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The effect of a herring diet on lipid composition, fatty acid composition, and cholesterol levels in the muscle tissue of pen-reared chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

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Abstract

Two groups of chinook salmon were held in marine net-pens. The control group was fed a Biodiet commercial diet, and the study group was fed whole herring. Fish of both groups were sampled at the start of the study and monthly for 3 months. The herring diet had a significant influence on the dorsal muscle total lipid content which doubled in the first month compared to the controls. The *n*-3/*n*-6 ratio in the herring-fed fish increased by 28%, while in the control group it decreased by 57% during the study period. The change appears to be related to the difference in 18:2 *n*-6 levels in the diets. Cholesterol levels of the herring-fed salmon were twice that of the salmon fed the

commercial diet, but were still much lower than initial cholesterol levels. This study demonstrates, for the first time, that the nutritional quality of pen-reared chinook salmon can be improved shortly before marketing by modifying the diet.



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