

NEWS RELEASE

Warning: Something Fishy About Farmed Salmon, Seafood Lovers Beware

Consumer Campaign Launched to Reduce Demand for Farmed Salmon, Reform a Dirty Industry

October 29, 2002: For immediate release

Seafood lovers in the Pacific Northwest may be in for a big surprise when they learn that most of the salmon they eat -- the so-called "healthy choice" food -- is raised like cattle in ocean pens, in a stew of antibiotics, pesticides and chemical additives.

Today the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), a British Columbia based coalition, launched a campaign to reform the farmed salmon industry, and released a new report which shows that farmed salmon pose numerous risks to both consumers and the environment. Twenty five percent of all farmed salmon imported to the United States comes from British Columbia.

According to *Farmed and Dangerous* (at www.farmedanddangerous.org), salmon farms can rapidly spread disease among aquatic species and threaten wild stocks of salmon. The report also shows how farmed salmon get their pink color -- from canthaxanthin and astaxanthin, chemicals that are mixed in with their food. In fact, salmon farmers use a color swatch called a "salmo-fan" -- not unlike the chips found in paint stores -- to decide which shade of pink they'd like their fish to be. The fish are further contaminated with antibiotics and highly concentrated accumulated toxins such as dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls and pesticides such as DDT.

Dr. Sandy Rock, instructor in environmental science at Bellevue Community College and Chair of the Environment and Health Committee of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, commented, "Overuse and misuse of antibiotics in domesticated fish, poultry and other animals contribute greatly to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and the rise of so-called 'super bugs' which can cause serious and untreatable human illnesses. Additionally, no one knows what these antibiotics do in natural ecological systems."

Consumers aren't the only ones affected. Other ocean species are bearing the impacts of the toxins that sift down through the cages where farmed salmon are raised. The ocean floor beneath salmon farms is covered in a thick blanket of feces, pesticides, and other farm wastes.

Farmed and Dangerous also shows that salmon farms do nothing to conserve the wild salmon population - in fact, the farms are depleting key ocean-dwelling species. It takes

three pounds of wild fish to grow one pound of farmed salmon; more than one-tenth of all the fish caught in the ocean become fishmeal for use in industrial fish farms.

"Taking ever-increasing amounts of small fish from the oceans to expand the total supply of commercially valuable [farmed] fish would clearly be disastrous for marine ecosystems and, in the long term, for the aquaculture industry itself," says Dr. John Volpe, a University of Alberta biologist who specializes in aquaculture.

CAAR's consumer markets campaign is designed to educate the public about the impact of salmon farms on the environment and human health, and provide ways for consumers to help reform the salmon farming industry and strengthen government regulation.

Farmed and Dangerous campaign director Melissa Nelson says the campaign is targeting 2,000 businesses up and down the West Coast to ask them to stop selling or serving farmed salmon. "Canada exports nearly 35,000 metric tons of farmed salmon annually, most of which goes to the United States." Nelson continued, "We are urging salmon lovers in Washington, Oregon and California to think twice before they purchase farmed salmon. The public can vote with their pocketbook, at grocery stores and restaurants, and make a difference."

Lee Pate, Meat and Seafood Merchandiser for PCC Natural Markets -- a seven store retail chain in Seattle and a supporter of the markets campaign - said, "By choosing not to sell farmed salmon in favor of sustainable alternatives, retailers can let salmon farming companies know that they have to improve farming practices or lose customers in Seattle. Pate continued, "Since launching our sustainable seafood program we've received a lot of positive feedback from our customers. We think this was a sound business decision."

Matt Costello, Chef at the Painted Table in Seattle, doesn't serve his customers farmed salmon. Costello says: "I've never had a good farm-raised salmon. They taste greasy, not clean and bright. Just as important to me is the fact that farmed salmon have a destructive impact on the marine environment."

CAAR is working to encourage the salmon farming industry to reform its practices in order to: eliminate the risks of disease transfer to wild fish and the use of antibiotics; stop the release of farm waste into the ocean; label all farmed fish so consumers can make informed choices; use fish food that does not result in a global loss of seafood and marine life; prohibit the use of genetically modified fish; and respect coastal residents and indigenous communities who object to the location of salmon farms in their local waters.

The full report can be downloaded from www.farmedanddangerous.org or www.livingoceans.org. For a list of independent expert resources please call EMS West at 206-374-7795 x.434

The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform is a coalition of First Nations, fishermen, and conservation groups working to protect wild salmon, coastal ecosystems, coastal communities and human health from destructive fish farming

practices. Members of CAAR include: BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission, David Suzuki Foundation, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Georgia Straight Alliance, Living Oceans Society, Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council, Raincoast Conservation Society, Raincoast Research, T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation, and Watershed Watch Salmon Society.

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