



The Truth about Fish Food Expiry & Best Before dates:

The Expiry Dates are a legal requirement in the EU and indicate the date when the manufacturer guarantees that the products will meet the Analysis that is printed on the label - if the products have been kept as recommended. After that date the foods will normally be ok, but cannot be guaranteed to be so.

Even if the products remain sealed, there can be some deterioration in the food. The first things to change would be the vitamins, which can denature and be less effective. The food will still have a good nutritional benefit to the fish and will still be eaten. Over a longer period oils and fats can become rancid and proteins can denature. If this happens the food will be distasteful to the fish and they will not eat it. The fat and protein denaturing is not very common and is usually due to the food being very old (5-6 years +) or being kept open or at high temperatures. I have only witnessed this a couple of times.

If the food has been opened or the packaging damaged so that the food is exposed to air the rate of deterioration can be much quicker. The food is only around 6 - 8% moisture, so if there is any moisture in the air it will be quickly absorbed by the food - allowing bacteria and fungi to multiply and resulting in the food clumping together. Exposure to oxygen in the air will also allow the degradation of some vitamins.

It is very difficult to give a rate of deterioration as it is impacted by the temperature the foods are stored at, including occasional exposure to high temperatures. In clear, packaging light can also have an impact.

As a very rough guide I would suggest that the food will still be in good condition 6 - 12 months after the best before date or Expiry date, with only a 20 - 25% reduction in vitamin levels.

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