Detention of Food Exported from Indonesia to the USA by FDA in 1998

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural products are expected to survive as export commodities under severe economic crises. Such an expectation could not be fully achieved due to the fact that some Indonesian food commodities exported to USA were held under detention by FDA. The detained food products were mostly cocoa beans, canned tuna, frozen shrimp and fish. Cocoa bean detention was due to the presence of filth and foreign objects, while for frozen shrimp and fish were due to the presence of filth, inadequate sanitary handling, and Salmonella contamination. Detention of canned tuna shipments due to the presence of filth, decomposition, no accompanying canning schedule process document, or no compliance with the labeling requirements. Especially for cocoa bean export to USA up to present Indonesia has been subjected to automatic detention. Quality management and food safety, against the potential Indonesia export commodities should be improved to be able to compete in global market.

INTRODUCTION

Under the current economic crises export of agricultural product is becoming the most important sector to generate foreign currency for Indonesia. The increasing value of U.S. dollar against rupiah to some extent has resulted in a tremendous profit for food exporters which utilizing local agricultural product as raw materials. In 1998 the U.S. imported 2.1 billion dollars of agricultural, fish and forestry products from Indonesia. Indonesia was the fourth largest exporter of agricultural, fish and forestry products to the U.S. after Canada, Mexico and Thailand (Table 1). The data also indicate that coffee beans, cocoa paste/butter, processed fruit and vegetables, spices, shrimp and tuna represent the major exported agricultural and fish products (Table 2).

<p>| Table 1. U.S. imports of agricultural, fish and forestry products in 1998-1999 (in thousand of dollars) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importer</th>
<th>Yeast</th>
<th>Sugar</th>
<th>Milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>13,844,780</td>
<td>13,821,440</td>
<td>6,533,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>3,508,474</td>
<td>4,555,371</td>
<td>8,777,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>3,217,880</td>
<td>2,850,201</td>
<td>2,058,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>8,668,336</td>
<td>2,006,846</td>
<td>8,198,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,077,001</td>
<td>1,810,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Republic of China</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>899,721</td>
<td>1,021,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>507,240</td>
<td>730,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>665,795</td>
<td>759,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>517,073</td>
<td>11,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4,869,177</td>
<td>17,664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Trade Data.

| Table 2. Import of agricultural, fish and forestry products from Indonesia in 1998-1999 (in thousand of dollars) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Calendar Years (Jan-Dec) | 1998 | 1999 | 1998 | 1999 |
| Cocoa Beans | 94,311 | 45,351 | 122,150 | 155,011 | 204,312* |
| Tea (Herb/Tea) | 116,910 | 11,840 | 116,910 | 11,840 | 116,910 | 11,840 |
| Tropical Oils | 45,641 | 72,130 | 77,300 | 116,839* | 58,769 |
| Other Vegetable Oils | 0 | 51 | 24 | 50 | 39 |
| Essential Oils | 13,724 | 12,810 | 11,797 | 23,739 | 35,209* |
| Coffee Beans & Green Beans | 10,692 | 11,797 | 23,739 | 35,209* |
| Shrimp (Bd, Crayfish) | 1,546 | 1,449 | 1,449 | 1,449 | 3,895 |
| Beef, Meat, Poultry | 2,773 | 3,060 | 4,648* | 6,312 | 2,301 |
| Processed Fruit & Vegetables | 6,230 | 4,575 | 14,614 | 7,035* | 65,778 |
| Peanut & Vegetable Oils | 2,380 | 3,150 | 7,493 | 13,101* | 3,648 |
| Soy Beans | 6,497 | 2,081 | 1,803 | 3,573 | 35,209* |
| Refined & Unrefined Oils | 10,382 | 15,047 | 11,120 | 16,800* | 13,253 |
| Spices | 8,437 | 112,435 | 112,435 | 112,435 | 112,435 |
| Shrimp | 101,381 | 58,573 | 150,815 | 188,392* |
| Lobster | 31,337 | 49,589* | 43,470 | 57,445 | 43,470 |
| Other Fish & Fishery | 32,404 | 43,310 | 32,404 | 32,404 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census Trade Data.

* Denotes highest import levels since at least 1970.
Information detention of food exported from Indonesia, however, might not be widely recognized by government agency and the food manufacturers. Since December 1997 the USFDA has imposed another regulation on imported fish and seafood. The regulation mandated that fishery-product intended for export to the U.S. should be handled, processed, packed, and stored according to Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. It has been reported that 599 detention notice has been issued by the FDA to imported food from Indonesia. Some of the detained food products should be destroyed, re-exported, or reconditioned for different purpose (Rahardjo, 1998). This has caused significant loss of foreign earning.

