

## Is it possible to 'sell' welfare to EU consumers?

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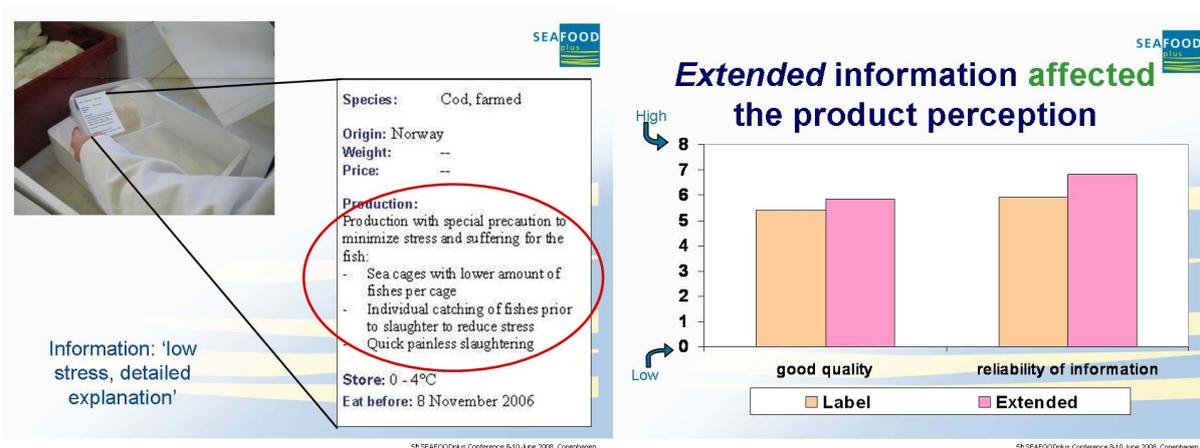
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In the ETHICOD project, we address ethical concerns, asking if good fish welfare lead to better quality of farmed fish. The project includes full scale value chain experiments with Atlantic farmed cod following the development of the fish all the way from small juveniles to slaughter and up to the consumer's fork.

The objectives of this project were:

- To measure the effect of consumers' knowledge about welfare information on the consumers' product perception.
- To measure the effect of consumers' use of and trust in welfare information on the consumers' product perception.

Results will be presented from the consumer in-home tests performed in Iceland and the Netherlands

Previously we presented the results of sensory differences between farmed cod produced following standard pre-slaughter practises versus low-stress pre-slaughter practises, the effect of ethical information and individual factors on consumer preferences for farmed cod and People's attitudes towards fish farming, farming practices and information about farming practices.

In an in-home situation n = 156 subjects from Iceland and n = 202 subjects from The Netherlands tested once a week the 4-6 samples with various sets of information. The consumers filled out a 'product test' questionnaire and a 'general' questionnaire.

The results show that the consumers hardly use information on welfare when they buy seafood but if they search for information about welfare, they firstly look on the product label.

Consumers think that Government and fish farmers have the equal responsibility to take care of the welfare of the fish. When the source of the information about welfare is mentioned on the label of the tested cod, either governmental or producers organisation, the reliability of the governmental source is higher. The consumers think that although the fish farmers are the experts they also have more interest in hiding the truth about welfare issues. The more reliable the information is perceived, the higher the buying intention of the product labelled as such.

The more detailed the information provided, the more relevant, important and reliable this information was perceived and resulted in higher self reported knowledge of the system. At the same time this resulted in higher quality perception of the product.