

## FDA requested to regulate GM salmon labelling

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been urged to include guidelines in the bill regulating genetically modified salmon before offering this product to consumers.

The aim of those advocating this measure is the addition of labels on all foods made with GMO products and the implementation of a programme to disclose to consumers whether salmon offered for sale is a genetically engineered variety, *The Hill* reported.

On the other hand, FDA informed that AquaAdvantage salmon, a product of AquaBounty Technologies, meets the statutory requirements for safety and effectiveness under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and is as nutritious as non-GMO Atlantic salmon, with no biologically relevant differences in the nutritional profile compared to that of other farm-raised Atlantic salmon.

The GMO salmon will be raised in land-based, contained hatchery tanks in two specific facilities in Canada and Panama.

One of those advocates of the guidelines, Senator Maria Cantwell, who condemned FDA in November for approving what some critics are calling "Frankfish," pointed out: "The FDA's genetically engineered salmon decision is bad for consumers and potentially bad for our environment. If the FDA doesn't reverse its decision, it's critical the agency develop clear and transparent labeling requirements for genetically engineered salmon."

Meanwhile, Pamela Bailey, president and CEO of the Grocery Manufacturers Associations stressed: "It is unfortunate that Congress has failed to take action this year to stop a patchwork of costly and misleading state labeling mandates, an issue of tremendous importance to consumers, farmers, food and beverage companies."

"In January, food manufacturers will face exponentially increasing costs totaling hundreds of millions of dollars to comply with Vermont's GMO labeling mandate," she added.

For her part, Jean Halloran, director of food policy at Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy arm of Consumer Reports stated: "We expect the food and biotech industries to renew their fight to block state laws from going into effect."

According to the union, surveys show that more than 90 per cent of consumers want food labels to tell them whether a product contains GMO ingredients, as it was revealed in a campaign in which more than 100,000 consumers contacted their senators to urge them not to include the anti-GMO rider in the budget bill.

"We need to keep up the pressure on Congress. "Consumers Union will keep pushing for consumers' right to know what's in their food, through a meaningful, easy-to-understand, on-package, mandatory label," Halloran concluded.

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