



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FISH INSPECTORS

Statement from the International Association of Fish Inspectors on the safety of smoked fishery products

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) are carcinogenic and genotoxic substances found in smoked foods. Exposure to these substances through consumption of smoked fish (however produced) is around 10 times higher in human populations living in some developing countries (especially those in Africa and Asia) than in developed countries. In the EU for example, the average exposure of consumers to benzopyrene (a key PAH marker) averages 3-4 ng/kg body weight/day from all sources¹, compared to an estimated average exposure (from fish only) of 32 ng/kg body weight/day in West Africa².

Smoking preserves and enhances value, increases production and marketing of fish products, and contributes to sustainable food security and livelihoods in developing countries. However, its cumulative negative effects have received minimal attention in the developing world. Therefore, the International Association of Fish Inspectors (IAFI), calls on Governments especially in developing countries to address the risk of consuming traditional smoked fish (as well as other smoked foods) that may contain elevated concentrations of substances that are of public health concern, as well as addressing the risks to health of fish processing workers and their families.

Accordingly, whilst supporting the ongoing efforts of Governments to address this hazard, IAFI calls for more research to determine the precise level of, and factors affecting, health risks arising from the production and consumption of smoked fish and other foods in their respective countries, and the adoption of appropriate risk management strategies, as well as measures to mitigate their potential socio-

economic impacts. Measures could include consumer awareness raising, delivery of dietary and food preparation advice to allow informed choices, investment incentives for introduction of improved smoking processes, preparation of processing guidelines, and regulatory measures where appropriate.

Mark Boulter, President of IAFI, said that *“food safety policy makers in countries with high rates of consumption of traditional smoked foods should take positive steps to manage the risks through support for better fish smoking processes and improved regulatory measures”*.

More information is available from:

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References

¹ Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Food, Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (Question N° EFSA-Q-2007-136), Adopted on 9 June 2008, EFSA Journal (2008) 724, 1-114
European Food Safety Authority, 2008

² Risk Management for PAH in Smoked Fish, Esther Garrido Gamarro (FAO), Yvette DieiOuadi (FAO) and Kennedy Bomfeh (Ghent University), paper presented at World Seafood Congress, Iceland, September 2017.