**Sustainability**

Are there sustainable ways of getting DHA & EPA Omega 3s? Contrary to popular belief, it is not necessary to eat fish to get these Omega 3s. There are other ways to get Omega 3s, “including the way the fish get them. They eat them. They get them with the plankton that they consume”, says Oceanographer Silvia Earle.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Again, since marine algae manufacture omega 3 then why not go to the source for supplements instead of grinding up fish valuable to the marine ecosystem? That is what some companies like Martek (<http://www.lifesdha.com>) and Deva (<http://www.devanutrition.com>) are doing by manufacturing DHA straight from the algae source itself and eliminating the need for capturing fish. These companies raise plankton in big tanks for DHA and some EPA production. Algae based supplements are rich in DHA and may be better than consuming other vegetarian supplements like flaxseed, canola and walnut oil that only provide ALA.

Research at the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET) in Baltimore Maryland is also providing valuable evidence for sustainability as it applies to the field of aquaculture. One issue with aquaculture is that it requires as many fish to make fish meal (food) as are produced in an aquaculture system. This pressure on the marine environment places aquaculture on the fine line of sustainability. However, if the food used to feed the fish is vegetarian/algae sourced then the tables may be turned in favor of aquaculture production. IMET research scientists Dr. Allen Place and Aaron Watson (a Ph.D. candidate at IMET) have met this challenge by developing a food that is vegetarian/algae sourced with the addition of taurine thereby making a connection to producers in the marine food chain and eliminating the need for fish meal production. In addition the use of the foundation of the marine food chain in turn helps produce fish with healthier profiles for consumption by significantly decreasing the amount of other trace pollutants that can be found in high value predators like striped bass and cobia. For more information about this research read the article in the Baltimore Sun (Aug. 19 2012), http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-08-19/features/bs-gr-vegetarian-fish-meal-20120819\_1\_fish-oil-aquaculture-striped-bass.

So the next time you are on a trip to the grocery store, health food store, or other health supply outlet take the time to consider alternative options for fish oil supplements as well as other food sources that are high in Omega 3 and 9. Look for supplements that are produced from algae culture like those mentioned in the article and you can become a contributing member to fisheries sustainability. In the end, remember it’s not fish oil in that capsule or delicious filet that you are going to have for dinner but omega 3 fatty acid manufactured from algae - Really.

1. <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/20/151047262/exploring-the-deepest-darkest-spots-on-earth> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)