



MEDIA RELEASE: 18 November 2015

Australian Seafood Strengthens Australia-China Partnership thanks to Free Trade Agreement

November has been a very productive and exciting month for the Australian Wild Abalone industry and the Australian seafood industry as a whole. On Monday 9th of November parliament passed legislation to enact the China Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) and on Tuesday the 10th of November, the inaugural Australian Wild Abalone Innovative Cuisine Design Competition was held in Beijing.

The competition was developed by the Australian Wild Abalone industry in partnership with the China Cuisine Association to showcase how premium Australian produce can be partnered with Chinese culinary skills to result in spectacularly good food!

The partnership with the China Cuisine Association is a key part of the Australian Wild Abalone (AWA) program which has been established to capitalise on the opportunities created through ChAFTA which will result in tariffs being reduced to zero over four years on some of Australia's best and highest value seafood exports such as Rock Lobsters and Abalone. These industries currently contribute \$1.2 billion to Australia's GDP and importantly provide over 8500 jobs in rural and regional Australia.

For Australian seafood producers, the prospect of significant growth for this important export market, is estimated to grow to \$750million per annum for Abalone and Rock Lobster alone and as such, a fully implemented agreement is welcomed.

The AWA program was developed following six years of research into the China market with the assistance of the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.

Australia produces about half of the total wild harvest abalone globally with 4000 m/t harvested in 2012/2013 with a value of \$186 million (FOB).



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The competition, held on the 10th November, aimed to inspire Chinese cuisine and catering industries to use AWA in unique and innovative ways. It also aimed to enhance young Chinese chefs' culinary skills and knowledge of the qualities of AWA. To enter the competition, chefs were required to submit photos and descriptions of their dishes on line.

An impressive 115 entries were received from 81 chefs throughout China during September and October 2015. These entries were put through a rigorous judging process by a distinguished panel of culinary judges. Ten chef finalists were selected and competed with each other in a cook-off at the Jinsong Vocational School in Beijing. Each finalist produced their best Australian Wild Abalone dish in an exciting live competition show-down.

The winning chef, Mr Zhu Jie who created Australian Wild Abalone in plum juice and black rice, was announced at the awards ceremony dinner and, along with the other finalists, was declared AWA's official Chinese Chef Ambassador.

As part of the exciting competition prize pool, Mr Zhu Jie and the 10 finalists will take part in an Australian Gourmet Adventure during March 2016 where the Chinese chefs will visit abalone producing states in Australia and experience first-hand where the product comes from, how it is harvested and how it is processed and packed. They will also experience and have the opportunity to meet Australian chefs and experience some of Australia's famous tourist attractions.

This prize has been proudly support by the Tasmanian Government, Department of State Growth.

Dean Lisson, Chief Executive of the Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd and Executive Chairman of the Abalone Council Australia Ltd said the competition also sparked a formal request from Chinese restaurateurs to visit Australia as part of a formal delegation with the China Cuisine Association.

Mr Lisson said, "This is great news for the Australian wild abalone sector but also for other Australian primary producers."



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“China has a long history and tradition in the culinary arts. Australia has a similar history and tradition in producing fine quality, safe, sustainable, nutritious and, even more important, tasty wild caught abalone. The competition allowed both of us to showcase our skills and knowledge and form a strong partnership that provides a fantastic platform to further promote the special features of AWA and our relationship with China”.

He added, “The conclusion of the ChAFTA will help us to maintain this momentum and secure the future of our industry as exporters of premium seafood. Right now we are feeling really positive about the future”.

For more information:

- www.australianwildabalone.com.au
- www.awachina.com.cn

To arrange interviews and photos for Australian media, please contact the following representative from Honey and Fox Pty Ltd:

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