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PREMIUM

Ruggiero Seafood cuts ties with Chishan Group

By Cliff White

January 17, 2024



Ruggiero Seafood has decided to cut ties with the Chishan Group – a seafood processing company based in China that has been tied to the use of forced labor involving members of the Uyghur ethnic minority group.

The Newark, New Jersey, U.S.A.-based supplier, which sells products under its Fisherman’s Pride brand, [was named in an Outlaw Ocean Project investigation](#) as sourcing from Chishan subsidiary Rongcheng Haibo.

The Chishan Group – a major Chinese seafood firm responsible for producing as much as 17 percent of processed squid imported by the U.S. from China – was linked by the investigation to vessels alleged to have used forced labor and the employment of Uyghur labor at its processing facilities. Importing seafood with such ties is illegal under the U.S. Uyghur Forced Labor Protection Act (UFLPA).

“Ruggiero Seafood Inc., a proud fifth-generation family business renowned for its unwavering dedication to delivering top-quality seafood products, is addressing recent concerns surrounding certain Chinese seafood suppliers, commonly known as the ‘Chishan Group,’ and [its] alleged involvement in unethical practices,” Ruggiero Seafood said in a statement. “At Ruggiero Seafood Inc., we consider ethical and responsible sourcing practices to be fundamental values that guide our operations. We prioritize the highest standards for our suppliers and believe in the importance of transparency and accountability.”

The company said it made the decision to discontinue placing orders with the Chishan Group in late August 2023. It said it will continue to source from its other Chinese partners “until the allegations cast against Rongcheng Haibo can be adjudicated.”

“Our proactive approach ensures that our seafood products exclusively originate from reputable and responsible sources,” it said. “All our overseas suppliers undergo a comprehensive vetting process to guarantee compliance with rigorous international standards and regulations. We take pride in importing products only from suppliers who have earned approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and hold BRC certification.”

In its statement, Ruggiero Seafood addressed its customers, saying it hoped to assuage concerns about its own supply chain.

“In conclusion, we want to emphasize that Ruggiero Seafood Inc. shares your concerns regarding ethical practices within the seafood industry,” it said. “Our resolve to provide our valued customers with seafood products of the utmost quality, backed by the strictest ethical principles, remains unwavering.”

Photo courtesy of Ruggiero Seafood



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