For Immediate Release
CONTACT: Joey Brookhart (202) 483-9570 or
joey@seafoodchoices.com

Contaminant Levels in Farmed vs. Wild Salmon

(Washington, DC) January 9, 2004 – Not all seafood is created equal. Seafood Choices Alliance, the national organization bringing ocean conservation to the table, issues the following statement in response to a major study published today in the journal *Science*.*

> "We have always known that there are environmental impacts associated with certain seafoods (wild and farmed). Now, in light of new evidence that farmed Atlantic salmon contains significant levels of substances toxic to humans, it's clear that seafood lovers must also consider health effects as well as environmental effects of the seafood they choose. This study provides us with an opportunity to focus on the differences between wild and farmed salmon. The higher levels of contaminants found in farmed salmon are due to the difference in diet between wild and farmed salmon, and in particular, what the farmed salmon, a carnivorous fish, are fed.
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> "Seafood Choices Alliance believes it is important to understand where our seafood comes from. We need to know more about the fish we eat and how its production or capture impacts the ocean environment and human health. Currently, we have little information with which to guide our decisions. Better labeling and more testing of seafood could begin to give us the information we need to make sound health and environmental decisions regarding our seafood choices.
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> "Many ocean-friendly seafood options are also good for human health. These "best" seafood choices include wild Alaskan salmon, wild sardines, U.S. farmed tilapia, U.S. farmed catfish, and U.S. farmed caviars (such as rainbow trout and white sturgeon)."

This study found that farmed Atlantic salmon contains approximately 10 times more dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other contaminants than wild Pacific salmon. The authors warn that the contaminant levels found in some farmed salmon may be high enough to "pose risks that detract from the beneficial effects of fish consumption."

* The study, "Global Assessment of Organic Contaminants in Farmed Salmon," is published in the January 9th issue of *Science.* The authors – scientists from the University of Michigan, the University of Indiana, Cornell University and the State University of New York – applied a cancer risk analysis developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They analyzed more than two metric tons of farmed and wild salmon from around the world for fourteen organochlorine contaminants.

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Seafood Choices Alliance is a non-profit organization bringing ocean conservation to the table by working with the seafood sector – chefs, retailers, caterers, fishmongers, and others – to make the best informed decisions about the seafood they buy/serve and provide the best options to their customers. Seafood Choices Alliance is dedicated to ensuring a lasting and diverse supply of seafood.

1731 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20009
202•483•5365
1•866•SEA•MORE
fax 202•483•3518
www.seafoodchoices.com
info@seafoodchoices.com