

Fourth open SEAFOODplus Conference in Bilbao

Scientists present the latest results of their research work

More than half the running time of the Integrated Research Project SEAFOODplus is over and the 70 participating partners from 16 countries are reporting fresh results from the six main research areas more and more frequently. In the face of this flood of information it is sometimes difficult to recognize which results are particularly valuable. That is why it is important that some of the participating researchers will be presenting their work themselves in Bilbao at the beginning of June. It will be an open conference – anyone who is interested is warmly invited to attend.

The total running time set for the SEAFOODplus project which began officially on 1 January 2004 was four and a half years. Intensive research work was carried out right from the start: on fish farms, in laboratories, at processing facilities and in hospitals. The strategic objective of the integrated project is to reduce health problems and increase well-being among European consumers by applying the benefits obtained through the consumption of health promoting and safe seafood products of high eating quality. The relevance of seafood in the diet to diminish increased incidence of, for example, cardiovascular, cancer and inflammatory diseases will be assessed by performing dietary intervention and epidemiological studies. Other focus areas are the health of young populations, prevention of osteoporosis and postpartum depression observed in women after giving birth. Seafood's importance for consumer well-being and behaviour is being investigated in order to understand determinants of consumers' seafood consumption and to adapt seafood products to consumer demands. The impact of health-related communication strategies on consumer seafood decision-making needs to be assessed, too.

The objectives of the seafood safety component are to make seafood safe for the consumer. The researchers have made it their aim to improve the health status of consumers through the development of 'tailor-made' functional seafood products and to ensure their nutritional quality and safety. In the face of overfished oceans and dwindling fish stocks efforts towards full utilisation of raw materials from aquaculture and from traditional fisheries are no less important. The aquaculture component studies the effects of dietary modulation, husbandry, fish physiology, genetics and pre-slaughter conditions. The challenge is to find a compromise between the trends towards intensive rearing and consumer demand for healthy, high-quality seafood which is ethically acceptable and has a low impact on the environment.

Presentation of significant new results

There will be many interesting new research results from a lot of these research fields to hear in Bilbao. Based on the presentations at the previous three conferences – the researchers will be presenting the results of their work to the public for the fourth time in June

– there are likely to be some unexpected findings, too, which will point the way forward. Although the project is still by no means complete it is already possible to say that SEAFOODplus has greatly altered and broadened both our knowledge and the possibilities of influencing the safety and quality of seafood products.

The fourth Open SEAFOODplus Conference 'Seafood in a changing world' will take place at Palacio Euskalduna, Bilbao, Spain from 4th to 6th June 2007. During the Conference there will be simultaneous English-Spanish translation. Christian Patemann, one of the most senior directors of DG Research in Brussels, will open the conference.

The conference talks will be grouped in five sessions:

- Session 1: Nutrition, gastronomy and consumer research in seafood
- Session 2: New seafood supply from aquaculture and the need for traceability
- Session 3: Seafood Safety - Controlling microbial risks
- Session 4: Sustainable and ethical aquaculture production
- Session 5: Initiatives for industry integration in research and innovation

Focus on health and nutrition

The first session will again focus on health and nutritional problems among certain consumer groups and on the question as to how seafood can contribute to their solution. Among the announced talks are for example "Food in early life: communicating about food and health" (Monique Raats, University of Surrey, United Kingdom) or "Seafood diet and weight management in young Europeans with overweight and obesity problems (Alfredo Martínez, University of Navarra, Spain). Gertjan Schaafsma, Wageningen University, The Netherlands, will talk about "New EU regulation on Nutrition - and Health claims, what does it mean for seafood". The fact that such topics are of interest not only to scientists but also to companies working within the industry and to representatives of other practical fields can be seen in the selection of some of the speakers. Andoni Luis Aduriz, for example, from Restaurante Mugaritz Spain will talk about "Innovative gastronomy from seafood." It is known that Spanish cuisine, in particular, has recently introduced some sensational innovative approaches. Juanjo de la Cerda from Grupo Pescanova (Spain) will deal with "Trends

in new fish products development," a topic that should really catch the interest of any seafood producer.

