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Contact:

Glenda Beasley

Media Relations

512.750.5199

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Everything is Bigger and Better in Texas, Including Consumer Fraud 60% of Galveston and Kemah Restaurants Found Serving Imported Shrimp While Implying Texas Wild Caught

Galveston, TX — A recent investigation into seafood labeling practices at restaurants in Galveston and Kemah revealed significant seafood fraud, with troubling implications for consumers, local shrimpers, and the regional economy.

Genetic testing conducted by SEAD Consulting has exposed widespread seafood mislabeling in the Galveston and Kemah dining scene, where more than half of the tested restaurants (59%) were found to serve imported shrimp despite claims, implications, or menu descriptions suggesting they were offering Texas wild-caught Gulf shrimp.

Key Findings from the Investigation:

Mislabeled Shrimp is Rampant: Out of 44 restaurant samples tested, 26 restaurants were confirmed to be serving imported, farm-raised shrimp, rather than Gulf shrimp as implied, through using a Rapid ID Genetic High Accuracy Test (RIGHTTest).

Deceptive Menu Practices: Several of the sampled restaurants explicitly advertised Gulf shrimp on their menus yet were found to be serving imported farm-raised varieties instead.

Higher Costs for Fraudulent Dishes: Shrimp dishes falsely labeled as Gulf shrimp were priced higher than the average pricing on genuine Gulf shrimp dishes.

Tourist Misinformation: Restaurants used misleading marketing, imagery, or descriptions to imply their seafood was locally sourced, giving diners—particularly tourists—the false impression that they were enjoying authentic Gulf shrimp.

Implications of Fraudulent Practices:

1. **Threat to Galveston’s Shrimping Heritage:** The local shrimping industry has been a cornerstone of Galveston’s history and economy. Mislabeling threatens the livelihoods of honest shrimpers, tarnishing a tradition that defines the region.
2. **Unfair Economic Disadvantage:** Restaurants falsely claiming Gulf shrimp profit unfairly at the expense of ethical competitors and Gulf shrimp suppliers, undermining an already challenging industry.
3. **Erosion of Consumer Trust:** Fraudulent practices deceive diners, many of whom willingly pay a premium for what they believe is high-quality, locally sourced Gulf shrimp.
4. **Ethical Issues:** Farm-raised imports have been associated with environmental damage, slave labor, and poorly regulated chemical usage.

“The local Gulf shrimp we pull in is now sold for less than \$1.00 per pound, when it used to be \$3.00 a pound, because of these deceptive practices. A 60% fraud rate is not shocking to me, but I’ll bet diners have no idea how much they are being duped”, said Galveston Commercial Shrimper and Texas Shrimp Diva Nikki Johnson-Kunz.

The Path Forward

The investigation highlights the need for accountability in seafood sourcing and dining transparency:

- **Technology to Combat Fraud:** Tools like SEAD’s Rapid ID Genetic High-accuracy Test ([RIGHTTest](#)) can help restaurants and regulators ensure shrimp authenticity and consumer confidence.
- **Public Awareness:** Increased consumer knowledge is crucial in promoting fair practices and supporting restaurants that serve authentic Gulf seafood.
- **Stronger Regulations and Enforcement:** Clearer guidelines and enforcement measures are essential to safeguard local industries and ensure fair competition in the restaurant marketplace. The [FTC regulates consumer fraud](#) on a national scale. Local Texas legislators are currently behind other Gulf states like [Louisiana](#) and [Alabama](#) for having local shrimp regulations and enforcement in place for mislabeling.

Local Heroes Serving Authentic Gulf Shrimp

The following restaurants have been confirmed through RIGHTTest rapid genetic testing as serving genuine Gulf shrimp, setting an example for others in the region:

1. Benno's Cajun Seafood
2. Black Pearl Oyster Bar
3. BLVD Seafood
4. Coopers Landing
5. Fish Company Taco
6. Gaido's
7. Katie's Seafood House
8. Kritikos Grill
9. Little Daddy's Gumbo Bar
10. Mario's Seawall Italian
11. Miller's Seawall Grill
12. Outriggers
13. Nick's Kitchen & Beach Bar
14. Sunflower Bakery & Café
15. Shrimp N' Stuff
16. The Gumbo Diner
17. The Spot
18. Yaga's Café

“We take pride in supporting local shrimpers because it's a better-quality product and is what we are promising on the menu. We are in a time where Americans are concerned about where their food sources are coming from in general, and rightfully so. Anyone who's serving imported shrimp and calling them local should take a good look in the mirror and start doing the right thing. It's not hard to source local shrimp. It's pathetic for restaurants to be using imported shrimp and portraying them as local. There's not enough of a price difference for anyone to be doing that”, said Raz Halili, Owner of Prestige Oysters and Pier 6 Seafood (a restaurant not tested but known by wholesalers to source and purchase Gulf Shrimp and label appropriately).

Conclusion

The investigation's findings serve as a wake-up call for stronger measures to combat seafood fraud in Galveston and Kemah. By promoting transparency, raising consumer awareness, and supporting local industries, the region can reclaim its reputation for authentic Gulf seafood and protect the livelihoods of its shrimpers.

About SeaD Consulting

SEAD (Seafood Development) Consulting works with diverse stakeholders — seafood producers, academia, governmental agencies, and environmental organizations — to foster innovation and sustainability throughout the sector, bridging commercial fishery

science with testing and processing technologies to combat seafood mislabeling and substitution fraud.

For more information about the investigation and how you can support ethical seafood sourcing, please visit www.seadconsulting.com or contact us at sead@seadconsulting.com. #SEADConsulting

Consumers are encouraged to contact SeaD Consulting <https://www.seadconsulting.com/contact-us> to report suspected fraud in their area.

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