

# CANADIANS SHOULD EAT SEAFOOD MORE OFTEN

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Ruth Salmon, the Executive Director of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance (CAIA) said that Canadians are not eating enough seafood products.

Salmon is basing her view on a survey recently conducted for the CAIA that shows that, while 88 percent of Canadians have eaten seafood over the past three months, only 15 percent of fish consumers are meeting Canada Food Guide's recommendation of two seafood servings per week.

Salmon said, "The good news is that Canadians are eating seafood. However, the not-so-good news is that our seafood consumption frequency is far below national dietary guidelines of eight servings per month."

According to Salmon, there are a number of reasons why Canadians should be eating seafood more often.

"The recommendation from Canada's Food Guide that we should eat seafood more often is based on the fact that seafood – both wild and farmed – is a good protein source that's high in Omega 3 fatty acids," Salmon said.

"There's a lot of strong scientific literature now that links Omega 3 fatty acids to a positive impact on heart and brain health. The Omega 3 fatty acids in seafood, especially in the oilier fish such as salmon and trout, helps ward off heart attacks, strokes and dementia.

"A recent article in the 'Globe and Mail' reported on a study conducted by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition that suggested that the fatty acids also guard against Type 2 diabetes.

"Scientists are saying that eating two servings of seafood per week can reduce the risk of dying from a heart attack by 36 percent."

Salmon said that there are other reasons why Canadians should eat more seafood.

She noted that, in addition to supporting economic growth in rural areas of Canada, the health benefits could also help lower health costs for Canadians in the future.

She said, "By 2020 almost 1 in every 5 Canadians will be a senior, and it's estimated that the Canadian provinces are going to be spending even more on health care than they



*A fine fish of steelhead trout and mussels. Photo courtesy of NAIA*

do today. I believe we can help tackle this future problem by learning how to eat better today and seafood is definitely a part of the solution."

Salmon said that she realizes some people still have an aversion to eating farmed fish as opposed to wild species. She said that aquaculture or farming fish has come a long ways since its beginnings about 30 years ago.

She said, "People should realize that the aquaculture industry is rapidly changing, and that we are doing a much better job of farming than we did 30 years ago. We know more now and research is indicating best practices for our work.

"People should take comfort now from the fact that the aquaculture industry is a responsible industry that is highly regulated in Canada."

"In addition, all of our seafood has a world-wide reputation for quality and freshness, and we're particularly known for our salmon. Both farmed and wild salmon are excellent nutritional choices."

Salmon said that the industry works within 73 different pieces of legislation and that a proposed aquaculture site goes through a rigorous assessment via the Canada Environment Assessment Act before it's approved. There is any number of safeguards in place to ensure that aquaculture practices are safe and sustainable.

The CAIA represents Canadian fish and shellfish farming companies and their suppliers. The Canadian Seafood Survey found that more men than women like the taste of fish (73 vs. 66 percent respectively) and that men have a more positive impression of farmed seafood than women. Nearly 74 percent of Canadians eat salmon, followed by trout at 45 percent and shellfish as 43 percent.

Finfish and shellfish farming generate \$2.1 billion for the national economy and takes place in every province and the Yukon Territory. Aquaculture provides 14,500 jobs in coastal, rural and First Nations communities, where other industries are in decline.