

On Thursday, September 20, 2012, PBS News broadcast a story concerning human rights and child labor abuses at shrimp production facilities in Thailand. The story focused on abuses in a network of unregistered peeling sheds that employ undocumented migrant workers from Burma that supply shrimp to large processing plants in Thailand.

This is not the first time we have been made aware of these allegations. The USA State Department has for three years singled out the Thai shrimp industry as perpetuating trafficking and labor abuses in their annual Trafficking in Persons Report. We take these allegations extremely seriously.

Mazzetta Company ensures that our supply chain is free of labor abuses, and we have consistently maintained that it is unproductive to condemn the entire Thai industry. Instead, we have advocated that those bringing allegations forward name specific companies involved in an effort to give responsible USA shrimp importers something tangible to act on. In this case, the PBS investigation did just that. Using a worker with a hidden camera, PBS uncovered child labor in a peeling shed that the worker claimed was sent to one of Thailand's largest shrimp companies, Thai Royal.

This was extremely disappointing news to me because for over a decade Thai Royal has been among Mazzetta Company's shrimp suppliers. From the beginning of our relationship, they were well aware of our policies regarding worker's rights and quality control. Our internal quality specifications require that all overseas suppliers use only head-on shrimp from known sources with complete traceability back to the pond and an explicit requirement that forbids the use of peeling sheds. In light of information uncovered by the PBS investigation, we will not conduct further business with Thai Royal until they can adequately address these allegations and assure us that our specifications are being met.

Let me be unequivocally clear, Mazzetta Company will not tolerate labor abuses or modern day slavery in our supply chain. Our products are as much about the people involved and the means by which they reach the marketplace, as the products themselves. Our overseas suppliers know with great certainty that we do not purchase products

from unregistered companies. We do not purchase products from companies who employ undocumented workers or child labor, and we do not purchase products without full traceability. These are conditions of doing business with Mazzetta Company and they are not negotiable.

As many of you may know, the USA State Department recently recognized Mazzetta Company for our leadership in the effort to rid global seafood supply chains of forced labor. Our commitment in this regard is unwavering. We will continue to monitor this situation and offer our full support to governments, NGOs and other industry leaders who are working to eradicate child labor, human trafficking and forced labor from global supply chains.

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