

Genetically engineered salmon on their way to US supermarkets

US company Intrexon also engaged in marketing cloned bulls and genetically engineered insects

20 November 2015 / The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared the way for the first genetically altered animals to reach American supermarkets. The salmon are engineered to grow much faster than normal through enhanced growth hormone production. This reduces both the time needed to raise the fish and feeding costs. A Canadian company acquired by Intrexon some years ago, will be raising the salmon. Intrexon is also actively engaged in marketing cloned bulls and genetically engineered insects. In Europe, Intrexon is known for its patents on genetically engineered chimpanzees. It is entirely feasible that Intrexon will also try to market the fish in Europe.

The genetically engineered salmon could also possibly lead to a court case under the planned free trade agreements TTIP and CETA: In the US, the salmon is regarded as safe for human consumption and can be marketed without any labelling. Certainly, using methods currently available it is difficult to confirm or exclude health risks from the consumption of these fish.

Since health hazards are not proven, Intrexon could, after the free trade agreements are signed, try to file a legal case in the EU to gain authorisation to market the salmon without any special labelling. According to the text of CETA, it appears that labelling is only foreseen if risks to health have already been proven. There seems to be no possibility of labelling such products for ethical reasons or to maintain freedom of choice.

It has to be expected that in future more genetically engineered animals will be given market authorisations in the wake of new methods of genetic engineering known as genome editing. These types of genetic engineering have been developed to alter the structure of DNA in animal cells. In the EU, meat from the offspring of cloned animals is already on the market, despite European Parliament demands for a prohibition or at least labelling.

Further information: [Story in New York Times](#) [1]

[Testbiotech report on TTIP and CETA](#) [2]

[Intrexon press release](#) [3]

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