The objective of this paper is to evaluate non-conformance of exported food to the U.S. according to existing imported food quality and safety regulation enforced by the FDA. For that purpose the data presented here was based on detention report between May and August 1998. In addition, comparison has also been made to evaluate the number and season of detention food exported from Thailand and Philippines to the U.S. during the same time interval.

**DETECTION RECORDS**

The United States of America is considered to be a big market of food exported from various part of the world. In 1988 the U.S. imported food from more than 100 country around the world. Asian countries contributed that fishery-product intended for export compared with other groups of country. Among the Asian countries China had the highest number of detection records, followed by Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and Philippines (Table 3). Australia, Canada, and Germany, represent developed countries, also had detention records issued by the FDA. This indicates that food quality or safety non-conformance is also a problem for developed countries. The incidence, however, was much less than that of developing countries. Within period of May to August 1998 Indonesia has recorded an increasing number of detention. This has raised our concern because too little effort has been done to address the recurring problem and it was also too slow. Related government agency seem to be unresponsive to work with food processors to eliminate these problems.

Among food imported to the U.S., fish and sea food, processed fruits and vegetables, and herbs and spices processed the highest detention records (Table 4). This could be related to the volume of the imported products. In addition, these group of Food products may mostly originate from developing countries.

**Table 3. Food from selected countries of origin detained by FDA at port of entry in the period May-August 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Exporting Country</th>
<th>Number of detention (May-August 1998)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>25, 20, 19, 25</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>120, 136, 143, 164</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>50, 90, 114, 78</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>117, 132, 241, 108</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>123, 94, 128, 132</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>56, 86, 81, 100</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>149, 138, 150, 152</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>144, 180, 144, 144</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>16, 27, 23, 27</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>39, 83, 84, 97</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>People Rep. for China</td>
<td>326, 357, 347, 314</td>
<td>1,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>22, 24, 45, 23</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>130, 127, 155, 91</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>143, 194, 166, 166</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>95, 72, 114, 148</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>19, 39, 37, 26</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 4. Number of detention classified into food groups in the period May-August 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Number of detention (May-August 1998)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cereal and Starch</td>
<td>44, 79, 65, 55</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Macaroni and Noodle</td>
<td>3, 14, 19, 24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>4, 9, 7, 7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fish and seafood</td>
<td>379, 501, 434, 356</td>
<td>1,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>120, 109, 118, 683</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vegetable products</td>
<td>386, 361, 344, 140</td>
<td>1,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Meat products</td>
<td>4, 1, 2, 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Herbs and Spices</td>
<td>108, 85, 75, 62</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Soft drink</td>
<td>25, 33, 33, 29</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tea and Coffee</td>
<td>5, 10, 14, 8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Confectionary</td>
<td>42, 36, 60, 96</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cocoa bean and Cocoa products</td>
<td>22, 22, 25, 68</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Soup</td>
<td>11, 9, 18, 75</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Food additives</td>
<td>7, 4, 1, 28</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COCOA BEANS

Indonesia is one of the big exporters of Cocoa beans to the U.S. and the figure in 1998 was not less than 200 million dollars. The growing value of Cocoa beans export, however, was also accompanied by the increasing number of automatic detention (Table 5). Cocoa beans detention in 1997 indicated that the number of detention reached its highest point in September. This could also be the case for the detention records in 1998. It seems the high number of detention was directly related with the peak season of harvest in August.

Other Cocoa beans producing countries such as Ivory coast, Brazil, and Papua New Guinea also exported their product to the U.S. Their detention records, however, much less than that of Indonesia. For example, among 68 detention cases in August 1998, 52 out of it originated from Indonesia. In addition, the reason of detention of Indonesian Cocoa beans were more serious than other countries (Table 5). The presence of Salmonella in Cocoa beans indicate the poor hygienic condition of the environment and manufacturing practices.

