

Advancing Human Rights in the Thai Fish Supply Chain: 2019 Progress Update

We find it unacceptable that forced labor and other serious human rights issues persist in many industries and supply chains around the world. In Thailand, public reports have documented risks and instances of debt bondage, document and wage retention, and dangerous working conditions in the seafood industry.

In 2016, Mars Petcare began activating our [Human Rights Action Plan](#) focused on the fish supply chain in Thailand. This is an update on progress and key learnings to date.

In our Human Rights Action Plan, we outlined our aims to:

- Establish traceability mechanisms
- Understand working conditions in factories and on vessels
- Build trusted relationships with suppliers, government and civil society partners

While we are advancing toward our goals, we have experienced first-hand the complexity and long-term nature of this work. We have also learned several lessons along the way that give us a better understanding of how we can advance respect for rights in our Thai fish supply chain and influence broader change across the industry.

1. Human rights issues in the fishing sector in Thailand are deeply rooted, complex and require major, systemic change. There is not a quick fix.
2. Businesses at every level of the supply chain must take responsibility for their employees and the improvements needed to ensure their rights are respected. This means they should conduct human rights due diligence and strengthen management systems to identify, address and prevent human rights issues. Currently, few businesses have robust systems in place.
3. Ensuring respect for rights requires a strong enabling environment – existing laws need to be enforced with additional regulations implemented where needed.

As outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, governments bear the primary responsibility for protecting human rights and businesses should respect human rights. Although Mars Petcare cannot resolve these issues alone, we believe we can drive improvements by shining a light on key challenges, partnering with government and others to address them and working toward a Thai fish supply chain for Mars where human rights are respected at every level. As we continue our efforts, we are:

- Hiring an additional senior role based in Thailand to progress this work
- Supporting our direct suppliers as they strengthen their own supply chain human rights management systems
- Working with suppliers and partners to test new approaches to addressing human rights risks at the vessel level - identifying what works and what can be taken to scale
- Working with partners in industry, government and civil society to identify and begin to address root causes

Additional Details & Progress

We developed our plan in 2016 using the CARE Framework, a strategy and planning tool developed by Mars and based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Key progress to date is described below.

MARS

Commit

- Established team accountable for implementing our human rights work in Thailand, led by the Procurement function.
- Put in place internal governance and support structure, including senior leaders from Mars Petcare and Mars, Incorporated who meet on a regular basis with the implementation team to review progress and address challenges.

Assess

- Mapped our Thai fish supply chain to the vessel level.
- Verified traceability processes through third-party review.
- Grew our understanding of working conditions on land-based facilities and vessels in our supply chain.

Respond

- Most of our first tier suppliers have put in place third-party human rights grievance hotlines at our request, reaching about 50,000 workers.
- Ensured all 13 of our first-tier suppliers in Thailand participated in in-depth, 2-day human rights training. More than 80 managers from our first- and second-tier suppliers including pier owners and vessel owners took part.
- Built collaborations with suppliers, government and civil society, for example:
 - Piloted connectivity at sea technology on four vessels with supplier Thai Union, testing scalability and effectiveness for workers.
 - Funded OceanMind effort to build government capability to stop illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
 - Formed strategic partnership with the Issara Institute, a leading nongovernmental organization based in Bangkok, to understand human rights conditions among workers in our Thai fish supply chain.

Engage

- As an elected Board member of the Seafood Taskforce - an industry-led coalition tackling environmental and social challenges in the sector - we led the Tuna subgroup and are a member of the Responsible Recruitment subgroup. Through the Taskforce, we drove focus on international tuna supply chains and the development of the first Social Code of Conduct and auditable standards for vessels.
- Convened global human rights and environmental sustainability experts for a two-day session to share input and guidance on our fish sustainability strategy and Human Rights Action Plan.
- Engaged across sectors on the importance of advancing respect for rights in the Thai seafood industry.
 - Co-Chair of the Consumer Goods Forum's Forced Labor Taskforce and led development of its Priority Industry Principles against Forced Labor. Our CEO has [spoken publically](#) on the importance of this work.
 - Member of the Institute for Human Right and Business (IHRB) Leadership Group on Responsible Recruitment and active participant in its dialogue with government officials and supplier training sessions in Thailand.

Our ultimate objective is that effective human rights management systems are in place across our full Thai fish supply chain, helping to ensure that all workers are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. We are committed to drawing on the lessons we've learned so far to deliver further progress and positive impact going forward.

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