

The shrimp aquaculture industry in Thailand has maintained its significance to the Thai economy. This export-oriented product, particularly the USA and Japanese markets, has played an important source of foreign earnings to the country, meanwhile, keeping competitiveness in the world market. Although the shrimp exportation from Thailand tends to be well-performed, there are recent barriers with regards to trade, particularly non-trade barriers relating to food safety and environmental issues, which may affect the export competitiveness and sustainability of Thai shrimp in the international market. Factors that play an important part to promote export competitiveness and sustainability are export performance of Thai shrimps in the world market and roles of related organizations in the industry.

The exportation of Thai frozen shrimp to the world from 1989-1998 showed high export performance and export specification ratios. However, the trend of export competitiveness has been declining. Considering the biggest two importing countries, market share of Thai shrimp has been decreasing in Japan due to higher export price compared with those from other Asian countries especially Indonesia. The market share in USA, on the other hand, showed the largest in 1998. Demand of Thai shrimp in the USA depends positively on the US price index, as a substitution of shrimp in the USA. In addition, the recent multilateral and bilateral regulations relating to food safety and environmental conservation are accused of being non-tariff barriers which the exporters have to maintain great awareness.

The role of related organizations, acting as driving agents, namely, shrimp farmers and their association at the farm level, marketing enterprises including local enterprises, and multinationals, and the public policies, has played a significant part in maintaining the competitiveness and strengthening the sustainability in both domestic production and trade. Their interaction through participation in technological transfer, managerial know-how, regulation control, and marketing networks is able to help ensure food safety as well as generate environmental-friendly practice to continue the competitiveness in the international market and keep sustainability in both domestic production and trade.