocking densities, regeneration of valuable natural habitats and the prohibition of chemical additives and genetically manipulated plants in fish feed. Besides this, social criteria are imposed for the treatment of the employees of the Naturland members. From organic shrimps from Vietnam to organic trout from Germany, Naturland offers a wide range of products from organic aquaculture.

In 2007 Naturland passed its standards for sustainable fisheries/wild fish and initiated a pilot project for Lake Victoria perch with traditional fishers in Tanzania. The criteria applied include the sustainable use of existing fish stocks, abstention from critical fishing methods, high social standards for fishermen and -women and employees, and organic processing to the Naturland standards. To provide the consumer with clear information on the source of the products, Naturland has designed its own “Naturland Wildfish” logo.

The production, processing and export of fish and seafood are important sources of income for many southern countries, and these can only be maintained by practising organic and sustainable forms of production. Consumer awareness of this principle is growing daily. It is the responsibility of trading partners from the north to impose clear quality criteria as an incentive for their suppliers to adopt these principles.

At the international trade fair for fish and seafood, over 1,000 exhibitors from all parts of the world will be presenting their products from industrial fishing and from aquaculture. You will find the Naturland fish experts at the Boston Seafood in booth 287.

Naturland promotes organic agriculture throughout the world. With its 53,000 farmers and over 500 manufacturers as Naturland partners, it is one of the major organic associations. As a forward-looking association, Naturland regards organic competence and social responsibility as interdependent.

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