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25 September 2026

Dear Mark,

UPDATE ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO ANALYSE PERSISTENT ELEVATED MORTALITY ACROSS SCOTTISH MARINE FARMED SALMON SITES

Last year the Scottish Government committed to analyse persistent elevated mortality across Scottish marine salmon farming sites. This was a commitment made to the former Rural Affairs and Island Committee, in response to their inquiry into salmon farming in Scotland during parliamentary session 6.

On March 5 this year, my predecessor and the former Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands Ms Gougeon, provided the committee with a substantive update¹ on the work, and its initial conclusions based on preliminary findings from the analysis, and discussed it during the subsequent evidence session on 11 March. It was noted there was a scientific peer review process underway to confirm the underpinning methodological approach taken to the overall analysis.

I am pleased to inform you that the peer-review process is now complete and the scientific paper *Decoding persistent elevated mortality in farmed marine Scottish Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar L.) using artificial intelligence and logical modelling* has been accepted and published by the journal Preventive Veterinary Medicine².

¹ [Salmon farming: Scottish Government report on persistent elevated mortality in salmon farming in Scotland and finfish survival data topic sheet | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

² Meadhbh Moriarty, Sonia J. Duguid, Sarah-Jane Parker, Joanne M. Murphy, Ronald J. Smith, Neil L. Purvis, Alexander G. Murray, Decoding persistent elevated mortality in farmed marine Scottish Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.) using artificial intelligence and logical modelling, Preventive Veterinary Medicine, Volume 256, 2026, 107012, ISSN 0167-5877, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prevetmed.2026.107012>.
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S016758772600231X>)



The peer review process and associated final quality assurance steps did not result in significant changes in the initial results or conclusions originally reported to the RAIC in March. However, for completeness, it should be noted that the finalised analysis identified 10 sites (4.6% of the total number considered) as having experienced persistent elevated mortality, rather than 9 reported initially.

This publication concludes the Scottish Government's commitment to analyse persistent elevated mortality in Scottish Salmon farming. It demonstrated that producers react promptly to mortality when it is experienced and they take a range of actions to curtail losses. However, I remain absolutely clear that the sector should continue working to drive mortality to the lowest possible levels across all production sites, and the Scottish Government will continue to support the innovation necessary to do this including via the Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Cluster and the Marine Fund Scotland.

Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE

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