Valuable facts about Icelandic seafood

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Norway lobster
Nephrops norvegicus

Saithe, pollock
Pollachius virens

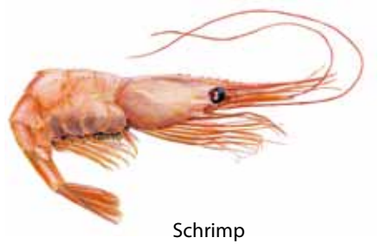
Catfish
Anarhichas lupus

Plaice
Pleuronectes platessa

Redfish, ocean perch
Sebastes marinus

Haddock
Melanogrammus aeglefinus

Herring
Clupea harengus



Schrimp
Pandalus borealis

Greenland halibut
Reinhardtius hippoglossoides

Cod
Gadus morhua

Monitoring is necessary to ensure quality and safety

In this brochure, the results from the Icelandic surveillance programme for various pollutants from the past five years are compiled and illustrated graphically for ten economically important marine species. The pollutants/undesirable substances are measured in the edible part of the seafood, and the results are presented based on the average level of each pollutant measured from 2003 to 2008. The marine species presented here provide an example of the type of data available from the Icelandic surveillance programme and are intended to shed a light on the status of the levels of undesirable substances in Icelandic seafood products. Additional data, for other marine species and fisheries products, as well as fish meal and fish oil for feed, have been published in annual reports from the Icelandic surveillance programme. These reports are open to the public and can be accessed at the Matís homepage (www.matis.is).

Levels of pollutants in the edible part of Icelandic seafood are low in comparison to available EU maximum limits. The level of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in the edible part of the seafood is approximately 1/10 of the limit set by the EU. The concentration of marker PCBs is also found to be low, compared to existing maximum limits in Europe. The concentrations of heavy metals, e.g. cadmium (Cd), lead (Pb) and mercury (Hg) in Icelandic seafood are generally well below the maximum limits set by EU.

One of the main exposure routes to the undesirable substances presented in this brochure is through food. It is therefore important to monitor how much of these undesirable substances are present in food in order to ensure the safety and well-being of consumers. Following is a short description of the different chemicals and chemical groups that are of main concern in connection with to seafood consumption.

About Matís

Matís is an independent research institute with 100 percent governmental ownership. The total turnover in 2009 was about $USD 10 million working capital, of which 39% was coming from the Icelandic Government. Matís is located in seven cities or towns around Iceland. Matís' employees are many of Iceland's most competent scientists in the field of food technology, food research and biotechnology; food scientists, chemists, biologists, engineers and fisheries scientists. Several of Matís employees have a part-time position at universities in Iceland and about 14 Ph.D. students and many M.Sc. students are doing their research at Matís.

Matís is working in research and development for the authorities, food industry, fisheries and aquaculture. Matís focuses on innovation in food and biotechnology, various services in the food industry in Iceland and abroad and to increase safety and quality of food products.