

Tesco in U-turn over 'red herring' of Scots salmon promotion

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TESCO has been forced into a U-turn over a Scotland-wide farmed salmon campaign after conceding products branded as "100% Scottish" were imported from Norway.

Hundreds of stores across the country have been promoting Scottish farmed salmon with Saltires, flags and "I'm Scottish" flyers.

However, the retail giant has ordered staff to tone down the campaign after environ-

mentalists pointed out that in many cases farmed salmon billed as Scottish had been imported as eggs from Norway and reared briefly on Scottish farms before reaching supermarket shelves.

Tesco has apologised after the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture wrote to Philip Clarke, the Tesco chief executive, accusing the retailer of misleading customers at stores in Edinburgh, Inverness and Perth.

A spokesman for Tesco

confirmed that in-store promotions of farmed salmon across Scotland were being updated after campaigners tipped off trading standards officials in several Scottish local authorities and lodged a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority.

Staff have also been given "refresher training" on the importance of accurate advertising.

"Tesco's blatant breaches of trading standards makes a mockery of their claims to be

promoting Scottish salmon," said Don Staniford, from the anti-industrial aquaculture group. "Surely Tesco should be selling exclusively Scottish salmon not flooding [its] supermarket shelves with Norwegian farmed salmon?"

John Robins, secretary of Animal Concern and Save Our Seals Fund, said: "Tesco admitted to me that only a small amount of their salmon is sourced in Scotland. Despite this they have saturated their stores with Saltires. This is not

just a red herring it is a blatant and very likely illegal attempt at misleading consumers into buying Norwegian salmon in the belief it is Scottish."

Last year, Sainsbury's apologised after wrongly labelling some of its Scottish salmon products. Packaging on smoked fish sold as part of the store's Taste the Difference range claimed the product was sourced from seawater farms at locations around Skye, Lewis and Uist, when in fact it was farmed at Loch

Fyne, a sea loch on the Argyll mainland.

On Friday, a spokesman for Tesco said: "These signs were put in the wrong place by mistake. The products were clearly marked with their country of origin. We are working with our stores across Scotland to make sure only Scottish products are displayed in cabinets that feature Scottish flags and signs."

A spokesman for the ASA said: "We have received a complaint in respect of farmed

salmon in Scotland and it is being assessed."

The row coincides with new data showing imports of farmed salmon have risen 10 times faster than UK exports in the past decade.

According to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, exports of farmed salmon rose about 51% from 73,000 to 111,000 in 2003-13. However, imports over the same period rose 520% from about 11,000 to 69,000 tons.

A report by the Food and Drink Federation claims Scottish salmon exports have soared over the past year and are now worth an annual £465m to the economy, making Scotland the world's second-largest producer of Atlantic farmed salmon after Norway. Scots firms last year exported more than 13m fresh fish to 55 countries. However, campaigners argue the true value of farmed salmon is much lower as the figures do not take account of imports.