THE FISH INSPECTOR
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GLOBAL

Rise in seafood consumption as buyers put taste at the top

Fish and seafood consumption globally is on the rise, while consumer interest in sustainability continues to grow, a survey by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) has found. ASC's latest consumer research surveyed 14795 seafood consumers across 14 countries between February and March 2026, examining seafood purchasing habits and changing attitudes towards seafood sustainability. After a decline reported in ASC's 2024 research, consumers globally now claim a 2% net increase in fish and seafood consumption, with the US recording particularly strong growth at 12%. Key findings of the study are as following: i) Taste and enjoyment in eating (31%) remain the leading reasons for buying seafood, followed by health (27%) and nutrition (19%); ii) Freshness (31%) has overtaken price (27%) as consumers' top spontaneous purchase consideration, replacing price as the number one factor in the previous survey. Quality ranks third at 15%. In the 2024 survey, price ranked first at 36%, followed by fish type and preparation (18%) and freshness (16%); iii) Interest in sustainability is growing with measures of sustainable consumption increasing by more than 10% since 2024. Some 78% of consumers say they would choose a product that is less harmful to people and the environment when choosing between otherwise equal products; and iv) Independent certification provides trusted reassurance: Consumers are almost twice as likely to trust independent certification schemes for seafood sustainability information (21%) as information from retailers (11%) or seafood brands (11%). The research noted, however, that sustainability is not yet a leading purchase consideration. Just 3% spontaneously mention it when choosing seafood, rising to 10% when consumers are prompted. The findings suggest sustainability resonates most strongly when connected with tangible benefits consumers value, including health, food safety and quality. The findings were presented during the *Seafood Through the Consumer Lens: What's Changed?* webinar, hosted by ASC on September 8.

Read more: *here*

Study quantifies pathogen prevalence in traditional food markets; seafood showed greatest contamination

A global systematic review and meta-analysis of nearly 2.8 million samples quantified the prevalence of foodborne and zoonotic pathogens in traditional food markets, with the greatest levels of contamination observed in fish and seafood markets. Published in *The Lancet Global Health*, the study included 247 studies comprising 597 pathogen detection records from 41 countries across 16 regions. The researchers analysed studies published between January 2000 and October 2025 that reported the detection of zoonotic or foodborne pathogens in traditional/ informal food markets or related settings, including wet markets, farmers' markets, live animal or live bird markets, and seafood markets.

Read more: *here*

FSSC 22000 version 7 published

Food Safety Management System Certification, FSSC 22000 version 7, is an upgrade of the existing FCCS 22000 standard. This standard is made up of three different standards: i) ISO 22000: 2018; ii) FSSC Scheme requirements; and iii) ISO 22002:2025 Prerequisite Programmes. This standard is GFSI benchmarked. This is a process that enables this standard to be recognised and accepted by all major retailers across the world. But as part of the benchmarking process, every few years upgrades are required. This is what has happened this year. The new version 7 standard was published in May 2026, and audits will start in May 2027. So, what has changed in version 7: i) Further monitoring evidence is required to prove that your company has implemented Food Safety and Quality culture onsite. That would be monitoring documented KPI and action plans; ii) New food loss and waste requirements; iii) Changes to packaging design to reduce food loss and waste; iv) Updated risk assessment and training requirements for Food Fraud and Food Defense; v) Alignment to the prerequisite framework in ISO 22002-100 and ISO 22003; and v) There are also changes to the certification audit process and the data governance rules. The new standard is available: *here*

Wholechain and iFoodDS integrate to simplify compliance

Wholechain and iFoodDS announced completion of a software integration designed to streamline seafood suppliers' compliance with FDA's Food Traceability Rule, FSMA 204(d). The integration enables suppliers using Wholechain's software to share key data elements with trading partners on the iFoodDS Trace Exchange™ platform, supporting efficient FSMA 204 data sharing across the seafood supply chain. This integration underscores the growing importance of interoperability as seafood suppliers prepare for FSMA 204 compliance.

