

## The salmon war: An environmentalist concoction that is bad for consumers.

Few foods have the potential to do so much good in the diet as salmon. While the reduction in coronary heart disease (CHD) is the primary benefit, there are others that surface every day. Best of all, eating salmon is something that is a not nutritional chore. With sincere apologies to broccoli growers, it's not something you have to eat because it is good for you, it is something you eat because you like it. The benefits are substantial: a significant reduction in CHD and related deaths unlike anything else that has come along.

But all of that is threatened in the name of wild salmon. Not by the wild salmon industry, who for the most part promote their fine product on its own merits as they strive to carve out a premium priced niche in the fresh salmon market. It's done on behalf of that industry by environmentalists, who, by and large, after failing to make their case on environmental grounds, but still hating farmed salmon with a passion that has now outstripped any logical fault of the fish or producers, are throwing food safety and nutrition misinformation about on every possible front.

Worse yet, we see the tales that the farmed salmon foes flood the internet with being repeated by others without any scrutiny. Sorting out the truth doesn't take much—a simple trip to the USDA website will tell you that farmed salmon has more omega-3 than wild salmon. Other examples abound.

As an example of distorted facts which are introduced and then repeated as the truth, consider this: Dr. Frank Hu, the Harvard researcher who is often quoted on the benefits of fish and omega-3 in relation to CHD is widely reported to have said that *"this benefit does not accrue to farmed salmon because they don't swim around as much as wild salmon do."* Pretty powerful stuff coming from the big gun in the heart studies. But, when asked why he said that (just one simple email did it) he said, *"I can say categorically that these quotes are not mine. My understanding of the amount of omega-3 contents is from the USDA nutrient database. Thus, I have no reason to believe that omega-3 fatty acids are lower in farm-raised salmon based on the USDA data."*

It is not very difficult to find out that he was deliberately misquoted (that is a charitable assessment), and given that, maybe other facts need to be checked.

Who gets hurt by all of this? Consumers do. All of them, but especially those who cannot afford \$15-a-pound wild salmon—either on a regular basis or even once in a while—and may be scared away from \$5-a-pound farmed, which is every bit as good. Unfortunately, these middle class consumers get heart disease too. And even the wealthy salmon buyers who don't blink at the price, won't find fresh wild salmon eight months of the year. But the saddest fact is that since most consumers cannot tell wild from farmed, they may stay away from salmon all together.