

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Warning: Something Fishy About Farmed Salmon, Seafood Lovers Beware**

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

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Californians 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* (available at [www.farmedanddangerous.org](http://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 (PCBs) and pesticides such as DDT.

"The salmon farming industry tells us not to worry about the chemicals they use to farm these fish," says Patricia Unterman, a well-known San Francisco food critic and chef. "Personally, I do not serve or eat farmed salmon packed with these kinds of contaminants."

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. Jon 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 Jennifer Lash 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," Lash says.

"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."

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](http://www.farmedanddangerous.org) or [www.livingoceans.org](http://www.livingoceans.org)**

**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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