

**NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF EATING CATFISH:
DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF CATFISH BAD FAT**

By

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**WELCOME/OPENING ADDRESS AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON
HEALTH BENEFITS OF EATING CATFISH: DEBUNKING THE MYTH
OF CATFISH BAD FAT**

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FISH DEMAND, SUPPLY GAP IN NIGERIA

With a national fish demand of about 2.7Milliom MT per annum and a domestic production estimated at about 800,000MT Nigeria has a short fall of about 1.9milliom MT.

Aquaculture, the farming of fish in Nigeria has greatly assisted in bridging the gap between fish demand and supply. In the last 20 years fish production from aquaculture has increased for 70,000MT to more than 350,000MT. Production brought about by catfish has been responsible for over 90% of fish produced from aquaculture.

IMPORTANCE OF FISH

The importance of fish cannot be overlooked as fish is important not only for its calorific value but also as an important source of animal protein. Moreover, thousands of Nigeria populace derives their livelihood directly from activities related to fish procurement, distribution and consumption.

Consequently, the question of catfish been bad has generated a lot of concern across all the stakeholders that participate in the production, distribution and consumption of catfish. Nigerians are naturally alarmed to find out the news degrading their choice catfish which has demonstrated tremendous support for their economy, health status and livelihood is now a candidate for destruction.

ACTION

The Council of Fellows of Fisheries Society of Nigeria is hereby leading all stakeholders to undertake today's discourse. The story of catfish been bad has taken the dimension of a myth. The story is mythical in the sense that it was invented from imaginary and fictitious perspectives, basically unproved and should be regarded as false. We planned to put the record straight by x-raying what has led to this latest campaign against catfish, further reinforce the good qualities of catfish and continue to promote catfish as a good and healthy candidate that it has been known for.

IMPORTANCE OF FISH TO HUMANS

Fish is important to human as a nutrient source of low fat, high quality protein. It is also a good source of omega 3 fatty acids, Vitamin D and B2, calcium, Phosphorous, Iodine, Iron, Zinc, Magnesium and Potassium which are essential for health living. Catfish is no exception to these attributes.

Fish is highly recommended by the American Heart Association to be included in the diet at least twice a week because it helps to lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases. In addition to having a healthy heart, fish helps in having a healthy brain. The omega 3 fatty acids help in the brain and vision development of infants while still in the womb. Fish generally are good sources of omega 3 fatty acids.

BENEFITS OF FISH OIL

Fish oil contains omega 3 fatty acids which can reduce risk of coronary heart disease and lower cholesterol. The omega 3 fatty acids found in fish oil have other benefits besides protecting heart health. For example, omega 3 fatty acids help to reduce swelling and pain. They lower the risk of age related and muscular degeneration. They reduce the chance of heart attack and stroke by lowering triglycerides and blood pressure level slowing the development of arterial plaque. They also reduce the chance of individual with heart disease dying suddenly due to cardiac related causes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these aforementioned qualities of fish and fish oil shared by catfish have been demonstrated from the scientific and research frontiers of nutrition and health thereby promoting the acceptability of catfish in Nigeria. While promoting the acceptability of catfish, it may be important at this junction to start the tracking of the aquaculture products from the producers to the consumers. This initiative will prevent the abuse of production processes in catfish industry.

Catfish will remain choice fish species for aquaculture industry and consumers! **I THANK YOU ALL FOR LISTENING.**