One of the highlights in the second session will be Javier Arán Echabe's "Trends in the European aquaculture products supply: status for new aquaculture species". Javier Arán Echabe works for the Spanish Grupo Empresarial Isidro de la Cal, a group of enterprises operating in the fishing sector. In their plant Lusohispana de Acuicultura a team of experts is working on improving the production of the currently farmed species and on analysing the feasibility of farming new ones.

Detection methods for Norovirus and Hepatitis A Viruses

Steve Otwell from the University of Florida (USA), who will open the third session with his talk "Balancing risks and benefits in seafood consumption: the USA perspective", is the founder and National Coordi-

nator for the Seafood HACCP Alliance for education and training based in the United States, and serves as the USA Board Delegate for the International Association of Fish Inspectors. Since 1985 he has served as the Executive Director for the Seafood Science & Technology Society of the Americas and runs annual international schools on warm water lobsters and shrimp. Paw Dalgaard and Jette Emborg at the Danish Institute for Fisheries Research will present new developments in relation to histamines and biogenic amines in seafood. Albert Bosch, University of Barcelona, Spain, an internationally acknowledged specialist in the field of virus research, will speak about "Standardised real-time RT-PCR assay for Norovirus and Hepatitis A virus detection". Noroviruses, in particular, have frequently been in the headlines lately and are thus a source of worry to many consumers.

Session 4 is concerned with sustainable and ethical aquaculture. Ole Torrissen from the Institute

of Marine Research, Norway will present aspects of "Aquaculture from an animal welfare perspective" and Pirjo Honkanen and Svein Ottar Olsen from Fiskeriforskning, Norway, will speak about "The role of ethical concern on evaluation of farmed cod". The other talks in this block will also deal with key issues of acceptable animal welfare and ethically acceptable aquaculture as demanded by consumers.

Stronger integration of small and medium-sized enterprises

The fifth session is especially devoted to the question of how industry can be better integrated in the research and innovation activities. For, no matter how important or valuable the research results presented by the scientists might be, they will only become effective if they are picked up by industry and become a part of daily work routines. Fernando Trabada Crende from the EC, DG Research, Unit "Research and SMEs) will point out the possi-

bilities offered by the EU for small and medium-sized enterprises in the seafood sector and Begoña Pérez-Villarreal from AZTI-Tecnalia, Spain will report on "Demonstration projects coming from SEAFOODplus and related innovation actions".

After this lecture block the scientists from the SEAFOODplus project will be available to interested conference participants for a round table discussion and one-to-one meetings provided a previous request has been submitted prior to the meeting aimed at providing specific assistance in technological and R&D needs, checking a project idea for its suitability for EU programs, or technology transfer.

From the above, the only conclusion possible would seem to be that the journey to Bilbao and participation in the conference is definitely worthwhile. For registration forms and further information please visit www.seafoodplus.org



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4 - 6 June 2007 at Palacio Euskalduna in Bilbao, Spain

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- Nutrition, gastronomy and consumer research in seafood
- New seafood supply from aquaculture and the need for traceability
- Seafood Safety - Controlling microbial risks

- Sustainable and ethical aquaculture production
- Initiatives for industry integration in research and innovation

The conference is aimed at industry representatives, scientists and policy makers and will offer various workshops arranged by SEAFOODplus consortium members on 4 June. In addition, posters will be on display throughout the event. Simultaneous English-Spanish interpretation is available during the sessions.

More information on programmes, prices, registration and hotels are available at www.seafoodplus.org or contact SEAFOODplus Coordinator Torger Børresen, tb@difres.dk, +45 45252577; secretariat manager Jette Donovan Jensen, jej@difres.dk, +45 45252575; or Begoña Pérez-Villarreal, bperez@suk.azti.es, +34 94 6029400

