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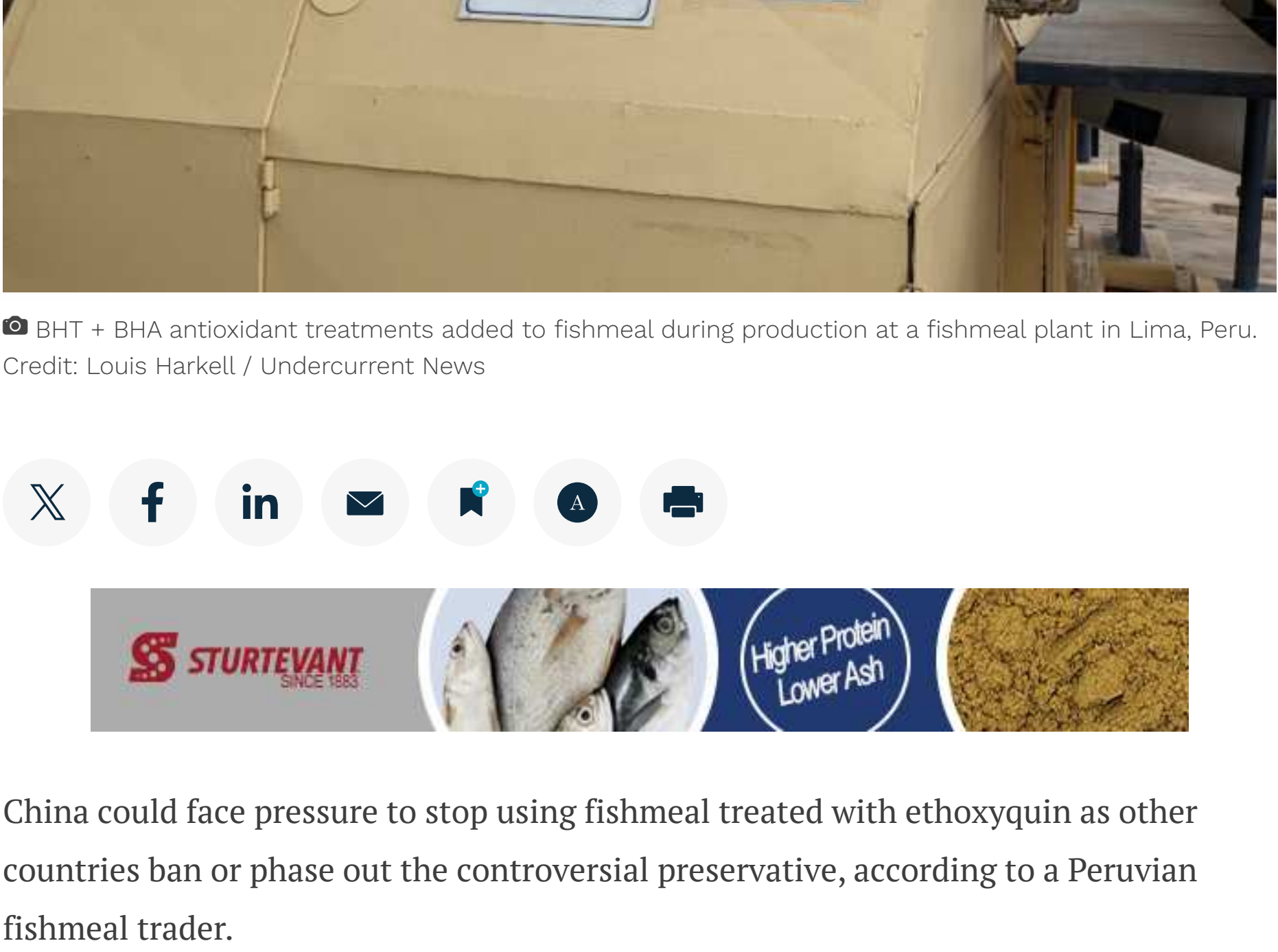


