Protected food, drink or agricultural product name

Product specification for Scottish Salmon

A protected geographical indication (PGI)

Responsible country: Great Britain

This document sets out the elements of the product specification for information purposes.

Competent authority

Name: G.I. Team, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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Applicant group

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Composition: Producers/processors

Type of product (as in Annex XI Implementing Regulation 668/2014)

Class 1.7 Fresh fish, molluscs, and crustaceans and products derived therefrom

1. Product name(s)

Scottish Salmon

2. Description

Scottish Salmon must be typical of the species, *Salmo salar* (Atlantic salmon). Scottish Salmon have a consistent shape. The fish must have a rounded ventral body shape when viewed laterally and the body wall musculature should show no significant tendency to collapse when carcass is eviscerated. Scottish Salmon have an iridescent appearance and are silver in colour. The flesh colour must have a minimum intensity of 26 on the SalmoFan™ scale. Scottish Salmon flesh is firm with a fibrous but smooth and even texture. Scottish Salmon have a consistent flavour primarily due to rapid chilling post-harvest.

Processing practices must provide for samples of Scottish Salmon to be evaluated against defined bacteriological criteria to ensure that, overall, hygiene procedures are effective, and that the microbiological quality of the products is being maintained at a satisfactory level.

3. Geographical area

The coastal region of mainland Scotland, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland Isles

4. Proof of origin

Scottish biologists have been attempting to improve wild salmon runs for over 150 years. The first efforts to incubate and hatch salmon eggs took place in 1838. Biologists established many hatcheries on rivers where obstructions (such as waterfalls) blocked access to good spawning grounds for salmon returning from the sea. These hatcheries enabled biologists to release eggs and fry above the obstructions, expanding spawning grounds.

In 1890, there were 18 hatcheries operating in Scotland. From this period until the 1960's this knowledge and breeding skills were further developed through experience so that the production of Scottish Salmon could be initiated, with the first ongrowing farm fully established at Loch Ailort in Inverness-shire in 1969.

Towards the late '70s and early '80s, as experience grew and increased finance was available, the rate of expansion was increased with a number of businesses getting involved. Tonnage rapidly grew on the back of this. While only 600 tonnes were produced in 1980, this grew to 32,500 tonnes by 1990 and 115,000 tonnes in 1998. In 2021, just over 205,000 tonnes were produced, contributing to over £760mil to the UK economy and making up a significant share of the £1.2bil worth of salmon and salmon products sold in

UK retail (circa. 30% of £4.2bil worth of UK seafood retail). With this rapid expansion in production, there was also growth in the numbers employed in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. Indeed, today over 4000 people are directly employed in the production of Scottish Salmon, either in the rearing process (hatcheries and ongrowing farms) or within a number of packing stations that handle the salmon post-harvest.

The magical mix of climate, terrain, indigenous industries and the Scottish people's inherent love and respect for their surroundings have blended to create a unique environment. Pure coastal waters and sheltered lochs have sustained and nurtured each Scottish Salmon while expert husbandry skills have ensured each salmon achieves and maintains prime condition.

Much of the industry's success has been due to its ability to successfully market itself to meet changing trade and consumer requirements. The vital element in this has been its emphasis on high quality. From the start, this has transcended from the product attributes through to the rearing processes employed, which ensures maximum welfare of the salmon and protection of the surrounding environment. Indeed, quality has become a watchword among all producers of Scottish Salmon, and it is never compromised as evidenced by the Label Rouge label which some Scottish Salmon is entitled to bear.

It is therefore with good reason that Scottish Salmon has continued to be held in such high regard by leading chefs, food writers and discerning consumers world-wide. The high reputation in which Scottish farmed salmon is held for quality, consistency and flavour is borne out by the findings of consumer research.

5. Method of production

Scottish Salmon

1. Ova: The ova are stripped from parental broodstock when they are in their peak reproductive state. Fertilised ova are then incubated in freshwater under carefully controlled conditions.

