



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

LORETTA FUDDY, DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: August 8, 2012

12-041

PACIFIC BLUE MARLIN JERKY TEST RESULTS SHOW LOW METHYLMERCURY LEVELS
STATE PLANS PERIODIC PRODUCT TESTING

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) has received final test results from the Food and Drug Laboratory Branch, California Department of Public Health, for methylmercury levels in commercially available Pacific Blue Marlin jerky samples. Laboratory results indicate the levels of methylmercury found in the samples were below the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulatory maximum of 1 part per million (ppm). Actual data findings are attached.

"The findings are consistent with earlier results that show most mercury in Pacific Blue Marlin is the less toxic form; eating moderate amounts of marlin jerky is safe for the general public," said Gary Gill, deputy director for environmental health. "We continue to urge pregnant women and young children to follow our Local Guide to Eating Fish Safely brochure to reduce their health risk from consuming mercury. The department will continue monitoring fish jerky products for methylmercury levels that may pose a health risk. We will keep the public informed on what we find."

The DOH brochure, A Local Guide to Eating Fish Safely, is available at:

http://hawaii.gov/health/family-child-health/wic/wic/nutrition_information/wic/nutrition_information/mercury.pdf

DOH collected samples of locally-produced marlin jerky from Asia Trans Company in Kailua Kona in November 2011 in response to a study published last year in the *Journal of Environmental Health*. The study by California researchers found high levels of total mercury in Pacific Blue Marlin

(more)

jerky purchased from large retail stores in California and Hawai'i. The samples tested by the DOH state laboratory showed levels of total mercury in the range of 0.6 to 2.2 ppm. Recent results from samples sent to the FDA to further separate out methylmercury levels showed an average of 0.31 parts per million, the range found in other large ocean fish, including fresh ahi. Methylmercury is of concern because some studies have shown that consumption of fish with high levels can harm a baby's growing brain and nervous system.

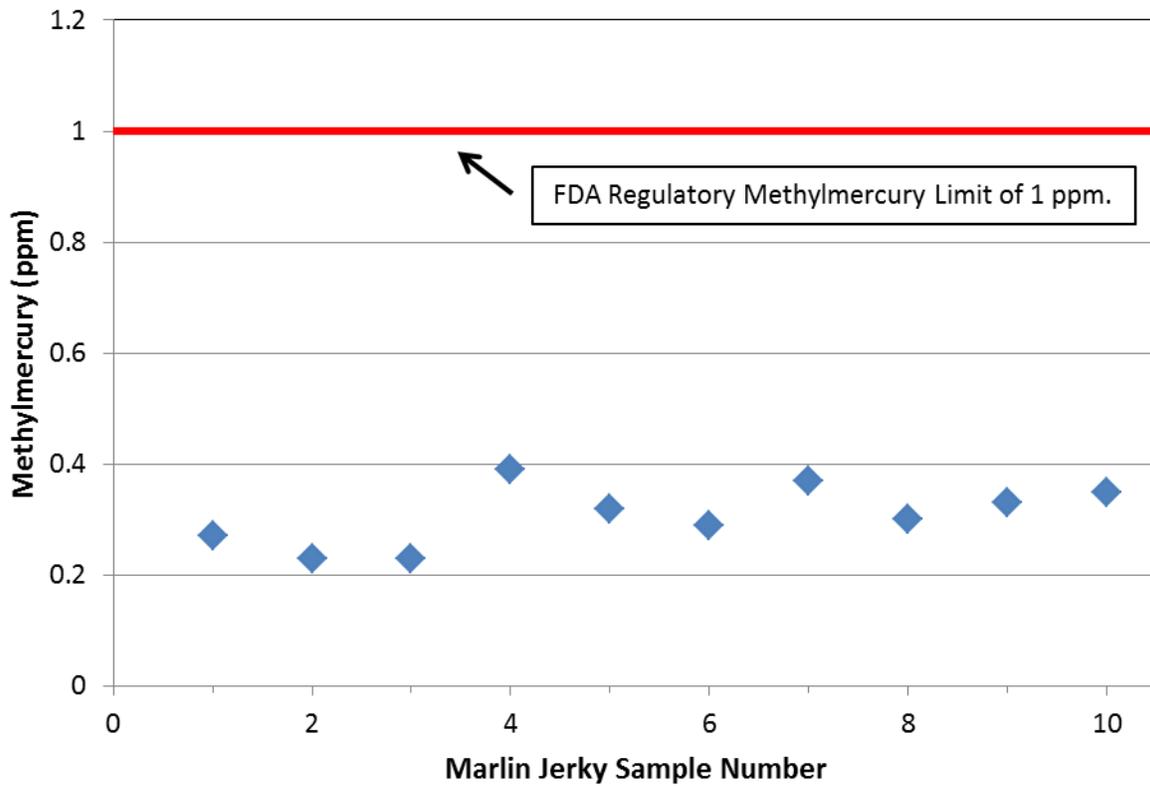
DOH plans to do periodic sampling to ensure that marlin jerky products are safe for the general public. The DOH will also be meeting with fish jerky manufacturers to ensure they are informed of the risks involved and the need to monitor the methylmercury levels in the fish that they use to manufacture their jerky products.

The DOH brochure, Local Guide to Eating Fish Safely, has been revised and updated based on the new findings. DOH currently recommends that pregnant women, young children and nursing mothers avoid eating Pacific Blue Marlin because the larger fish (greater than 200 pounds) can contain high levels of methylmercury.

The DOH protects public health by ensuring food products are safe. DOH programs conduct inspections of establishments statewide where food products are prepared, manufactured, distributed or sold. Programs also investigate complaints and collect samples for laboratory testing to determine compliance with product standards.

(more)

Methylmercury Concentrations in Marlin Jerky*



* Samples of locally-produced marlin jerky from Asia Trans Company in Kailua Kona collected November 2011

###