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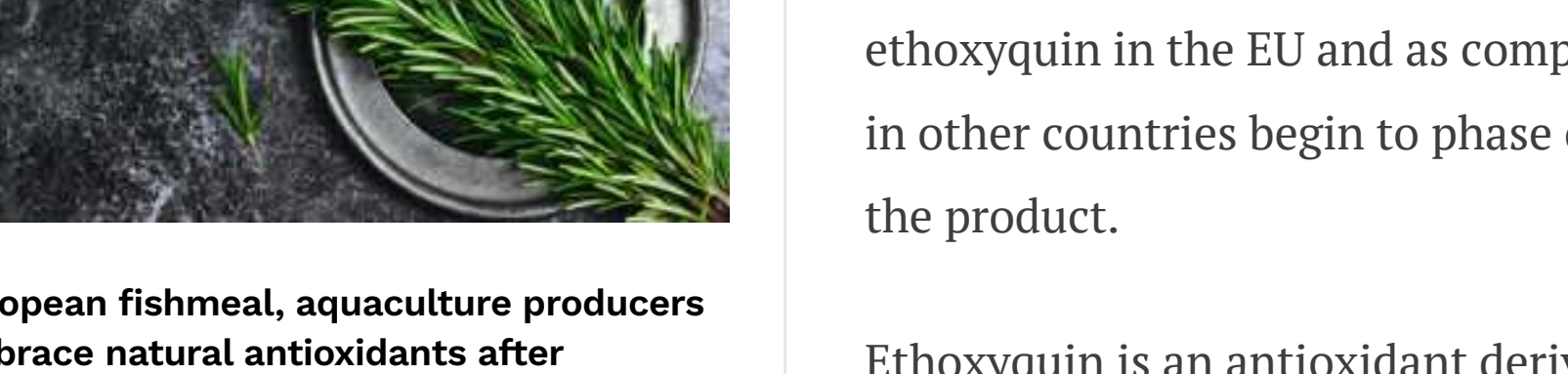
China may face pressure to ditch ethoxyquin-treated fishmeal, says Peruvian trader

'More and more destinations are not accepting ethoxyquin... soon enough, we will all see China have to follow suit' -- James Frank, managing director of MSICeres

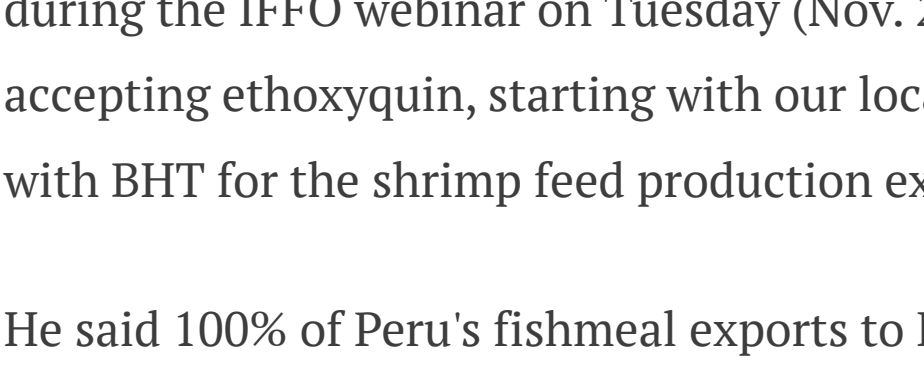
By [Louis Harkell](#) | Dec. 2, 2022 09:34 GMT



 BHT + BHA antioxidant treatments added to fishmeal during production at a fishmeal plant in Lima, Peru. Credit: Louis Harkell / Undercurrent News



China could face pressure to stop using fishmeal treated with ethoxyquin as other countries ban or phase out the controversial preservative, according to a Peruvian fishmeal trader.



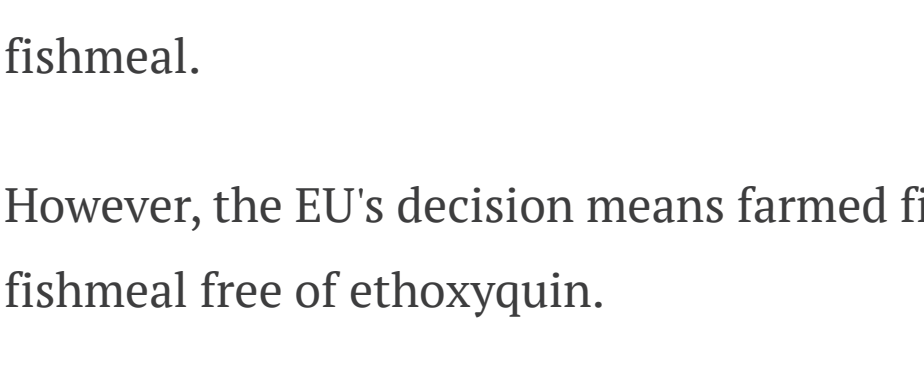
European fishmeal, aquaculture producers embrace natural antioxidants after ethoxyquin furor

James Frank, managing director of MSICeres, said that China -- the world's largest consumer of fishmeal -- could become an outlier in continuing to use the preservative since the ban on ethoxyquin in the EU and as companies in other countries begin to phase out the product.

