Pangasius, a Mouth Watering White Fish by Martin Walker

Article published on January 13th 2012 | Food

Though Pollock is the most widely consumed seafood species, nobody has ever heard of by this name! This particular variety of whitefish which is extremely popular comes from the Alaskan waters. Its quality and quantity make it economical in a large variety of recipes. This fish is found anywhere from the plates at five-star restaurants to fast food fryers. Another most desired and mouth watering is the Pangasius, which resembles a catfish and farmed mostly in Vietnam.

The Pollock after being harvested from the Alaskan waters would be frozen only once to lock in its unmatched flavor, soft white meat texture and the freshness. The flesh of this fish is used in various ways to create delicious recipes. Though this marine species is available from waters all over the North Pacific Ocean, those from the Bering Sea of Alaska and the Gulf of Alaska is the most in demand. Pangasius also goes by the scientific name Pangasius hypophthalmus and also as Vietnamese Tra or White River Cobbler. They breed well in a tropical climate. They are fed with pellets made from rice bran and some soybean meal, which floats on top of the water and stops them from being bottom feeders, ensuring better quality fish.

In the United States, the harvesting of Pollock is diligently managed by both the national standards and the state of Alaska as written into the 1959 state constitution. Alaska is considered the real pioneer and leader in the natural resource management, development and sustainability with regard to seafood. Because of the demand for the product worldwide the standards of packaging and storage are enforced. The Pangasius grows to its weight of 3 to 4.5 pounds in about six months. They average 11.5 to 23.5 inches long and weigh from one to 6.5 pounds. The product is sold mostly in fillet, skin-off and fully trimmed forms and price is subject to several yardsticks.

The Pollock from Alaska is used in include fish and chips meals, fillets, fish sticks, and many other products. It is also found in surimi, more commonly known as 'imitation crab.' This is found in everything from fast food sandwiches to fine sushi dishes. In most of the fish baskets, fish sandwiches, or even salads, particular species from the sea is the basic ingredient. Pangasius is a multipurpose white fish with a medium texture and subtle flavor, and has a stable market in 70 countries around the world. This species is farmed in semi-closed ponds, cages and fenced off areas in the Mekong River and its branches in South-East Asia. The overall impact of farming this species of fish has on the environment is unknown at present.

In order ensure regular income to Pangasius farmers, nine provincial Seafood Associations in the Mekong organized a meeting to find means of sustainable breeding of the species in the Mekong Delta. To help the Seafood Associations in the Mekong Delta in supporting farmers, the management boards of the Associations are actively following the international market trend, applying modern technologies in producing, attracting investments and step up the demand in the global market.

Article Source:
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Martin Walker is an author who writes informative articles on Tilapia, a Pollock, Basa, a Pangasius.

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Article Keywords:
Pollock, Pangasius

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