

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ocean Health Now Affecting Consumers' Seafood Choices

Most US consumer and buyers concerned about pollution, plastic waste and labor conditions, while also now accepting various types of aquaculture, including cellular production.

For More Information Contact: Arlin Wasserman, Changing Tastes
651.769.3533. | arlin@changingtastes.net

Stockbridge, MA, February 24, 2020 — New research by Changing Tastes finds that most American consumers are concerned about the impact of ocean health on fish and seafood. A majority are now concerned about heavy metals, plastic contamination and radiation in their fish and seafood as well as the use of forced labor and antibiotics. These issues are now of greater concern than overfishing, which also remains a concern for more than 8 out of 10 adults. Purchasing and menu decision makers also are most concerned about heavy metals and plastic contamination along with overfishing.

Older consumers born before 1964, and now 55 years or older, continue to be less concerned about a variety of ocean health concerns than younger consumers. They also continue to prefer wild fish and seafood more than younger consumers.

Consumers born after 1964 are more likely to consider farmed fish and seafood including cellular aquaculture to be acceptable than older Americans, with over half of Millennials considering all forms of aquaculture to be acceptable, including cellular production. All generations also continue to consider wild capture to be the most acceptable production method, but the preference over farmed narrows among younger generations.

“We are seeing new concerns about the health of our oceans such as plastic waste and radiation reshaping how Americans think about eating fish and seafood as well as their openness to new ways of producing fish and seafood including advanced aquaculture such as cellular production,” said Arlin Wasserman, founder and managing director of Changing Tastes. “The conventional wisdom that Americans prefer wild fish and consider it a healthier choice used to be true and it still is among older Americans. But it’s that’s not as prevalent a belief among younger generations.”

Changing Tastes found that Americans born before 1964 are more likely to think of fish and seafood as heart health and rich in Omega 3s than those born after 1964 and about twice as likely than those born after 1997, in Gen Z. Only about 1 out of 5 adults regardless of age currently consider fish and seafood to be safer to eat than other protein choices or better for the environment.

“Consumers are becoming more aware of the interconnection between ocean health and their own health through eating fish and seafood,” says Arlin Wasserman. “As they become more concerned about the health of the oceans, Americans are increasingly accepting of other production methods that produce food that is clean and free of contamination like plastics and heavy metals.”

“Having about 30% of Americans ready to replace wild fish and seafood with cellular products is a remarkable level of acceptance, especially considering the products are not yet in market,” added Wasserman.

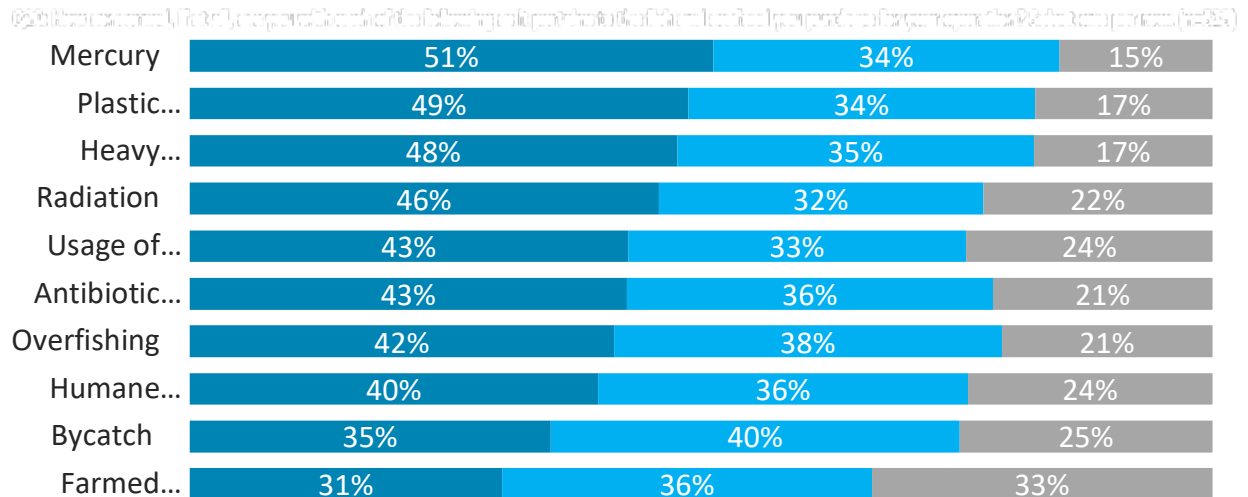
According to Jada Tullos, a seafood sustainability consultant with Changing Tastes, “Some of the issues on the minds of consumers are ones the seafood industry can address and remedy in part or entirely on their own, like slave labor or eliminating the use of plastic in fishing gear. But others, such as high levels of mercury in wild-caught fish, cannot be readily addressed by a single company or the fishing industry alone. Because of this, consumers are becoming increasingly concerned with wild-capture fishing compared to farmed. Ocean health indicators like mercury, plastic contamination, heavy metals and radiation are a concern for about half of seafood consumers. These concerns can be completely addressed in closed aquaculture systems, like onshore fish farming or cellular cultivation. More traditional aquaculture production methods, like mariculture, can work to reduce exposure to contaminants through site selection.”

The new research are part of the findings from Changing Tastes’ work exploring how Americans will eat seafood over the next five years. The look ahead report will be released in mid-2020. To learn more visit www.changingtastes.net.

Changing Tastes is a values-driven consultancy firm that provides business strategy and culinary consulting to Fortune 500 companies, growth stage restaurant and hospitality firms, investors, and the philanthropic sector. Through its work, the firm has created more than \$2.5B in value for its clients while catalyzing some of the most significant changes in the US food industry including reaccelerating growth in the natural and organic food industry by developing a new marketing strategy focused on personal health benefits, helping the leading US restaurant companies address antibiotic use in livestock production, and pioneering the now popular plant-forward dining strategy.

Charts to May be Used with Credit:

Consumers: How concerned, if at all, are you with each of the following as it pertains to fish and seafood? (n=2802)



Purchasing and Menu Decision Makers: How concerned, if at all, are you with each of the following as it pertains to the fish and seafood you purchase for your operation? (n=523)

