

Food Safety and Rockweed

It is important to always be aware that you are harvesting a food ingredient. Food ingredients must be protected from contamination to protect public health. Dried Rockweed is a specialty ingredient in many products consumed by people and is also an ingredient in animal feed. Please think food safety and comply with the following sanitation standards:

- a) All species must be rockweed (*Ascophyllum nodosum*).
- b) All rockweed must be free of foreign material such as rocks, sand, shells, sticks, rope, plastic, glass, metal, oils etc.
- c) All rockweed must be free of holdfast.
- d) All rockweed must be freshly harvested and free from rot and discoloration.
- e) Never harvest in areas where the water is visually contaminated. For example, diesel oil slicks are a reported concern around wharves and harbours. Rockweed harvested through a diesel slick will be contaminated and will not be fit for consumption by people or animals.
- f) Never harvest in close proximity to sewage outfalls. Sewage is a source of pathogenic bacteria, such as e. coli, that can pose a serious food safety threat. Outfalls may be located visually or by smell.
- g) Always harvest into a clean boat. Ensure that your boat is free of physical debris (metal, glass), chemicals (industrial oils and lubricants), and rotting debris such as (left over by-catch from previous harvest). As you would never leave fish in the boat from a previous day on the water, the same logic applies to rockweed. Always start each day with a clean boat.
- h) Always ensure that your harvest is transferred into a clean container (truck box). You have worked hard to protect your harvest. Ensure that it stays that way in transit to the solar drying site.

Many aspects of food safety depend on preventive measures at the time of harvest. Thanks for doing your part to ensure the safety of seaweed products.