

## Fast-growing AquaBounty salmon could pave way for more genetically modified animals

When it was revealed over the summer that genetically modified salmon was now being sold in Canada, the backlash from anti-GM environmental groups was fierce.

The source of the stink was a two-line disclosure in the quarterly earnings of AquaBounty Technologies, a US biotech company, which stated it had sold a small amount of its AquAdvantage salmon.

Engineered to grow at twice the rate of regular salmon, it is also believed to be the first example of a genetically engineered animal bred and sold for human consumption.

Despite the hostile response from some quarters, Ronald Stotish, chief executive of AquaBounty, says “you almost have to be an optimist to do what I do,” adding that although distributors “were thrilled with the product”, his company appreciates “everyone’s right to choose.” He is, however, adamant that launching the product was the right thing to do.

The main advantage of the salmon’s shorter lifespan is that the fish can be grown in tanks inland, vastly reducing the cost of transportation and the burden on the environment.

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[S]ome experts believe this small first step could mark the beginning of a new era in genetically modified food production, paving the way for more animal products to come on to a market which has hitherto focused exclusively on crops.

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