



Goals and Methods

- What are the perception of consumers towards trout and salmon ?
 - Reasons for consuming, or not, trout and salmon
 - Similarities and differences between trout and salmon
 - Opinion about organic trout or salmon
- 5 Focus Groups in France, Dec 2015 and Jan 2016
 - 3 locations : Brest, Dunkerque, Paris
 - 40 participants

Trout & Salmon : indeed can be wild or farmed

Consumers refer to the following sources for trout & salmon:

Trout	Salmon
- from leisure fishing –angling- in rivers, torrents, lakes, in France	- from professional fishing at sea (and from leisure fishing –angling- in Ireland and Scotland),
- from farms in France.	- from farms, abroad.

- wild trout and salmon are still mentioned as a reference by a number of consumers,
- a number of consumers refer to meals of wild trout as a normal experience,
- many consumers mention wild salmon as a food product.



Trout and salmon : a lot of benefits but also drawbacks

Trout		Salmon	
+	-	+	-
Tasty A fine food served at restaurant "Economic" : cheaper than salmon "Ecological" when produced locally	Not familiar to some people Taste of fresh trout can be not appreciated	Flavorsome Affordable Easy to cook Easy for kids Festive (for some people)	"High-fat" fish Changes in quality and fatter today Fatter than trout

Trout and salmon are perceived as similar when smoked, different as fresh products



"I feel a difference between trout and salmon when trout is not smoked. When smoked, I don't see any difference between the two species." (Priya, 24, FG-Brest I)
"I have never been particularly attracted by trout but one day I saw the product next to salmon and I noticed that it was cheaper so I tried it. And I don't really see any difference between smoked trout and smoked salmon so that's fine to me." (Florence, 26, FG-Brest II).



Smoked trout is bought in place of smoked salmon because: (i) they are hardly distinguishable; (ii) smoked trout is cheaper than smoked salmon.
We note that this substitution has been a key for the growth of trout demand within the last years on French market.

Labels, and organic fish

Labels are perceived as related to eco-friendliness

but information about labelled products and labels are insufficient or unclear

Organic fish: still an unclear definition for some consumers VS the understanding of the principles of organic farming

- some consumers refer to a fish living in a natural environment : a wild fish, as observed in early 2000's (Aarset et al., 2004),
- a fish farmed under conditions specified and verified - as for agricultural organic products -, bringing guarantees on no use of antibiotics, on feed ingredients and on fish welfare,
- but some doubts about controls and quality, in relation to a paper published in a consumers association magazine in December 2016.
"There is no control of what fishes eat, I mean...there is no way to control..." (Emmanuel, 25, FG-Brest I, p.15)
"At the beginning of the week, I read an article about organic salmon which, according to them, is more polluted than farmed salmon." (Cathy, 23, FG-Brest II, p.16)
"Even organic fish can be contaminated." (Marie-Christine, 63, FG-Paris I, p.25)

Media messages, distrust towards farming, demand for information

- despite the benefits recognized to fish farming : sparing natural fish stocks, possible control on production conditions, possible certification, lower price,
- a distrust towards fish farming referring to negative information given by the media especially about salmon farming in Norway (after a TV programme on Norway salmon farming in 2013, followed by a marked decrease of salmon consumption)
- toxic substances in wild salmon mentioned by media bring confusion about choosing wild or farmed
- but some "free thinkers": their purchase are not influenced by negative media messages, too frequent and too diversified

"I don't really think too much about that. Except that, from time to time, the press hastens to warn us when some salmon is contaminated or whatever but I don't pay much attention to that." (Marie-Paule, 66, FG-Paris I)

A demand for information and communication about fish farming and quality of farmed fish.

« They should also say how farming is done, and reassure us about quality I think... »
(Joël, 55, FG-Paris II)

Conclusion

- Results congruous with previous studies about image of farmed fish
- A heavy weight of media and a poor knowledge hardly compensated by a limited communication

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The project SUCCESS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 635188



Summary: Five consumer focus groups have been organized in three locations (Brest, Dunkerque, Paris) in France in December 2015 and January 2017, within the H2020 program SUCCESS. We investigated consumer perceptions concerning trout and salmon, labels, organic fish, and comparison between farmed and wild fish.
Trout and salmon are both perceived as fine food, easy to cook, with an acceptable price. The difference between the two species is perceptible and known for fresh fish but hardly for smoked fish.
For some consumers, there is some distrust towards farmed fish, with a strong reference to media messages, while some consumers declare their buying is not influenced by negative media messages. The need for more information about farming system is often mentioned, especially about feeding.
Labels are perceived as concerning products respecting environment. Information about labels is considered scarce or hardly accessible. Organic fish is known as a farmed fish, except for some consumers who mention that wild fish is organic ("biologique" in French). Consumers often declared that despite the label "organic", they are not confident on the quality and on the controls.
Farmed fish is perceived positively as farming allows to spare natural fish resources, as it can be farmed under organic label, and for some consumers, because it is cheaper than wild fish. The mentioned negative aspects often concern the use of antibiotics. The results are coherent with previous studies, regarding the strong weight of negative media messages, the distrust towards farming and the demand for more information.