

AV (HS) 1617

2 April 2004

Importers & Exporters of Seafood

Dear Sir/Mdm

**MISLABELLING OF ESCOLAR FISH SPECIES AND  
POTENTIAL HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH  
CONSUMPTION**

The purpose of this circular is to inform you that a fish known as Escolar (*Lepidocybium flavobrunneum* and *Revetus pretiosus*) has been mislabelled, imported and sold as Butterfish or other common names and also the potential health consequences of people consuming the Escolar fish.

It is likely that many food business owners are unaware of the potential health consequences of consuming Escolar fish. The fish has a high content of indigestible wax ester oil. If the fish is not prepared properly and/or eaten in large quantities, it could cause stomach cramps and diarrhoea in some consumers. Grilling will tend to reduce the heavy fat content in the fish. Additional symptoms may also appear within 3 to 12 hours after eating the fish, which include headache, nausea and vomiting. The illness may be more severe in older people and those with an existing bowel condition.

It is, therefore, important for importers, exporters and retailers of fish to use acceptable common names for fish so that consumers are well informed of the type of fish they are consuming. People in the risk category could then decide if they would want to consume the fish.

We would like to remind all importers to use the proper common name when making declaration of fish imported into Singapore. The scientific name of the fish species determines the commercial designation or the designated common name. Use of incorrect common names for fish

imported and sold in Singapore constituted as mislabelling of the product, which is an offence under the Food Regulations.

Yours faithfully

KOH CHENG LIAT  
IMPORT & EXPORT DIVISION  
For DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
AGRI-FOOD AND VETERINARY SERVICES