

The integrated project SEAFOODplus

Investigating the benefits of seafood for the consumer

The integrated project SEAFOODplus will investigate the benefits of seafood for the consumer and how products can be made safer as well as related issues in aquaculture, the environment and the economy. A total budget of about 26 million euros is available for the project, 14.4 m of which will come from EU promotion programmes.

The research will not be carried out in isolation but in close collaboration with a number of commercial enterprises. According to Director Christian Patermann, Directorate E, Biotechnology Agriculture and Food Research, fifteen percent of the funds that are being supplied by the EU will go to small and medium-sized enterprises.

SEAFOODplus also takes account the limited fisheries resources by focusing on better utilization of seafood. The project will be instrumental in creating new knowledge and novel products enabling the seafood industry to maximise the proper and economic utilisation of scarce fisheries resources. There may also be opportunities to utilise untapped potential without increasing fishing pressure, by research into functional components for food from marine life.



Professor Torger Børresen. In his role as co-ordinator, the highly respected Danish fisheries researcher will be in charge of the EU project SEAFOODplus.

At the official project launch in Brussels at the end of January co-ordinators of the six broad topic areas into which SEAFOODplus is divided outlined the essential content of the planned research. The seafood and consumption section, for example, will investigate the health effects that fish proteins have on the composi-

tion and metabolic activity of intestinal flora. This knowledge could be used in the prevention of cancer and inflammation of the intestine. Investigations will also be carried out to find out how Omega 3 fatty acids affect the bowel, brain, heart, skeleton and fatty tissue.

Under the topic seafood and consumer behaviour, researchers will try to find out why there are such big differences in seafood consumption in the individual regions of Europe. Which factors influence consumption? What is particularly important to consumers? In the context of seafood safety scientists will develop quick, reliable methods of testing for viral contamination of mussels and other shellfish. The aim is to protect consumers more effectively from gastrointestinal disorders or hepatitis A. In another topic complex the researchers will examine the factors that influence product quality

during processing. Which chemical processes, for example, are responsible for fat oxidation in fish and how can the process by which foods become rancid be prevented? Another major topic is aquaculture, where the focus will not only be on improved quality and different methods but equally on ethical issues and the development of new standards.

Traceability and consumer confidence will be examined across the topic areas and take into account EU requirements for product information to be fully traceable from fisherman to retailer as from 2005.

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