

Overwaita Food Group Stores Roll Out Sustainable Sushi Options

(June 1, 2011 – Vancouver, BC) Starting today, the Overwaita Food Group (OFG) takes another major step forward in its commitment to provide customers with ocean-friendly seafood by offering locally produced, sustainably sourced sushi products in its Lower Mainland stores. Over seventy-five percent of the seafood in OFG sushi products will meet SeaChoice's science-based criteria for "Best Choice" (green) or "Some Concerns" (yellow) sustainable seafood rankings.

"We are proud of reaching another milestone in our long-term commitment to ocean health and sustainable fishing industry practices," said OFG President Steve van der Leest. "We're working hard with SeaChoice to help our local suppliers become more environmentally sustainable, which in turns contributes to sustainable and thriving local economies."

OFG was the first Canadian retailer to partner with SeaChoice on a sustainable seafood initiative. Over the past two years in support of this, OFG has distributed nearly 400,000 SeaChoice sustainable seafood guides, discontinued several red-listed, unsustainable seafood products, and continues to work with local suppliers to seek and identify sustainable seafood alternatives for customers. This sushi will be expanded to additional regions in the coming weeks.

"SeaChoice is very proud of OFG's ongoing commitment to sustainable seafood. This sustainable sushi initiative represents significant progress" said Bill Wareham, SeaChoice representative and marine conservation specialist with the David Suzuki Foundation. "OFG is really living up to its sustainability commitments and is demonstrating leadership in creating positive change in the marketplace that will result in healthier oceans."

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OFG operates a total of 123 stores in Western Canada. The company has been in operation for more than 95 years, with its first store originally located in New Westminster, BC. With the support of 14,000 team members, OFG serves over 80 communities with six store formats - Save-On-Foods, Overwaita Foods, PriceSmart Foods, Cooper's Foods, Urban Fare and Bulkley Valley Wholesale. OFG received its first Environmental Leadership Award from the federal government in 1993.

Formed in 2006, SeaChoice is a national program that provides science-based sustainability assessments of seafood to Canadian consumers, fishermen, chefs and businesses. The SeaChoice program is operated by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Living Oceans Society and Sierra Club BC, working in collaboration with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program.

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