Read more: *here*

ASIA PACIFIC NEWS

Australia: Food safety and climate change remains a paradox

The country does not have a centralised authority responsible for coordinating food safety research. A new publication from the Food Safety Research Alliance (FSRA) argues this needs to change, warning that fragmented and reactive research efforts are leaving the country's food system exposed to emerging risks, including those driven by climate change. Much like climate adaptation, food safety depends on strong partnerships between researchers, government, industry and producers, and the report calls for a well-funded, coordinated national research system to protect public health and safeguard Australia's reputation for safe food. The report highlights vibriosis as a clear example of the climate link. Vibriosis is caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, a naturally occurring aquatic bacterium that grows faster in warmer water. Outbreaks linked to marine heatwaves have been increasing in Australia over summer months. These outbreaks have affected oysters from all major producing states, with significant events in Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales. The impacts of these outbreaks extend beyond human health. The 2021–22 South Australian outbreak alone cost the oyster industry an estimated AUD 14.7 million, on top of government costs to manage the response. For the seafood sector, adapting to climate change isn't only about what happens in the water, it also means adapting the systems around production, including testing and monitoring, so that food safety keeps pace with changing climate.

Read more: *here*

Cambodia: CQS standard helps fishery producers reach international markets

The postharvest fisheries sector is undergoing a significant transformation as local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) adopt the Cambodia Quality Seal (CQS), boosting the competitiveness of Cambodian fish products in international markets. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has issued CQS certificates to 30 local fishery producers under the CAPFISH-Capture initiative, the ministry said in a report recently. The certification enables recipients to export quality fresh and processed fishery products to markets including Australia, the United States, China, New Zealand and Vietnam. Implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the CAPFISH-Capture component of the broader CAPFISH project aims to strengthen Cambodia's food safety system, facilitate entry into international markets, including the European Union, and attract investment to raise competitiveness across the postharvest fisheries value chain.

Read more: *here*

Thailand: Tuna company unveils unique marine longevity portfolio

Globally leading tuna canning company, Thai Union Group, unveiled its vertically integrated marine longevity portfolio bringing together DHA oil, collagen, and bio calcium through a single tuna ingredient pipeline. It addresses cognitive, skin, and bone needs across different stages of life, with proven results backed by human trials. Longevity supplement brands generally work with separate suppliers and supply chains. But Thai Union Ingredients, the marine ingredients business of Thai Union Group PCL, stands out for producing an integrated healthy aging solution through a proprietary model extending from tuna sourcing to factories, refineries and finished ingredients. This enables end-to-end traceability and direct quality control at every stage of production. The portfolio enters the market as Asia-Pacific prepares for significant demographic change. The number of people aged 60 and over in the region will roughly triple between 2010 and 2050, approaching 1.3 billion, according to the United Nations Population Fund. By then, one in four people in the region will be over 60. Demand for longevity products, however, already extends across generations. A 2025 McKinsey survey found that up to 60% of consumers viewed healthy aging as a top or very important priority, with younger generations increasingly taking a proactive approach.

Read more: *here*

EUROPEAN NEWS

Fish consumption in the EU is evolving, consumption patterns is changing:EUFOMA case study finds

The European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA) case study provides a comprehensive assessment of the evolution of fishery and aquaculture product consumption in the EU, examining changes in consumption patterns, consumer behaviour and preferences, and the main economic and structural factors shaping demand. EU apparent consumption declined from 12.94 million tonnes in 2014 to 10.25 million tonnes in 2023, while per capita consumption fell from 25.5 kg to 22.9 kg, its lowest level of the decade. Trends varied considerably across Member States: consumption

decreased in countries including Spain, France and Lithuania, while it increased in Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Portugal and Spain remained the EU's largest per capita consumers. The study identifies a gradual shift from frequent at-home consumption towards more occasional patterns and greater out-of-home consumption. This trend is particularly pronounced among younger consumers, who tend to have lower familiarity with fish preparation and stronger expectations regarding convenience. Demand is increasingly oriented towards portioned, prepacked, ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products. Price and product appearance remain the main purchasing criteria, although origin, convenience and sustainability are gaining importance. At the same time, EU supply also shapes consumption patterns. The EU market's reliance on imports and retail strategies favouring stable, predictable supplies are contributing to a concentration of consumption around a limited number of species, such as salmon, tuna and shrimp. The report also provides detailed analyses of Spain, France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Austria, showing how cultural traditions, income, retail structures, product availability and price sensitivity influence consumption differently across national markets.