Ethoxyquin is an antioxidant derived from petrochemicals that prevent omega-3 fatty acids from oxidizing.

"The EU has now definitely banned ethoxyquin and BHT [butylated hydroxytoluene] and BHA [butylated hydroxyanisole] have become the optimal way to go," said Frank during the IFFO webinar on Tuesday (Nov. 29). "More and more destinations are not accepting ethoxyquin, starting with our local Peruvian market, which consumes fish with BHT for the shrimp feed production exported and locally used as well," he said.

He said 100% of Peru's fishmeal exports to Europe, Canada, the US, and Australia are now ethoxyquin-free. In Europe, companies in UK and Norway -- countries outside the EU -- have also stopped using the product. The countries instead use fishmeal treated with BHT and BHA, alternative synthetic antioxidants.



Concern over high levels of feed additive banned in EU in Tasmanian salmon

"Vietnam is now requiring more BHT as well. Soon enough, we will all see China have to follow suit," he said.

In August, the EU officially denied the reauthorization of ethoxyquin in all animal species and categories through regulation 2022/1375 of the European Commission. The ban followed a suspension in 2017 that prevented ethoxyquin's use in the EU until further notice.

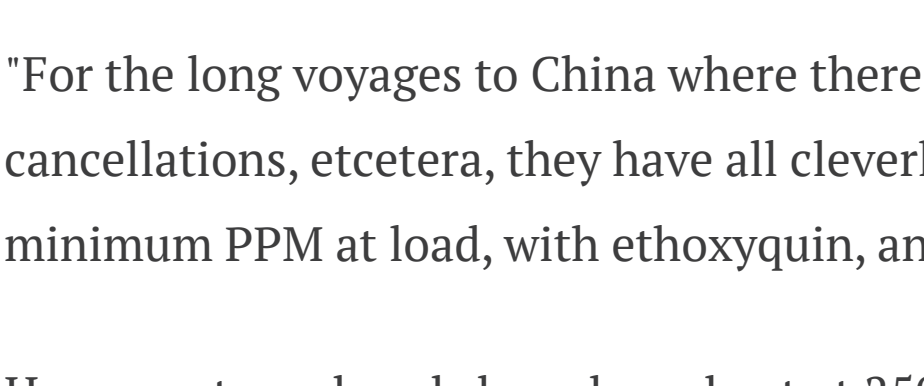
European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) said data was lacking regarding the carcinogenic impurity p-Phenetidine. EFSA could not say definitively p-Phenetidine found in farmed fish products was in quantities safe for humans and longer-living animals, such as dairy cows, it said.

Other options for China

Ultimately, Chinese buyers will decide what antioxidant treatment they want on their fishmeal.

However, the EU's decision means farmed fish imported from China must also be fed fishmeal free of ethoxyquin.

Frank said China had already bought fishmeal treated with BHT from Peru, the country's largest supplier. This was typically after batches were redirected from other BHT-focused markets.



Concern over high levels of feed additive banned in EU in Tasmanian salmon

"We have already loaded Peruvian fishmeal with BHT to China, as some production earmarked for BHT markets ended up being sold to China," he said.

However, more expensive alternatives like natural antioxidants, such as tocopherols from rosemary extract, may be shunned by Chinese importers. Natural antioxidants are typically less effective, more difficult to handle and "extremely expensive" for Peruvian

producers, noted Frank.

That could change if prices of natural oxidants continue to fall. According to IFFO, natural antioxidants [are now used widely in Europe and picking up in North America](#), and so are being produced in greater quantities.

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has also lowered levels of ethoxyquin and BHT required for seaborne transport, said Frank. Fishmeal exporters are now required by IMO to use a minimum 50 parts per million (PPM) of ethoxyquin in fishmeal (and 100 for BHT or BHA) before shipping.

Frank said Peru "cleverly" didn't reduce ethoxyquin's prescribed levels in fishmeal for transport, keeping levels at 150.

