

Finally... Ocean Garden for sale

By Congelado sin cabeza

After a series of internal and external debates during the last three years, regarding the convenience and feasibility of selling the Mexican owned company specialized in shrimp marketing in international markets, with a strong presence in the USA, Mexico's Bank of Foreign Trade, BANCOMEXT, holder of the shares, is officially taking bids for the company's shares.

Those who do not have a broad knowledge of the Mexican fisheries idiosyncrasy, may react to this piece of news with indifference and in certain cases, it may even have seemed obvious. Why had this sale not occurred before? Nonetheless, those who are imbued in Mexico's shrimp fishing environment, at least for the last 20 or 30 year, this transaction could seem unbelievable.

Not withstanding the historical events of the Mexican fishery, and besides any ethical judgment, in this story, Ocean Garden has been the company that has marketed Mexican shrimp mainly in the US market. When speaking about Mexican shrimp, I do not refer to shrimp caught in Mexican territorial waters and which could be marketed by one, two, three or four companies, that is, I do not refer to shrimp as Mexican in the geographical sense, but rather in the sense of shrimp belonging to the Mexican people.

Now, Ocean Garden being a company owned by the Mexican Government, and in a certain way, by all Mexican citizens too - at least in Mexico's own idiosyncrasy - the shrimp marketed by Ocean Garden also belong to all the Mexican people, precisely when shrimp becomes part of the company's inventory and therefore, the most important issue is that since this is a such a type of company, it should not pursue any profits, and therefore, it is committed



to offer to me, a Mexican fisherman, the highest market prices and the best conditions of purchase and, of course, it will purchase all the shrimp I produce, whenever I produce shrimp.

Without a doubt, once Ocean Garden is sold to the business sector, this will change in practice and in time, in the idiosyncrasy of the country's shrimp fishermen and producers. The question is, "What will be the social cost that has to be paid for it?"

The answer to this question can not be provided without first answering other interesting questions that deserve an analysis. When we asked the actors of the Mexican fishing industry what they thought about the sale of Ocean Garden, we found a myriad of answers, as broad as the different socioeconomic and cultural levels of the participants. Nonetheless, there is a response in form of a question, that can summarize the trends of the opinions in this respect and which is, "What is the reason of the sale?"

The sale due to the lack of profitability would be something understandable for the remainder

of the population that does not partake in the fishing industry and that understands that an unprofitable company paid by public funds is a great mistake. Nonetheless, if it were sold under these conditions, the sector's participants would deem it is like dismantling a business in which much has been invested and that has had losses due to mismanagement and carelessness.

On the other hand, if it is sold because it is very successful, this would not be understood by the remainder of the population that would approve of the sale of a company that can benefit marketing the product of small producers that would have no access to international markets by themselves, and if this does not cost, so much the better. For the industry's actors, their situation would be in relation to the position

under which they would have to participate, that is, if they are able to, they can purchase it, but otherwise, they would be left without a successful company which, in the end, belongs to all Mexican citizens.

Lastly, Ocean Garden's value, that is, what its potential purchasers are looking for is the penetration of their brands in the US market, precisely now that shrimp has become a "commodity". How much would it cost to develop a brand such as Ocean Garden which has been in this market for 48 years, with present prices, with present costs and with the present level of competition?

We will not know the answer for the time being. In the meantime, we will continue keeping you posted on the events and... prepare your check book... just in case.

Finalmente... Ocean Garden a la venta

Por Congelado sin cabeza



Excelencia en Productos del Mar desde 1957

Después de una serie de debates internos y externos en los últimos tres años sobre la conveniencia y viabilidad de la venta de la paraestatal mexicana especializada en la comercialización de camarón en los mercados internacionales, con fuerte presencia en los EE.UU., el Banco de Comercio Exterior de México, BANCOMEXT, tenedor de las acciones, ha puesto en licitación oficialmente los títulos de la empresa.

Para quienes no tengan un conocimiento amplio de la idiosincrasia de la pesca mexicana, la noticia puede parecer indiferente y hasta en ciertos casos, obvia, ¿Por qué no se había realizado esta venta antes? Sin embargo, para los que están sumergidos en el entorno pesquero de camarón en México, por lo menos en los últimos 20 ó 30 años, esta operación pudiera parecer inverosímil.

Independientemente de los acontecimientos históricos del devenir pesquero mexicano, y al margen de todo juicio ético, Ocean Garden ha figurado en esta historia como la empresa comercializadora del camarón mexicano principalmente en el mercado estadounidense. Al hablar del camarón

mexicano, no me refiero al camarón que se pesca en aguas territoriales mexicanas y que se pudiera comercializar por una, dos, tres o cuatro empresas, es decir, no me refiero al sentido geográfico del camarón como mexicano, sino al sentido de pertenencia del camarón por los mexicanos.

Ahora, siendo Ocean Garden una empresa propiedad del Gobierno Mexicano, es en cierta forma de todos los mexicanos también, al menos así es en la idiosincrasia propia de México. En este sentido, el camarón que comercializa Ocean Garden también va a ser de todos los mexicanos justo al entrar éste a los inventarios de la empresa, y lo más importante, como es una empresa de todos los mexicanos, la cual no debe de tener fines de lucro, está obligada a ofrecerme los mas altos precios del mercado y las mejores condiciones de compra. Ah! y a comprarme todo el camarón que produzca y cuando lo produzca.

No cabe la menor duda que al venderse Ocean Garden al sector empresarial, estos conceptos van a cambiar en la práctica, y con el tiempo en la idiosincrasia de pescadores y productores de camarón del país. La pregunta es: ¿Cuál será el costo social que se tendrá que pagar por ello?