



STATEMENT

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WHO'S RECOMMENDATION CONCERNS MAXIMUM TOLERABLE DAILY INTAKE OF DIOXINS, NOT SALMON

Several recent news reports about farmed salmon have incorrectly conveyed the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO). They have stated that WHO reviewed new data on levels of dioxins in salmon and subsequently lowered its "recommended daily intake of salmon." This needs to be clarified.

WHO has *never* recommended a daily intake for salmon. Furthermore, WHO has not received or reviewed the purported data showing higher levels of chemicals, including dioxins, in farmed salmon compared to wild varieties.

In 1998, WHO lowered its recommended Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) of *dioxins and related compounds* such as, dibenzofurans and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), to 1 - 4 picograms/kilogram body weight from 10 picograms/kilogram body weight. This reduced recommended TDI was based mainly on new information on the toxicity of these compounds, rather than on exposure considerations.

WHO will again examine the safety of dioxins and related compounds when the Joint United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) meets in June 2001. JECFA welcomes the submission of any data on dioxins in food, including farmed and wild salmon, for evaluation by the JECFA experts.

For further information, journalists can contact Melinda Henry, WHO Spokesperson's Office, Geneva, Switzerland; Tel. (+41 22)791 2535; Fax: (+41 22) 791 4858; E-mail: henrym@who.int. All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features, as well as other information on this subject, can be obtained on Internet on the WHO web site: www.who.int