

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

Environmental impacts of salmon farming

Written submission from Kathy Sayer

Please consider all the environmental issues as well as familiar agreements of chemical pollution, sea lice etc. there are other concerns.

If aquaculture was regulated as land farms are, many of those issues would be addressed and the “polluter” would pay or be fined. Sea water is rapidly becoming a concern as the antibiotic resistant bugs increase and affects humans (never mind the sea life.) As shown on BBC Countryfile Jan 14th – so it must be true!

There is minimal food hygiene and safety checks on fish presented for sale but there is a worrying failure rate ‘This testing needs to be rigorously increased to reassure the public. Why are pregnant women advised to avoid farmed salmon? Much as I used to enjoy it I no longer eat it and will not until it is safe to do so.

Wrasse seemed an ideal solution to the massive sea lice problem, but when prawn fisheries boast of giving up on prawns because they earn £16 for each wrasse they catch alarm bells ring! Wrasse are a very important part of the marine habitat and their sudden demise will cause “knock on effects.”

A worker, who is now retired, told me how after incineration at [REDACTED], diseased fish from the local fish farm ended up in margarine and cosmetics! Do people know what they are eating? Some dead fish are taken away in lorries for incineration but an awful lot more are dumped below the cages – contract divers slit the cages. Again this was told to me by a commercial diver.

After gales – we do get a few on the west coast – there is debris from the wrecked cages and pontoons washed ashore. Often in inaccessible places where it litters the environment for ever more.

Our local fish farm not only treats the sea with no respect, but has cut down most of the mature trees on its land as well! No replanting, so far.

For fish to provide the ‘omega oils’ we are advised to eat, they must be fed on fish. Poor communities on the far side of our small planet are suffering because “their” seas are being stripped of fish to feed Scottish salmon. Well in the main its Norwegian salmon – breed in Norway, owned by Norwegians and taxed in jersey and the like to give profits to few very rich foreigners. It’s just the polluting that happens in Scotland.

Older fish farms, like the one in [REDACTED] have never had an Environmental Impact Assessment done, but they want to double the size.

[REDACTED] we are fortunate in having a thriving economy, much of it tourist based. Protecting the environment and helping it recover from its abuse by man is especially important here.

Smaller communities up and down the west coast are being bombarded by the fish farm companies wanting to establish new farms in ever more remote places. Their offers of monetary incentives, a couple of jobs and a new house or two are hard to resist. Where some locals voice their opposition it can cause deep divides in the communities.

So please, stop the very damaging open cage fish farms expanding and start the development of much better “closed” farms on land – as other countries like Norway are leading the way.