

Portuguese Consumers' Interest in Seafood Production and Consumption: Insights Considering Benefits, Risks and their Environmental Impact

Ana Pinto de Moura¹ • Luís Miguel Cunha²

¹Department of Sciences and Technology, Universidade Aberta, Oporto, Portugal e-mail: apmoura@uab.pt

²DGAOT, Faculty of Sciences, University of Porto, Oporto, Portugal e-mail: lmcunha@fc.up.pt

Considering food choice, individuals base their decisions on assessments of risks and benefits. For seafood products, consumers may balance between perceived benefits and risks from consuming fish in order to get the health benefits without exceeding tolerable intakes of chemical contaminants. Moreover, consumers may balance between the potential environmental impacts of farmed fish and the thought of fish farming as a way to help save the wild fish stocks from over exploration. The aim of this research was to explore Portuguese consumers' perceptions about the benefits and risks of seafood consumption, while exploring differences on their views about wild and farmed fish. Focus group discussion was the method used. For the 23 participants enrolled in this study, seafood products are perceived as healthy foods and they like the taste of fish/seafood products. For them, farmed production is the image most associate with aquaculture, similar to the livestock production animals. Considering the sustainability, there is no significant discussion regarding this subject. For those who expressed their opinion, there was no consensus: some participants mentioned farmed fish production is more sustainable, whereas others considered wild fish capture as more sustainable.

Keywords: farmed fish; focus groups; qualitative study; wild fish