

Should I know if a substance changes the appearance of fish products?

In the last few years, Eurofishmarket has consistently carried out research about legal and illegal treatments on fish products in order to understand the "trend" of the market.

We highlight the following observations and proposals regarding the possibility for operators to use mixtures containing a certain percentage, oxygenated water for the handling of frozen and thawed cephalopod mollusks:

Hydrogen peroxide (oxygenated water) is not allowed by Reg. EC 1331/2008 used as an additive, and in fact the Ministerial Circular Favours for its use as a "processing aid."

The critical issues that we want to report on the subject in question, is that to date are not available analytical methods useful to detect the presence of hydrogen peroxide in food.

We would like to ask a question: how we can see if there is the presence or not of hydrogen peroxide in the food? If it left residues it would be an additive and as an additive would be banned in fish products. If we don't have a useful method to verify any additives not permitted or allowed aids how can we carry out the checks in question both in unofficial and official controls? It's desirable that the responsible institutions can engage more in research of these and in their validation.

According to this circular the companies of production / processing cephalopod molluscs may hold aqueous solutions with hydrogen peroxide in their establishment. So if the same company produces for customers who don't want treatment with peroxide but produces also for customers who want products made with peroxide, it will not be easy either for the customer (who does not want the "treatment") or for official authority to go verify with certainty distinguishing the actual products processed by those not treated.

This is because, in fact, is impossible to determine after the treatment any kind of residue about it. In this regard, the following question is: how can customers and consumers be assured that if they want a product not worked with peroxide they will have it surely?

Considering everything said, which is proved by the scientific references that hydrogen peroxide is not dangerous for human health and that consumers eat more and more with the eyes wanting food as well as proposes the common imagery (candid white cuttlefish, ever bright red tuna, etc.) the proposals are the following: instead of discriminating the use of certain substances useful for the purpose above mentioned and, therefore, useful as processing aids to make more "attractive" the product, we propose to simply authorize the use of the same at EU level. We also propose to mark on the label, even with a "mark", natural products (defined as free from any kind of treatment with different substances from water and salt) and those "treated" with adjuvants. This labeling should make the market more transparent avoiding unfair competition between who sells a product seemingly more beautiful thanks to ad hoc processes and who offers products less attractive but with no adjuvant treatments. Also, the consumer would have the opportunity to choose with greater awareness among the fish products on sale, selecting more accurately according to their needs and beliefs.

The petition is not so much about using of hydrogen peroxide as an aid for the processing of frozen or thawed cephalopods, rather to better understand how to identify and distinguish natural fish products from fish products that they are subjected to any case of changes compared to their natural state (coloring,

etc.) and which are absolutely normal and free of sanitary hygienic risks. This procedure will also be useful in the future to allow the younger generation to understand the difference between a "natural" product and a "treated" one.

Do distributors and consumers want to know if a product is natural or has been "improved" thanks to technology?