New analytical approaches for verifying the origin of food: Chapter 9. Using new analytical approaches to verify the origin of fish

Abstract:
Food and beverage labels often specify a product’s origin (i.e. its geographical origin, species origin, variety and/or method of production). These claims can significantly influence an item’s economic value, but their verification is not straightforward. This book reviews new analytical methods in this area. Chapter 9 ‘using new analytical approaches to verify the origin of fish’ will explain the importance of the fisheries sector, including aquaculture, to meet the constantly growing global demand for fish and fish products. It explains that the goal to reach sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production is greatly challenged by illegal activities, which also impede consumer protection and choice. It highlights the need for traceability ‘from ocean to fork’, i.e. starting from the fishing activity and all along the supply chain, which is supported by INDEPENDENT analytical verification. Verification includes species identification, geographical origin, and wild/farmed. These analytical technologies have to answer three key questions: ‘What species is it?’; “Where does it come from?” and ‘Is it of farmed or wild origin?’. In fact all three questions are highly to determine the true origin of fish food products. The need for efficient traceability in the fisheries sector is generally and globally acknowledged. This chapter will briefly discuss currently implemented measures to support fish (product) traceability, with emphasis on the USA, EU and activities followed by the UN. It will highlight pitfalls and shortcomings of these measures and argue that new analytical methods are urgently needed to sustain existing traceability schemes.

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