

New Zealand Greenshell™ Mussels Student Fact Sheet



New Zealand Greenshell™ Mussels

Greenshell mussels are indigenous to New Zealand and live in their natural state in beds on the sea floor. They were initially harvested by dredging.

On a marine farm the mussels are cultivated on long lines supported by buoys in rows. This system has been in place since the early 1970's. Since those early days, mussel farmers have vastly improved every aspect of their operation with great improvements to the way they grow and harvest them. Because of this, mussels have become one of the quickest and best ways of producing protein. The average size of mussel farms in New Zealand is 4 hectares.

New Zealand Greenshell™ Mussels are harvested year round with except for a brief period in August and September due to spawning and weather variations. Mussel farming does not require any additives such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides or pellet feeds. The only artificial or man-made components are the non-moving floats, ropes and anchors which provide support for the mussels while they grow.

Mussel farms are generally found in bays and inlets with good tidal flow and high in phyto plankton which forms the bulk of their diet. Mussels are filter feeders, meaning they literally filter their food from the sea by pumping the water through their gills. A typical mussel filters 360 litres a day. As they are in their natural habitat and they are filter feeders there is no need to feed them on the farms.

New Zealand Greenshell™ Mussels are easily recognised by their vibrant green and gold shell colouring, high meat-to-shell ratio, and valued for their succulent tender meat, versatility and appearance, making them a favourite with chefs and consumers around the world.

New Zealand Greenshell™ Mussels have high nutritional benefits, being low in fat, calories and cholesterol, and high in protein, iron and essential Omega-3 fatty acids. A 100 gram serving of New Zealand Greenshell™ mussels will provide one quarter of an adults' daily protein needs. Furthermore, mussels are a particularly good source of haem iron (the iron from animals and the most easily absorbed iron form), containing over 3 times the haem iron of rump steak, on a per gram basis.

Greenshell™ Mussel powder extract is also used in pharmaceutical products which are increasingly being recognised as helpful for joint mobility and promoting good health, healthy hearts and general well being.