



pure salmon campaign

RAISING THE STANDARDS FOR FARM-RAISED FISH

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Dear Mr. Infante:

On 19 December 2006 the UK Food Standards Agency issued an alert warning that a sample of Findus frozen salmon skewers had tested positive for the chemical dye crystal violet — a substance that the agency notes, “has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals following long term exposure at high levels.”

Despite the subsequent recall, however, there are two troubling issues attending the recent detection of the carcinogen crystal violet in salmon products bearing the Findus label and purveyed by Tesco and Farm Foods in the UK that the Pure Salmon Campaign would like to direct your attention to.

First, there remains a serious, and unanswered, question as to the origin of this contaminated salmon. On 20 December 2006, the UK Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) — in response to an inquiry as to the origin and nature of the contaminated salmon — informed the Pure Salmon Campaign that: “The country of origin is Chile and the packaging states that the fish is farmed salmon.”

A subsequent email from Dawn Greener with the VMD on December 21 clarified this information further stating that: “I can confirm that I received e-mail confirmation yesterday from Findus UK that the country of origin of the salmon was Chile. The information we have is that the salmon was farmed in Chile, part processed in Thailand and then freighted to the UK.”

This understanding was corroborated in a 2nd January 2007 email from Michelle Waterman of Tesco UK, who participated in the actual product recall, noting that: “My understanding is that it was Chilean product affected.”

In contrast, however, SalmonChile on December 22 issued a statement refuting this information alleging that: “Companies producing salmon in Chile have never used the product crystal violet at any part of their production chain.” Or in the original Spanish: “Las empresas productoras de salmón de Chile nunca han utilizado el producto cristal violeta, en ninguna parte de su cadena productiva.” (See attached statement in full.)

While it may be possible that the toxin entered the salmon outside of Chile, such as during processing in Thailand, SalmonChile, nevertheless, insists that the toxin is not used in “any part

of their production chain,” which on its face, would appear to include processing both inside and outside of Chile.

This is a serious conflict in assertions which remains unanswered to this day.

Second, the Pure Salmon Campaign has vigorously queried authorities as to the origin of the toxin. We have engaged experts skilled in government inquiry, toxicology and veterinary medicine from the United States, Chile and UK to assist in this investigation. Yet, despite these efforts we have been unable to determine a definitive answer.

The Pure Salmon Campaign believes that traceability and transparency should be of the utmost importance in the production of farmed salmon. We are deeply disturbed that a group of experts, bringing qualifications to bear on this question far above the average of UK consumers, have found questions about the origin of a common product sold in a major grocery store so difficult to answer.

Therefore, in light of these issues the Pure Salmon Campaign would request your assistance in answering the following questions:

According to SalmonChile: “All production and processing companies of salmon and trout in Chile have advanced and efficient traceability systems that allow them knowing the route of their products during all food chain. In the records of those systems it is evident that that product was not applied at any moment.”

This statement raises several questions:

- What is the evidence that the crystal violet has not entered any aspect of the production chain?
- Is the evidence the absence of recorded application of crystal violet?
- Are there independent tests to see what toxins such as crystal violet might have been applied, whether or not record or sanctioned?

In addition, we would like to know:

- Are there toxicology reports for each shipment?
- How many specimens of salmon are inspected?
- Who does the examination?
- Are they company employees, independent inspectors, and/or government inspectors?
- How does a Chilean company oversee treatment of its products once it leaves the country, such as for subsequent processing in Thailand?
- Does the company maintain employees, or subcontractors in those countries?

Finally we would like SalmonChile to state why the industry's chain-of-custody monitor is not transparent and why the public cannot view this evidence? By contrast, UK authorities list the lot numbers of the potentially violated batches.

While the motivation for salmon farmers to use chemicals in an effort to control disease and pests may be common in the aquaculture industry, the Pure Salmon Campaign feels strongly that the systematic deployment of banned substances is utterly indefensible in the name of profitability.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to working with you in an effort to resolve the above noted questions. Please feel free to contact us at anytime with any subsequent questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

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The Pure Salmon Campaign is an international coalition consisting of organizations from Chile, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Norway, the European Union and the United States all working to reform the farmed salmon industry.