Find this important report from EUMOFA: *here*

EU: New EU exemption for fish and oyster sauce imports

The European Union has updated its list of shelf-stable composite products exempted from mandatory official controls at border control posts, specifically including sauces containing oyster or fish extracts. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2026/908, which applies from 23 July 2026, officially classifies these products as low-risk to public health. This update removes border-control confusion and clarifies that these specific sauces do not need to undergo mandatory, systematic inspections at EU borders. However, exporters must still ensure their products meet strict compliance rules to qualify for this exemption. The sauces must be shelf-stable, securely packaged or sealed, identified for human consumption, and contain ingredients sourced only from countries authorised to export those specific components to the EU. Furthermore, competent authorities in EU member states retain the right to perform risk-based controls at the final destination, during customs clearance or at the operator's premises. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2026/908 is available: *here*

EU: Updated US seafood import requirements

The European Union has revised its regulatory conditions for importing fish and shellfish from the United States. For more than 20 years the conditions for importing fishery products into the EU have been governed by the equivalence agreement between the EU and the US on sanitary measures. An amendment to this agreement in June 2026 replaced the simplified health certificate with a new, multiple-page, health certificate to be used for exports of US seafood to the EU. The new health certificate includes safeguards against the use of antimicrobial medicinal products, and in this regard the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been collecting declarations of non-use from affected seafood facilities exporting to the EU. The new certificate also includes animal health attestations in line with the requirements in EU animal health law. EU importers are encouraged to communicate the new requirements to their US suppliers to ensure that they can obtain the updated information ahead of the next shipment. US suppliers should follow advice from the FDA and NOAA. The old certificates continue to be acceptable in the EU for a transitional period until 3 December 2026, provided those certificates were issued no later than 3 September 2026. The legal instrument that introduced the changes is Decision (EU) 2026/1205, available: *here*

NORTH AMERICAN NEWS

USA: National Fisheries Institute rebranding to National Seafood Association

The National Fisheries Institute (NFI) has officially rebranded as the National Seafood Association (NSA), unveiling its new logo and tagline: "Science, Education, & Advocacy Since 1945". 'The National Seafood Association is a name that aligns with who we are today,' National Seafood Association Chair and Bay Hill Seafood CEO Justin Conrad said. 'Our new name honors our legacy while positioning us for the decades ahead.' The association said the rebrand is the result of more than a year of research and engagement with its members, led by its executive committee and a rebranding subcommittee. That process included stakeholder engagement, member listening sessions, brand research, and evaluating a few potential names before ultimately choosing the National Seafood Association. 'For more than 80 years, we've brought together businesses across the seafood value chain to advance science-based policy, educate consumers and policymakers, and champion seafood as the healthiest, most sustainable animal protein available,' NSA President and CEO Lisa Wallenda Picard said.

Read more: *here*

FDA: Seaweed-based alternative packaging approved

Kelpi, a UK biomaterials startup, received US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance for its seaweed-based coating for paper and board food packaging, allowing the material to be used on packaging sold in the US. The coating is designed as an alternative to fossil-based plastic layers and can be used with all food types at or below room temperature, including refrigerated and frozen foods. The FDA clearance follows an earlier Letter of No Objection from Canada's Bureau of Chemical Safety and expands Kelpi's regulatory reach in North America. The company has also been working with Amcor to evaluate its barrier coating technology within fiber-based packaging applications, with the material positioned as compatible with paper recycling streams. For brands and packaging

suppliers, the approval opens the door to wider commercial use of seaweed-based barrier coatings in the US, supporting efforts to reduce reliance on conventional plastic layers while maintaining food-contact compliance.

