



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
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Opening Remarks

First off, I'd like to personally welcome everyone to this most auspicious gathering.

It has been my extreme pleasure, on behalf of the NOAA Fisheries' National Seafood Inspection Laboratory in Pascagoula to have worked with the Hawaii Seafood Council and the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office to organize this Symposium.

As you might expect, we have had our hands full in the Gulf making sure that Gulf seafood continues to be safe to eat. However, organizing this meeting has been a priority because of how important it is for the public, the industry, health educators, regulators and scientists to understand what the current state of the science is telling us about the health benefits and risks of eating seafood.

For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to interact with the National Seafood Inspection Laboratory, part of our mission is to promote, on behalf of NOAA Fisheries, the use of sound science regarding seafood consumption as it relates to human health. We share this mission with the NOAA Hawaii Seafood Program and the Hawaii Seafood Council here in Honolulu.

Since NOAA Fisheries Service is intimately involved in the science and policy of seafood safety, when we see opportunities to fund research and activities of high value, we along with programs within CDC, NIH, and elsewhere with common interest, tend to find the resources. Collectively, a lot of important research has been accomplished and continues to be funded, some of which you'll hear about in this Symposium along with other important research from around the world.

As most of us are painfully aware, you would have to travel to multiple symposiums, conferences, workshops, and meetings, to piece together what will be presented in this Symposium. As a result, together we can look forward to leaving this Symposium with a fairly comprehensive understanding of the state of the science and policy ramifications concerning the health benefits and the risks of seafood consumption. Our task in the next few days is not to merely present research results, but to help integrate this information and try to make sense of the evidence of seafood health benefits and risks.

I personally find this to be extremely exciting, and I'm looking forward to taking advantage of this unique opportunity. Again, we can thank the Hawaii Seafood Council for graciously hosting this Symposium and having the foresight to do so. And we can thank the presenters and organizers, NOAA PIRO, NSIL and the Hawaii Seafood Council, who have gone through considerable effort to make this unique Symposium possible.