2. Alevins: The ova hatch and the emerged alevins are sustained by their yolk sac. Health and performance are continually monitored by husbandry personnel to ensure optimum development into fry.

3. Fry: When they begin feeding for themselves, fry are placed in freshwater pens or tanks until they develop into parr.

4. Parr: The parr, identified by the characteristic "parr marks" on the flank, grow rapidly, gradually losing the "parr marks" and eventually undergo a major physiological and anatomical transformation (silvery blue colour, streamlined shape) to transition into smolts.

5. Smolts: These are young salmon which are ready to migrate to seawater and complete their transition into salmon. This transition is termed 'smoltification'. Under farmed conditions, they are transferred from the freshwater environment, in which they have lived and developed since hatching, to sea pens or tanks where they grow rapidly. The transfer

from fresh to sea water is an extremely delicate operation and requires very careful monitoring to ensure that the young salmon are not damaged.

6. Salmon Ongrowing: This is the stage where 'salmon become salmon' and this is one of the key differentiators between salmons and trouts. Once in salt water, and with smoltification complete, the salmon grow in pens in lochs and inlets around the Scottish coast for a period of up to 2 years. The salmon are fed on compound rations which may include fish meal, fish oil and a basket of other ingredients to ensure that they are provided with all of their nutritional requirements.

7. Harvesting: Scottish salmon are harvested humanely using methods which ensure that they are rapidly stunned and then bled. This ensures high flesh quality, and the process is underpinned by robust hygiene protocols.

8. Gutting: Once bled, the salmon are immediately chilled to a temperature of less than 4°C. They are then gutted as soon as possible and brought down to packing temperatures of 0-2°C.

9. Packing: The salmon are packed into food grade boxes/containers to protect the product during handling, storage and transit and all packing is carried out in line with stringent protocols governing temperature controls, hygiene standards and product grading.

10. Distribution: The salmon is stored and distributed to the consumer in line with strict hygiene standards, including temperature control at between 0-2°C.

Independent inspectors rigorously enforce the quality of Scottish Salmon. Farms and packing stations undergo frequent, detailed checks.

6. Link with the geographical area

Scottish Salmon are grown in the Scottish marine environment. It is the salmon ongrowing stage of production (the stage between smolt and harvest), in this environment, that underpins this Protected Geographical Indication. For Scottish Salmon, the designated production area provides a unique environment which produces the characteristic features of Scottish Salmon. In particular, these include:

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- High flushing rates of sea lochs and voes which provide strong currents ensuring that the salmon are continually swimming. This in turn produces the distinctive firm-textured flesh and prevents excessive fat deposition.
- High rates of water exchange ensure a good oxygen supply which increases the salmon's metabolic rate and leads to a beneficial effect on the size and weight of the salmon.
- The high quality, North Atlantic oceanic water enables the salmon to grow evenly and to a consistent shape.

- The small fluctuation in water temperature over any given year means that the fish can be cultivated in a relatively stable environment which in turn produces an even and consistent flavour and texture with no ‘off flavour’.

7. Inspection body

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Fax:

Email: enquiries.uk@lrqa.com

Website: www.lrqa.com

The inspection body conforms to the principles of ISO 17065 standard.

8. Labelling

The entire range of “Scottish Salmon” products, presentations and dishes including frozen, smoked, ready meals, salmon mousse and salmon pâté are allowed to bear this designation with obligatory mention of the place of manufacture on their label accompanied by the reference to the manufacturing process. Scottish Salmon, which is not presented as a single ingredient, fresh, chilled, product to the consumer (and not previously frozen) may benefit from the aforementioned designation but must state either ‘Made with Scottish Salmon’, ‘Made using Scottish Salmon’, ‘Contains Scottish Salmon’ or lists Scottish Salmon as an ingredient on product packaging, as appropriate.

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