

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 4/27/2016

GAIN Report Number:

Israel

Post: Tel Aviv

Israel's new fishing regulations and campaign against unhealthy food

Report Categories:

Policy and Program Announcements

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Report Highlights:

Israel implements new fishing regulations aimed at protecting and increasing its fish stock, while the Ministry of Health plans a nationwide campaign against "junk food".

General Information:

New Israeli Fishing Regulations

Decades of uncontrolled fishing along Israel's coast has led to a sharp decline in the country's fish stock. To redress this issue, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOAG) submitted new to the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) new regulations, but have yet to be ratified by the Economic Affairs Committee.

Due to the Committee's wavering position, MOAG's Fisheries Department made use of their authority by implementing new restrictions on its fishing permits.

These include:

- Moving of dragnet fishing deeper into the sea.
- Increasing the minimum size of fishing nets' holes.
- Fishing restrictions close to reefs and other vulnerable areas.
- Fishing ban during the breeding and development of young fish (April – May)

The new restrictions went into effect at the beginning of April, 2016, but, according to press accounts, many fishermen are simply ignoring the new restrictions. The Israeli Nature Protection Society, that monitors fishing offenses, through a computer based application, received many complaints about fishing offenses, promptly sending their information to the Fisheries Department. However, no enforcement against lawbreakers has been reported.

To address some of the fishermen's concerns, the ministry is considering compensation to fishermen that "ground" their boats. It's also focusing on research and development in aquaculture, as a means to meet the country's fish needs, while reducing the pressure on its coastal ecosystem.

"McDonald's out"!!!

What initially looked as a tongue-in-cheek comment by Israel's Minister of Health, declaring "McDonald's out" at a doctors conference earlier this month (April 2016), is now looking more like a national campaign led by his ministry against unhealthy food.

Subsequently to his comment, the Ministry of Health(MOH) funded a television advertisement against soft drinks using a bottle resembling the famous Coca Cola bottle, while also taking a jab at McDonald's "unhealthy food" despite the existence of other burger franchisees in Israel.

According to the minister, the MOH is determined to change the nutrition habits of Israeli's. It is currently considering the implementation of a tax on "unhealthy food", and using a "traffic light" labeling system. This comes after the ministry's decision from earlier this year of removing "unhealthy food items" such as sugary drinks and high sodium food products from school vending machines and kiosks.

