

Freedom salmon ad criticised  
By Jenifer Johnston

**THE Advertising Standards Authority** has launched an investigation into an advertisement, produced by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which claims farmed salmon swim in a space equivalent to an Olympic swimming pool.

The ad, for the RSPCA's assurance branding scheme Freedom Food, ran in a national newspaper two weeks ago. It claimed that at salmon farms approved by Freedom Food "a typical salmon pen contains the volume of an Olympic swimming pool".

A spokesman for the ASA told the Sunday Herald that an investigation into the advert had been launched following a complaint. The complaint was made by Sutherland-based campaigners the Salmon Farm Protest Group (SFPG), which objects to the comparison as giving a "misleading" impression of the space given to salmon.

Bruce Sandison of the SFPG said yesterday that the RSPCA had been reported because "the public should know what they are buying".

"What concerns me is that it is misleading – it uses the image of a swimming pool to fix in people's minds that the fish have loads of room to swim about in. In reality they are caged, when in nature they are used to swimming thousands of miles in their lifetime," he said.

"In human terms, if the pool was 'stocked' with swimmers at a similar density and of average weight, there would be 313 people in the pool at the same time. That could be in breach of health and safety regulations, and, unlike farmed salmon, humans don't eat three meals a day and defecate in the water they are swimming in."

A spokeswoman for the RSPCA and Freedom Foods said: "We are confident that the ad complies with the advertising code and that we can justify the claims made."

Freedom Food was established by the RSPCA to give shoppers more assurances about the source of farm-raised food and works with producers to improve animal welfare standards.

The ASA is also investigating the manufacturer Birds Eye over claims in a recent ad for salmon products.

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<http://www.sundayherald.com/57000>