

US FDA hits Choice Canning with three shrimp import refusals

Choice Canning is one of three Indian companies and one Chinese firm to have their shrimp denied entry into the US over adulteration-related concerns

By [Jason Huffman](#) | May 7, 2024 09:55 BST



Vannamei from India. Credit: Archer Dec24/Shutterstock

Add import refusals by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to the list of troubles plaguing the Choice Canning Company, a big Indian shrimp packer and trader.

The FDA, over the weekend, identified Choice Canning Company Unit II, a division of Choice Trading Corp., as one of at least three Indian companies and one Chinese business for which it has stopped 15 shrimp import lines chiefly over adulteration-related concerns.

Choice had three entry lines refused for shrimp contaminated with veterinary drug residues by the federal agency's West Coast office on April 4, show FDA online records.

Other Indian companies to have their shrimp refused entry include Kader Exports, Unit 5, and B-One Business House. Kader had one entry line refused by the FDA's West Coast office for containing nitrofurans, veterinary drug residues and filth on April 12. B-One had one entry line refused on April 2 by the FDA northeast office for containing nitrofurans and veterinary drug residues.

Shandong Tongxing Foodstuffs Co., a Chinese company, had 10 entry lines of breaded shrimp refused for being contaminated with veterinary drug residues and unsafe additives by the FDA's West Coast office on April 12, 2024.

Choice already is facing scrutiny following allegations of falsifying documents, knowingly shipping antibiotic-positive shrimp to the US, and mistreating workers, made by the Outlaw Ocean Project (OOP), the same investigative journalism outfit behind earlier findings of forced labor in China, as reported by [Undercurrent News](#).

OOP published a report in March in which it shared evidence provided by Joshua Farinella, a former general manager at Choice Canning's Amalapuram factory in Andhra Pradesh, who joined in October 2023. The company has denied the allegations, though lawmakers in both chambers of the US Congress have demanded investigations and tariffs, as also reported by [Undercurrent](#).

The company, in its response to the OOP investigation, made a claim that it can no longer argue; that no Choice Canning shrimp shipment has ever been rejected by the FDA for testing antibiotic-positive.

The firm runs two screening processes for antibiotics. Shrimp that has tested positive on an initial screening has tested negative on second "more vigorous" screenings, the company said.

US domestic industry on the attack

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA), a trade association that represents the harvesters and processors of wild-caught US shrimp, is drawing attention to the latest action taken against Choice. SSA, in a press release issued Monday, noted how the FDA stopped a total of 89 seafood entry lines in April.

"All four exporters currently operate under Best Aquaculture Practices certifications," SSA said.

SSA said it received data from the FDA in response to a Freedom of Information Act that indicates that, through the end of fiscal year 2023, the agency sampled had just 21 shipments of shrimp from Choice Canning since fiscal year 2002.

"Thus, over a span of more than two decades, the FDA had, on average, subjected less than one shipment from the company to the United States each year to testing for banned antibiotics," it observed. "In sum, the example of Choice Canning once again highlights the difficulty faced by the FDA in preventing antibiotic-contaminated imported seafood from reaching US consumers at the extremely low levels of testing currently conducted by the agency."

The SSA, in March, submitted a petition to the Department of Labor's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking to have Indian shrimp added to two lists that identify products produced with the use of child or forced labor, as reported by [Undercurrent](#).

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