Read more: *here*

LATIN AMERICAN NEWS

Brazil: New guide directs fish purchases and fraud prevention in restaurants

Two Brazilian associations developed a technical guide to guide the acquisition, reception and conservation of fishery products in bars and restaurants. As reported by *Seafood Brasil*, the document is aimed at entrepreneurs, buyers, kitchen managers and managers of the gastronomic channel. Irregularities addressed include the substitution of higher-value species for lower-priced ones and the excessive glazing of frozen products, which can distort the declared net weight. The guide also sets out visual, tactile and sanitary criteria for inspecting products during receipts. Recommendations include checking labelling and packaging conditions, monitoring temperature at the time of delivery and checking for cold chain maintenance. The material was prepared by the Brazilian Association of Bars and Restaurants (Abrasel) and the Brazilian Association for the Promotion of Fish (Abrapes) and is available free of charge. Read more: *here*

Chile: New policy will seek to increase the consumption of fishery products by two kilos

The country launched a national policy aimed at increasing the annual consumption of fishery products per capita by at least two kilograms. According to the Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Subpesca), domestic consumption currently stands at about 15 kilograms per capita, despite the fact that during 2025 the country registered landings of 2.1 million tonnes and fisheries and aquaculture exports close to USD 8,500 million. The initiative will address aspects related to production, marketing, transport, availability and access to fishery products. It will also seek to diversify consumption, currently concentrated in species such as horse mackerel, reineta, hake and salmon, as well as mussels, locos and clams. During the next few months, technical tables will be held with representatives of artisanal and industrial fishing, aquaculture, public agencies, health and education institutions and entities linked to research and productive development. The process will include a citizen consultation and, in a second stage, activities in coves with tastings and points of sale to bring the products directly to consumers.

Read more: *here*

AFRICAN NEWS

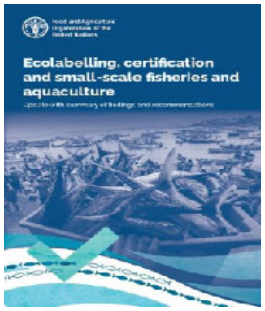
South Africa: Paralytic Shellfish Toxin levels in Saldanha Bay have decreased

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), South Africa, advises the public that paralytic shellfish toxin (PST) levels in mussels and oysters from the monitored production areas in the Saldanha Bay Aquaculture Development Zone have decreased to below the regulatory safety limits for human consumption. Recent monitoring has confirmed that PST levels in mussels and oysters from the Saldanha Bay Aquaculture Development Zone are within safe levels for human consumption. Shellfish from these approved production areas may therefore be harvested, marketed and consumed, subject to continued compliance with the official shellfish monitoring and control programme. The monitoring programme is implemented in line with local and international standards. The DFFE will continue to monitor toxin levels and will issue further advice should conditions change.

This is the follow-up media release by DFFE once they have detected very high levels (15 times higher than the regulatory safety limit) of PST in mussels and oysters in the Saldanha Bay farms on 25 May 2026. High concentrations of toxin-producing phytoplankton (*Alexandrium catenella*) have also been recorded, indicating significant harmful algal bloom.

Read more: *here*

PUBLICATION



Ecolabelling, certification and small-scale fisheries and aquaculture

Update with summary of findings and recommendations

This brief examines how ecolabelling and certification can support small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. It highlights barriers related to costs, data, governance and social inclusion, and proposes practical measures to improve equitable market access. The findings emphasise locally driven approaches, stronger institutions, digital innovation and collaborative action to achieve sustainable and inclusive aquatic food systems.

Download this important FAO publication: *here*

The next issue of THE FISH INSPECTOR will be distributed in January 2027. Any information you may wish to have disseminated through this newsletter may be submitted through http://e-newsletter.infofish.org/

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