"For the long voyages to China where there is transshipment, congestions, rollovers, cancellations, etcetera, they have all cleverly decided to continue with the 150 minimum PPM at load, with ethoxyquin, and with BHT the same as well," said Frank.

However, tocopherols have been kept at 250 PPM, which in theory, makes natural antioxidants even less competitive with ethoxyquin and BHT on price, given more is required to be added to fishmeal before shipment.

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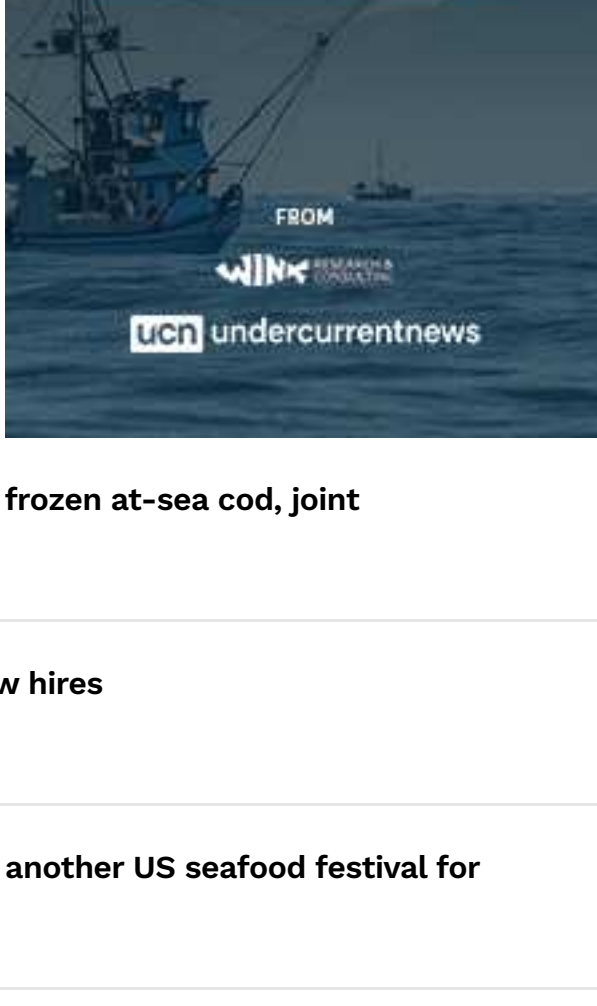
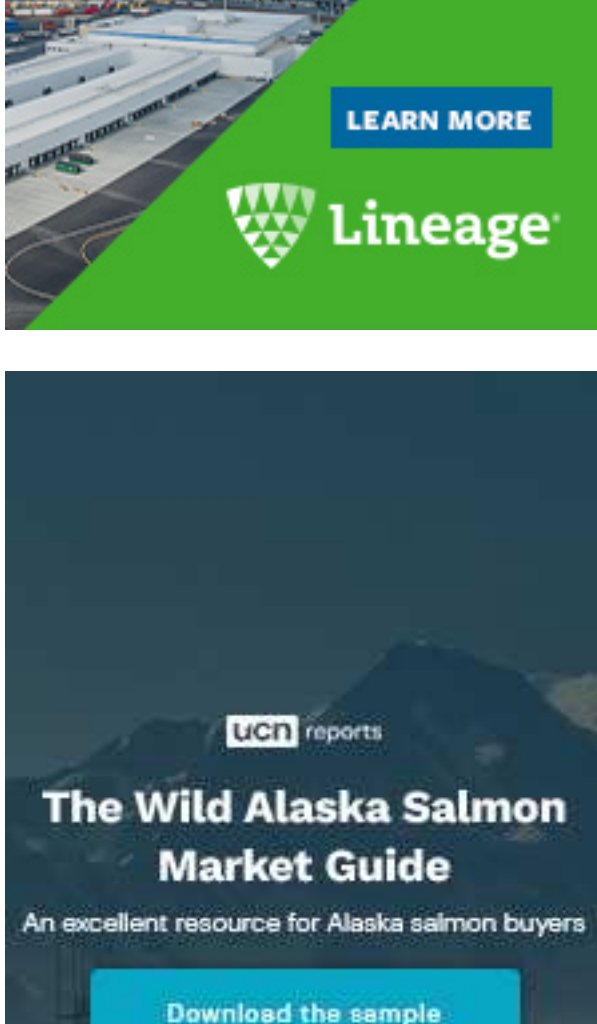
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