

# FDA Needs To Reconsider GMO Salmon Approval, Says Federal Judge

The Food and Drug Administration approved biotechnology company AquaBounty's application to make and sell genetically engineered salmon in 2015, and now a federal judge is on the verge of ordering the government agency to take another look. U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria is presiding over a case filed by the Center for Food Safety against the salmon's approval, and he expressed concerns on Tuesday that the FDA's approval of the salmon could inspire AquaBounty to expand their AquaAdvantage salmon program without fully considering the ecological impacts of it.

*I'm not saying it opens the floodgates or sets the standards, but perhaps it pushes us in a direction and future agency action will likely be informed by this agency action...Shouldn't the FDA in this case have considered the fact that this was the first such facility and future decisions would be building on this facility?"*

*Judge Vince Chhabria*

The AquaAdvantage salmon is the first genetically engineered food animal that the FDA has approved for raising and selling. The fish is a genetic mix of an ocean pout and Pacific Chinook salmon, a combination that leads to higher growth hormone in the blood. The company plans to breed the salmon at a hatchery on Prince Edward Island in Canada before moving the eggs to their facility in Indiana.

When the agency completed their assessment of the salmon, they listed the salmon as having "no significant impact," and Department of Justice attorney Marissa Pirovato said that...

*AquaBounty has no guarantee that the FDA is going to accept whatever comes down the pike..."*

*Marissa Piropato*

Environmental groups have a different take on the approval and current impact status of the modified salmon that echoed Judge Chhabria sentiments. The treatment and regulation of the AquaBounty salmon sets the precedent for the future of genetically engineered food animals.

*Whatever they do here is going to inform the approval for those other applications and is going to inform what the FDA does for all GE animals going forward...If the analysis they are doing here is inadequate that means it's never going to be enough. It's not going to get better."*

*Earthjustice attorney Brettny Hardy*