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UNH Conference To Focus On Benefits, Risks Of Eating Seafood

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UNH Conference To Focus On Benefits, Risks Of Eating Seafood
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Note: Reporters/photographers are welcome to attend this conference.

Concord, N.H. – Keywords such as farm-raised, wild-caught, omega-3 fatty acids, mercury and PCBs conjure up mixed emotions for consumers who simply want to eat healthy seafood. But an upcoming conference sponsored by NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension will allow dietitians, healthcare professionals, and the general public to better understand what seafood they should eat and what they should avoid.

The conference, “Seafood — Exploring Benefits and Risks,” will be held on Nov. 9, 2007 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Courtyard by Marriott and Grappone Conference Center in Concord. It will address the health issues surrounding seafood consumption, including nutritional benefits and risks, microbial contaminants, risk communication, farm-raised vs. wild harvest, the global need for seafood and media influence on consumer choices.

There is a $45 cost which covers breakfast, lunch, breaks, and all conference materials. For more information or to register for this conference, please visit http://extension.unh.edu/Marine/Seafood.htm or contact Deb Stevens at 1.800.248.6672.

“It seems like everywhere I go, as soon as people find out I work in the fisheries field the first thing they want to know is what seafood is safe to eat,” says Rollie Barnaby, NH Sea Grant extension educator. “There’s just so much confusion about it.” Part of this confusion may occur when consumers receive their health information from many sources other than health care providers, he explains.

The need to disseminate accurate seafood health information prompted Barnaby to team up with UNH Cooperative Extension specialists Catherine Violette and Ken La Valley. Together they began planning the conference to help inform health officials and consumers about what seafood is safe to eat and what should be avoided.

Speakers at the conference include renowned scientists in the fields of food safety, nutrition and risk analysis from institutions including Harvard School of Public Health, Tufts-New England Medical Center and the University of Rhode Island. Keynote speaker Charles Santerre, a professor of foods and nutrition from Purdue University, will discuss balancing the risks and benefits of fish for sensitive populations. The conference will conclude with a panel discussion in which audience members will be able to ask questions they may have regarding food safety.
“This is a health issue,” Barnaby adds. “People are afraid to eat seafood and that’s a shame. We need to educate them about the value of seafood and provide research-based information to help them make wise decisions.”