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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Recirculating Farms Coalition Denounces FDA Approval of Genetically Modified Salmon for Human Consumption

"Unnecessary, shortsighted, and potentially disastrous for both consumers and environment," says Recirculating Farms Coalition Director

NEW ORLEANS, LA — November 20, 2015 — On November 19, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the sale of genetically engineered salmon for human consumption. The decision draws heavy criticism from science, environmental, and consumer protection groups. The Recirculating Farms Coalition (RFC) joins in strongly condemning the decision, citing health concerns, too many unexamined risks to the environment, and a lack of exploration into safer viable alternatives.

Statement from Executive Director, Marianne Cufone:

"This is the first ever genetically engineered animal that has been approved for human consumption. It will not be labeled as such in stores because the FDA says 'it is nutritionally equivalent to conventional farm-raised Atlantic salmon'. This is problematic for consumers - they deserve to know that the fish they may be buying and eating is genetically modified, so they can make informed decisions."

"A significant concern is that the salmon may contain increased levels of a hormone linked to breast, colon, prostate, and lung cancer."

"There are no meaningful long-term studies done on health effects from eating this fish, or the real risks involved if these salmon were to escape into the wild. Moreover, the main stated reason for approval is to strengthen farmed fish's economic viability — but the FDA has not done due diligence in exploring alternative options."

"While the FDA echoes the company's contention that the engineered fish are sterile, 100 percent sterility is highly unlikely. There is still risk the fish could unintentionally end up in the wild and intermix with wild salmon — risks that have not been well evaluated."

"There is also a notable lack of discussion about safer alternative methods for fish production. Aquaponics – raising fish in tanks connected to plant grow beds in a closed-loop recirculating system – can naturally achieve fast growth rates for fish, making genetic modification to artificially enhance growth unnecessary. These systems are also space, energy and water efficient - an all around win for our planet."

"The data the FDA used to evaluate the GM salmon's safety were provided by the company who produces the product itself. How can that be considered objective or rigorous? Why test GM technology on consumers when there are sustainable and more natural ways of achieving similar benefits claimed by the company."

"Over 9,000 stores owned by 60 chains across the nation have already rejected genetically engineered salmon, including Kroger, Target, Aldi, Trader Joe's and others. Seventy-five percent of respondents to a New York Times poll said they would not eat genetically engineered salmon, and 1.8 million people have sent letters to the FDA opposing approval of the so-called "frankenfish."

"This decision represents nothing less than a wholesale pandering to corporate food interests' bottom line, rather than public or environmental health. The FDA has failed in its duty to protect our people and our planet. We are very concerned more GM animals will be approved soon."