New test to detect histamine in seafood launched

A new test to detect potentially dangerous toxins in fish has been devised by R-BiopharmRhône, one of Scotland's most important food safety companies.

The Glasgow-based manufacturer has unveiled a rapid test to pinpoint minute quantities of histamine, which can produce symptoms similar to an allergic reaction and is particularly relevant to products such as tuna, mackerel, anchovy, herring, bluefish, sardines, pilchards, marlin and even salmon.

Histamine occurs naturally when some foods spoil, and survives cooking, canning and freezing and may be undetectable unless chemically analysed.

"European legislation dictates that a number of fish species should be tested for the presence of histamine. Samples should contain less than 100 parts per million and if a batch exceeds 200 ppm it should be considered unsatisfactory," R-Biopharm Rhône managing director Simon Bevis.

"This test is the latest development from R-Biopharm Rhône which will help safeguard public health and will allow consumers to have greater confidence in products which they are eating on a regular basis," Bevis added.

Histamine symptoms appear quickly and include oral burning or tingling, skin rash, localised inflammation, hypotension, headaches and flushing, which can lead to misdiagnosis.

R-Biopharm Rhône was at the forefront of food safety in the horsemeat scandal of 2012 and has spearheaded investigatory testing as concerns mount about cheap fish being substituted for expensive fish.

R-Biopharm is considered to be a leader in developing solutions for clinical diagnostic tests and food and feed analysis.

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