

ANTIBIOTICS FOUND IN CHILEAN SALMON

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Wednesday, 30 April 2008
Last Updated Wednesday, 30 April 2008

Salmon from Southern Chile

A recent University Austral study confirmed antibiotic residues in locally farmed salmon that exceed levels tolerated by the World Health Organization (W.H.O.). Still, the antibiotic residues recorded in the study fall within levels allowed by Chilean government standards. The W.H.O. is combating the use of antibiotics in fish farming, arguing that their presence fosters bacteria resistance to antibiotics.

U.S. standards for antibiotic residues are more in line with W.H.O. standards, and the U.S. is a major consumer of Chilean farmed salmon.

Chile's US\$2.2 billion salmon industry was visited last week by the U.S. health authorities after a outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) created serious problems throughout the industry. Problems with ISA — a highly contagious virus that can be lethal to fish but does not affect humans — have led to a wave of industry firings. Indeed, in just the past few weeks more than 1,000 workers have been laid off in Regions X and XI.

Though University Austral study found the antibiotic levels to be within tolerances allowed by Chilean standards, this does not mean that bacteria won't mutate to become resistant to the antibiotics.

SOURCE: ECOCEANOS NEWS

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