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## **Exciting new Fair for Life fair trade certified products on the market The Market of Fair Trade Certified Products is Diversifying through Fair for Life Fair Trade Certification**

Weinfelden, 16.10.2012 – In 2012, Fair for Life has further increased its scope of fair trade certified products. It is exciting to observe that more and more ethical companies with products that have so far not been considered as classical fair trade merchandise are increasingly taking steps to enter the fair trade market and contribute to widening the impact of Fair for Life certification.

In June 2012 biodegradable Fair for Life certified, fair traded bags have become available. An Indonesian company, purchases tapioca starch from hundreds of rural households in Indonesia, who are organized into a farmers group. The tapioca starch is produced by sun-drying cassava roots bought from a local smallholder farmers group. The operator cooperates closely with the farmers and the processing unit, with its core mission being the social and economic empowerment of the community. The starch is polymerized and then used for producing bags and other products from the film. Plastic bags are individually designed by the customer, printed at the factory and sold to the US market (Whole Foods Market, amongst others).

In August 2012 another interesting product joined the movement new and innovative fair trade products on the market. Pacific white shrimps (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) has been certified Fair for Life Fair Trade, becoming not only the first Fair for Life shrimp certification world-wide but also the first time an animal aquaculture product could be certified Fair for Life. It is a huge achievement for the producer, who was persistent in convincing the trade chain to convert processing to be in compliance with the strict social responsibility criteria of Fair for Life Fair Trade Certification. It was not an easy task and took almost five years, but all the more remarkable is the success of the producer, who is not only Fair for Life certified but also carries EU organic, Naturland, and Soil Association certificates and BioSuisse approval, which demonstrate responsible aquaculture practices.

In general, working conditions in production and processing are often precarious in the aquaculture industry world-wide, with low wages paid and with inappropriate working conditions. This is one of the reasons why so far no other fish or shrimp aquaculture operator achieved Fair for Life certification. The Ecuadorian company has been a pioneer in taking up the challenge to convert its production and convince its partners in the trade chain to do likewise. "This is hopefully an example that provokes imitation by many other producers and processors of aquaculture products, because it shows that despite all difficulties inherent in the industry, positive change is possible and pays off" states Julia Edmaier, head of the Social and Fair Trade Department at IMO-Switzerland.

Fair for Life has been developed by the Swiss Bio-Foundation in cooperation with the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) to create an opportunity for all producers and products to become certified fair trade. It has gained quick acceptance in high quality markets worldwide. IMO is one of the first and most renowned eco-certifiers with its head office in Switzerland and local representatives and offices in more than 35 countries.

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