Key Milestone Strengthens Aquaculture Standards

ORLANDO, Fla., June 9, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- With global demand for seafood expected to jump 90 percent over the next 20 years, safe, responsible aquaculture will be essential to ensuring the sustainability of the world's oceans. As a leader in food safety, seafood sustainability and the use of sustainable aquaculture, Darden Restaurants applauds the recent announcement that the Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification program has been successfully benchmarked against and accepted by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

GFSI documents provide an internationally recognized benchmark against which any food or farm assurance standard can be measured. Representing a collaboration of leading experts from retail, manufacturing and foodservice companies, GFSI pursues continuous improvement in food safety management and cost efficiency in the supply chain.

"The GFSI benchmarking is the highest validation of the Best Aquaculture Practices certification program," said Bill Herzig, senior vice president of Purchasing and Supply Chain Innovation for Darden. "Seafood from BAP-certified sources meets the most stringent standards for food safety, which is a critical component of our overall sustainability efforts."

"Darden was the first U.S. restaurant company to require its farmed shrimp suppliers to adopt BAP standards and the GFSI benchmarking takes on added importance as BAP expands to include other species such as tilapia and catfish."

The food safety elements of the BAP program comply with the guidelines established by GFSI based on industry best practices and sound science. The BAP certification program also goes beyond food safety to address traceability, animal welfare, environmental sustainability and social responsibility in additional certification standards.

About Darden Restaurants

Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates 1,800 restaurants that generate more than $7 billion in annual sales. Headquartered in Orlando, and employing approximately 180,000 people, Darden is recognized for a culture that rewards caring for and responding to people. Our restaurant brands - Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, The Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze and Seasons 52 - reflect the rich diversity of those who dine with us. Our brands are built on deep insights into what our guests want. For more information, please visit www.darden.com.

SOURCE Darden Restaurants, Inc.: General

Copyright (C) 2010 PR Newswire. All rights reserved