Table 5. Number and Reason of detention for Cocoa bean exported from Cocoa producing countries in the period of May-August 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Exporting Country</th>
<th>Number of detention (May-August 1998)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Reason for Detention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>6 2 18 18 52 100</td>
<td>Filthy, lack of Foreign inspection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>New Guinea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall number of detainee (case reported) | 22 22 25 68 103 |

FISHERY PRODUCTS

Detention records on fish and seafood were not only issued to developing countries, but also delivered to developed countries. The number of detention, however, was higher in fishery products exported by developing countries than that of developed countries (Table 6). The reason for the detention was mostly due to the presence with the existing quality standards. Another reason for the detention was due to the presence of pathogenic bacteria such as Salmonella or Listeria and toxin contamination. The presence of these contaminants could pose significant food safety hazards to consumers. Many of the fishery products were found to have irregularities in its label, list of ingredients, net weight, name and address of manufacturers. This irregularity is easier to be corrected than the non-conformance on the quality and safety specifications. Most of the labelling mistakes were found in canned fish products, while Salmonella and Listeria were found in frozen shrimp or fish. Listeria contamination in fishery products is less likely to be found in tropical countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines.

Table 6. Number and reason of detention of fishery products exported by selected countries in August 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Exporting Country</th>
<th>Number of Detention</th>
<th>Reason for Detention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unsafe food additives, poison, integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Filthy, manufacture not registered, unsafe food additives, foreign object, misrepresentation, labeling, net name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Filthy, no name and address, nutrition label, foreign object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, foreign object, poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Filthy, no name and address, no net content, no English label, nutrition label.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poisonous, Listeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>No schedule process, no registered manufacturer, Listeria, no name and address, no net content, no English label, no usual name, nutrition label, no list of ingredients, poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, no schedule process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Poisonous, no name and address, no net content, nutrition label, filthy, Salmonella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, foreign object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, no name and address, nutrition label, no net content, nutrition label</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MISCELLANEOUS PRODUCTS

Indonesia's export of exotic agricultural products is limited to canned fruit and vegetables. On the other hand, Thailand capable of exporting more diversified exotic products such as tamarind in the form of whole and ...
Frozen, juice, young trays, paste, and candy (Table 7). The Philippines showed its diversified products from coconut which include coconut milk, juice, candy, desiccated, shredded, grated and nata de coco. These are coconut products that Indonesia is lacking, beside plenty of coconut is being produced. This is also true for tamarind products. Therefore, tamarind and coconut products in Indonesia deserve a higher priority to be managed to compete in the global market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Food Product</th>
<th>INDONESIA</th>
<th>THAILAND</th>
<th>PHILIPPINES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Coconut (raw)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Color additive label, unskimmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Coconut (milk)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Preservative label, no schedule process, manufacturer not registered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Coconut (juice)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Coconut (desiccated)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unsafe address, excessive salting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Coconut (crystal)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Coconut (young, shredded)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Staining, sulfite label</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Coconut (grated)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Coconut (gelatin)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Excessive sodium, no schedule process, no list of ingredients, false labeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Tamarind (candy)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fatty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Tamarind (candied)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fatty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Tamarind (juice)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fatty, manurary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tamarind (paste)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fatty, Soured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Tamarind (whole, leenoo)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fatty, no schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Tamarind (young leaves)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fatty, no schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Palm Sugar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Palm Fruit</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unsafe coloring, excessive sugar, no schedule process, sulfite label</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Rice Products</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fatty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Bamboo Shoot</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>No schedule process, manufacturer not registered, inadequate acidification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Jack Fruit</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Excessive sulfite, no schedule process, inadequate acidification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Cabbas bean</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Fatty, Salmotrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Collins bean</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fatty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Egg Products</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Salmotrella, no list of ingredients, no schedule process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. | Name of Food Product | INDONESIA | | | THAILAND | | | PHILIPPINES | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Fish (roast)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, presence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, Listeria</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, unstable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Fish (cooked)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>To schedule process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Fish (dried)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Filthy, foreign object, no list of ingredients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Shrimp (frozen)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Insanitary, filthy, Salmonella, foreign object</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Salmonella, foreign object, filthy, insanitary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Salmonella</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Shrimp (cooked)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Filthy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Salmonella, filthy, foreign object</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Shrimp (dried)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insanitary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Snail (cooked)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manufacturer not registered, as schedule process, nutrition label, suspect content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FDA (1988b)

**CONCLUSION**

Detection of fishery products was mostly due to the presence of filthy, oxin, and Salmonella, while cocoa beans and other food products were detected due to the presence of filthy, foreign objects, and Salmonella. The detention by the FDA of food imported from Indonesia over the past few years should be placed as the first priority by manufacturers, exporters, and regulatory agencies. A nation-wide and systematic measure must be planned and strictly implemented so decrease or eliminate the number of detention in the future. The fact that attention notices have been issued to other Asian countries should not be used as an excuse for us to take no action.

**REFERENCES**


