

Big Picture Report: May 2022
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A Close Look at the Global Seafood Industry

Of the many things that makes Southern U.S. cuisine famous around the world, fish and seafood certainly rank high on the list. From Gulf shrimp to Chesapeake blue crabs, from oysters to catfish, to the many fin fish varieties landed across the Southern coastline, the world loves Southern U.S. fish and seafood.

Indeed, the SUSTA region is a top seafood producer in the U.S. Six SUSTA States rank in the top 10 in aquaculture production, and three States rank in the top 5 in total commercial seafood landings. Not surprisingly, seafood is perennially one of the top products promoted by Southern companies through SUSTA activities and typically nets millions of dollars in sales.

That's why it was so great to be back with a SUSTA pavilion at the Seafood Expo Global – the world's largest seafood exhibition – during the last week of April. I had the privilege of accompanying our SUSTA exhibitors along with three Members of our Executive Board, Commissioner Sid Miller of Texas, Commissioner Rick Pate of Alabama and Commissioner Joseph Guthrie of Virginia.



Seafood plays such an important role in SUSTA's overall export performance from year to year, the Executive Board wanted to be on hand at the return of this premier global industry event. Seafood Expo Global has been missing from our program for the last couple of years due to COVID, but is now back and was held in Barcelona, Spain for the first time ever. Spain is a key market for seafood and the Expo presented the perfect opportunity to learn more about the market, industry and supply chain there.

In addition to going to the trade show, we toured seafood counters at retailers throughout Spain, browsing both local catch and imported goods. However, perhaps most interesting was a trip to the seafood market at 5:30 am to see the day's catch and watch the logistical art of keeping all of the products chilled and fresh. Further, a visit to the Port of Barcelona gave us insight into the logistics needed for imported chilled seafood to move safely into the port and join the supply chain in Europe.





The Expo, however, is a truly global event, reaching far beyond Europe. It is certainly a not-to-be-missed event for any seafood exporter or importer. At this year's show, the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service Trade Offices in Ghana and the Côte d'Ivoire brought a delegation of buyers from Africa to SUSTA's pavilion, expanding the reach for our SUSTA company exhibitors.

This year's show did not disappoint. The organizers reported more than 26,000 attendees from around the world. Despite a drop of buyers from Russia and China, the Expo was still bigger than the last Expo held in 2019 in Brussels. Feedback from our exhibitors was positive – the show earned a perfect rating – five on a scale of one-to-five – from all of the participants, who also projected significant sales to result from participating in the SUSTA pavilion.

It was great to be back to business as usual at a large, top tier trade show, with strong buyer interest. It was a great way to start off our 2022 seafood marketing program, building momentum into some other great opportunities, such as the Seoul Food and Hotel show in Korea next month, the Seafood Expo Asia later this year, and a couple of inbound buyers' missions from Latin America into Miami this September. If you are a seafood company, check out these events on your [MySUSTA account](#).