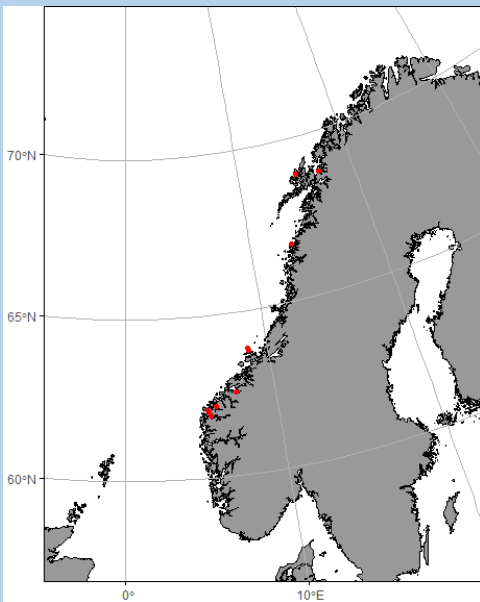


Low probability of viable nematodes to occur in the flesh of Norwegian farmed cod (*Gadus morhua*)

- Parasitic nematodes commonly occur in commercially harvested wild fish species from the NE Atlantic, including cod.
- The most important nematode species is *Anisakis simplex* which may provoke gastrointestinal disease known as anisakiasis, following consumption of parasitized raw or undercooked fish.
- According to EU regulations, raw or only lightly processed fishery products must undergo freezing before market release to eliminate viable parasites that could pose health risks to consumers.
- Presently, only farmed Atlantic salmon and rainbow trout are exempted from the freezing requirement in Norway.

A generic survey to monitor the occurrence of anisakid nematodes in Norwegian farmed cod was recently run, as a basis for specific regulatory assessments with regards to the freezing requirement



Sampling locations for farmed cod

SAMPLES AND METHODS

- The survey involved 865 ready-to-harvest cod from 11 farming localities covering all cod-producing regions in Norway.
- Both viscera and the fish flesh were checked for nematodes by applying the UV-press method (ISO 23036-1).

FINDINGS

- A total of 22 *A. simplex* larvae were identified, with 2.5% prevalence in market-size cod and 1.7% in underperforming fish (runts).
- Most larvae occurred encapsulated on the visceral organs; one larva was found encapsulated in the muscle of a single market-size cod.
- Fish farmed in coastal localities exposed to the open sea showed significantly higher infection rates than cod from more sheltered fjord localities.

CONCLUSIONS

- Norwegian market-size farmed cod is susceptible for infections with *Anisakis simplex* larvae, including the fish flesh.
- The probability of the fillets of market-quality farmed cod to contain viable *Anisakis*-larvae is low but not negligible.

