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With Aldi Süd pledge, all 11 major UK supermarkets have set shrimp welfare targets

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

All 11 major UK supermarkets have set higher standards for shrimp welfare

All 11 major UK supermarkets have now pledged to improve animal welfare standards for farmed shrimp, after a new global commitment from Aldi Süd.

The German retailer said it will use electrical stunning, or similar methods, before slaughtering all farmed shrimp by 2035 and end eyestalk ablation across its supply chain by 2030. The policy will apply across its markets, including Europe, the United States and Australia.

Other UK retailers, including Waitrose, M&S and Tesco, have already set similar goals, though their timelines vary. Some aim to make the changes by 2026, while Aldi Süd's plan stretches to 2035.



Shrimp welfare targets are now in place across all major UK supermarkets, following a new global commitment from German retailer Aldi Süd. Photo by [Mahmudul Hasan](#) (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/fresh-prawns-held-by-fisherman-in-chattogram-32230042/>).

“With Aldi Süd’s commitment, every major UK supermarket has now drawn a line on prawn welfare,” said Jonas Becker, head of invertebrate welfare, International Council for Animal Welfare. “We believe the global scale of this pledge will make effective electrical stunning the norm well beyond Europe.”

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Shrimp are the most widely consumed farmed animal in the UK, with more than 1.2 billion sold each year. Research from the London School of Economics and the University of Stirling has found they are sentient and capable of feeling pain, a view reflected in the UK’s Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.

Two practices have drawn particular scrutiny. In hatcheries, breeding females may have one eyestalk removed to stimulate egg production. At slaughter, shrimp are often placed in ice-water baths, which research suggests may not render them unconscious.

Electrical stunning is being introduced as an alternative, designed to render shrimp unconscious within seconds and already in use in parts of the UK supply chain.

Aldi Süd was the last of the 11 major UK supermarkets to set a timeline, but its pledge is broader than most, applying across all of its global markets and including a commitment to publish annual progress updates.



What is the path to viable alternatives to shrimp eyestalk ablation?

Welfare concerns around the common hatchery technique that underpins global shrimp farming is leading to trials for new approaches.



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Most retailers have taken a more limited approach. Lidl, for example, has committed to electrical stunning for shrimp sold in Great Britain but has not set timelines for its operations elsewhere in Europe.

The pace of change has picked up quickly. As recently as mid-2024, no major UK supermarket had set a timeline. Commitments followed over the next two years, and some retailers have already begun making changes. Lidl GB says its core own-brand range is now ablation-free, while Ocado has completed its transition to electrical stunning.

“The ALDI SOUTH Group is investing in an industry-led research project to assess the effectiveness of electrical stunning and other potentially higher-welfare methods for warm-water shrimp,” wrote Aldi Süd in its **factsheet** (<https://sustainability.aldisouthgroup.com/files/fish-and-seafood-factsheet>). “This project will conclude in 2028, and from this date, ALDI will start transitioning to electrical stunning or other measures confirmed by the study for its own-brand warm-water shrimp, with the aim of completion by 2035. We are committed to transparently report annually on the implementation status of preslaughter stunning methods from 2028 onwards.”

[Read the full pledge here \(https://sustainability.aldisouthgroup.com/files/fish-and-seafood-factsheet\)](https://sustainability.aldisouthgroup.com/files/fish-and-seafood-factsheet).

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