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Answer Guy / Farm-raised seafood vs. wild seafood

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Posted: Sunday, December 27, 2009 | 0 comments

A weekly feature that answers reader questions about the people, events, history and news in southern New Jersey.

Q: Can you enlighten me on the nutritional, or other, advantages or disadvantages of wild-caught seafood versus farm-raised seafood?

George Harvey, Ventnor

Answer Guy: Perhaps the biggest difference the average diner will notice is taste.

"The only thing I ever heard is that a farm-raised fish is a little bland as opposed to the wild, which has a stronger flavor," said Mike Shepherd, who writes a fishing column for The Press of Atlantic City.

As far as nutrition, there are concerns that farmed fish, especially salmon, contain more contaminants than wild fish.

According to Consumer Reports, Ronald Hites, an environmental chemist at Indiana University, found that farmed salmon had higher levels of the flame retardant PBDE, PCBs and dioxins than wild salmon.

HealthCastle.com, a nutrition community run by dietitians, suggests trimming the fat and skin from the fish, where PCBs are stored. Grilling and broiling salmon also will reduce the fat.

But there also are economic and environmental issues.

Emily Main, of Rodale, a publisher of health-related books, writes that nitrogen and phosphorous from feed and waste can lead to algae blooms that contaminate the surrounding water. And if the farmed fish escape, they can compete with wild fish for food or breed with them, causing an eventual die-off.

But aquaculture could help save a species from extinction.

The state Department of Agriculture reports that New Jersey has 186 aquatic farms, including 107 hard-clam farms, 43 oyster farms and 15 finfish farms that produce trout, koi, hybrid striped bass, sport fish species and tilapia.

Main says the best farmed fish to buy are Arctic char, bay scallops, U.S. catfish, U.S. sturgeon caviar, mussels, oysters, rainbow trout, striped bass, tilapia and steamer, littleneck or cockle clams.

Got a question?

If you have a question you would like the Answer Guy to tackle, call 609-569-7489, or mail your question to The Press Answer Guy, The Press of Atlantic City, 11 Devins Lane, Pleasantville, NJ 08232. Questions can be faxed to 609-272-7224. E-mail:

answerguy@pressofac.com

Posted in Atlantic on Sunday, December 27, 2009 2:20 am

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