

The Sensible Environmentalist

Fish Farming Protects Wild Stocks

(NAPSA)—**DEAR DR. MOORE:**

Why are so many environmentalists against salmon farming? Doesn't it reduce pressure from commercial over-fishing?

You're right. Aquaculture takes pressure off wild fish stocks—which can't possibly meet the demands of a growing global population. Unfortunately, the campaign to discredit fish farming is one of the worst I've seen in terms of disregard for facts.



Dr. Moore

For me, it's an old argument. When I worked

with Greenpeace, we were against whaling, sealing, driftnets, bottom dragging and over-fishing in general, and rightly so. I believed then, as I do now, that aquaculture—practiced sustainably—would allow people to continue sourcing food from the sea without depleting wild stocks.

Twenty years later, activists continue to float various reasons to be against aquaculture. And, despite the fact that not one stands up to scrutiny, they have the attention of a fearful public. With that in mind, here are brief responses to three of the worst allegations:

Fact: Farmed salmon is safe to eat.

Activists point to a study of PCBs in farmed salmon as proof that it's unhealthy. Too bad they ignore the conclusions of the study's authors—that levels are well within the safety guidelines set by the U.S. Food and

Drug Administration. There is no evidence that this very minor contamination causes any health problem. In contrast, both farmed and wild salmon are rich in omega-3 fats, which help prevent heart disease and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.

Fact: Farmed Atlantic salmon are not escaping and replacing wild stocks.

Aside from the fact that the industry has continued to improve its equipment to prevent escape, Atlantic salmon don't do well outside their native range. Around the world, numerous efforts have been made to establish Atlantic salmon, with one country going so far as to release more than eight million fish. It doesn't work.

Fact: Farmed salmon are not fed fish that would otherwise go to humans.

Farmed salmon eat fishmeal, which is made of trimmings from fish processing plants and fish that humans won't eat. The claim that people are losing valuable protein because of aquaculture is false.

For more information, I recommend visiting www.farmfreshsalmon.org. In the meantime, I hope that sensible environmentalists everywhere will see this campaign for what it is—an attempt to discredit a perfectly sound and sustainable industry.

Dr. Patrick Moore has been a leader of the environmental movement for more than 30 years. A co-founder of Greenpeace, he holds a PhD in ecology and a BSc in forest biology. Questions can be sent to Patrick@SensibleEnvironmental.com.