

**Letter to the Editor  
New York Times**

**Re: *Sardines with your bagel?* Op-ed June 9, 2008**

Taras Grescoe's opinion piece *Sardines with your bagel?* (June 9<sup>th</sup>) reinforces the concern that all of us have about our declining wild Pacific salmon stocks. However, his inaccuracies about salmon farming are a disservice to readers who seek healthy, sustainable food choices.

Most troubling is incomplete and incorrect information about emamectin benzoate which is used to control sea lice on farmed salmon. Farmed salmon are not fed pesticides. Emamectin benzoate is classified as a drug. The same active ingredient in emamectin benzoate is approved for use on agricultural crops in the United States.

This medicine is prescribed as a seven day treatment under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. A tiny amount, 50 micrograms (or 0.00005 grams) of drug to each kilogram of fish, is provided on average for about ten days of the more than two years that the fish are grown.

To ensure that emamectin benzoate is not present in harvested fish, a minimum 68-day withdrawal is required before harvest. To suggest that farmed salmon products may contain pesticide residues is wrong.

It is true that the feed used in salmon farming contains both fishmeal and fish oil derived from capture fisheries, but the conversion ratio is much lower than the value Mr. Grescoe provides. Farmed Atlantic salmon gain about one pound for every 1.2 pounds of capture fisheries raw materials that are consumed. Stock selection and continually improving fish feed formulas mean that one-to-one conversion ratios will be attainable in the future.

It's unfortunate that Mr. Grescoe did not take the time to learn more about salmon farming in British Columbia and around the world. He would have learned why farmed salmon is a nutritious and sustainable food choice.

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