

## Sysco, WWF deal a big boost for 'green' seafood

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Sysco's plan to develop new sustainable-seafood sourcing strategies for the major species it sells could lead to improvements in fisheries and aquaculture around the world, Meredith Lopuch, WWF's deputy director of sustainable seafood, told IntraFish.

Lopuch is the architect of a deal announced Thursday between Sysco Corp., the largest foodservice distributor in the United States, and World Wildlife Fund to jointly develop a strategy for sustainable seafood sourcing.

The two groups have been negotiating for about a year, and Sysco's size and influence in the industry could be a big boost for sustainable seafood programs, she said.



WWF's Meredith Lopuch is hoping Sysco's influence will help boost sustainable seafood sourcing throughout the industry.

"We're excited to be working with them because there is an opportunity, once we do this pilot phase and identify the strategies for moving [Sysco's] source fisheries forward, that those strategies could be tangible, very ambitious and will help lead the industry as a whole to more sustainable seafood sourcing practices," said Lopuch (pictured).

Sysco's annual seafood sales are near \$2 billion (€1.5 billion). The company operates 180 distribution facilities serving more than 400,000 foodservice customers. For fiscal year 2008, the company generated more than \$37 billion (€28.2 billion) in total sales.

"Given that they are a large company, they may have the ability to influence some of the fisheries that they source from in a way that will be very meaningful," said Lopuch.

Sysco has revamped its sourcing policies in recent years to combat seafood fraud, but the company has until now avoided endorsing or participating with any high-profile sustainable seafood initiative.

Under the agreement, WWF will assess the sourcing of Sysco's top 10 branded seafood species and work with the company to develop strategies that build on its efforts to move toward sustainable seafood sourcing.

Sysco will provide financial support for WWF's shrimp and salmon dialogues. Both Lopuch and Sysco's senior vice president of quality assurance, Craig Watson, declined to specify the level of financial support offered by Sysco.

Through the dialogues, WWF and stakeholders are developing standards aimed at minimizing negative environmental and social impacts associated with aquaculture.

WWF said it will work with Sysco's to effect a change in practices across the supply chain, and encourage fisheries to achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability standards.



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