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Reference: FSH/0015

Guidance concerning Wild Salmon and the Anisakis parasite.

It has come to our attention that there has been an increased prevalence of wild salmon in UK rivers infected with the parasite Anisakis. We are therefore providing this Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidance for those anglers and netsmen who may want to eat their own catch or supply small quantities to local retail establishments or members of the general public.

A raft of hygiene legislation sets out extensive legal requirements for food businesses that place fishery products on the market for human consumption. However, these requirements do not have force over the preparation and handling of food for 'private or domestic' use, or where small quantities of primary products are supplied to final consumers and local retail establishments. The catching of wild salmon from UK rivers for personal or local consumption falls into these categories. Consequently the FSA are advising consumers of about hygiene practices to ensure that these products are safe to eat.

Parasites in fish, particularly anisakis, can, if ingested alive, cause serious health problems. Therefore the FSA recommends that anyone consuming wild salmon taken from UK rivers adheres to the following advice:

- Visually inspect the wild salmon to **detect and remove** parasites. Those fish which remain obviously contaminated should not be consumed.

- If wild salmon is to be **eaten raw or almost raw** it should be frozen in all parts for at least 24 hours, at a temperature of -20°C or colder. This will ensure that any non-visible parasites or undetectable larvae of nematodes are destroyed.
- This freezing advice also extends to wild salmon that are to undergo a cold smoking process or to be eaten after marinating or salting i.e. as in Gravaglax.
- Where wild salmon is to be hot smoked (internal temperature above 60°C), which is sufficient to kill any parasites present, then it is safe to eat without freezing first.
- Where it is not possible to carry out adequate freezing it is advisable to cook the wild salmon. A temperature of 70°C for two minutes will kill any parasitic contamination present. As there is no infallible method of detecting and removing larvae, this advice is particularly relevant for pregnant women and elderly people, where ingestion of live parasites from fish could pose a serious health risk.

This guidance has been issued by the Fish and Shellfish Hygiene Branch, which is part of the FSA's Primary Production Division. To discuss or seek further clarification please contact Mr Michael Talbot on 0207 276 8991 or by email to michael.talbot@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk.