

## **Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee**

### **Environmental impacts of salmon farming**

#### **Written submission from Malcolm Whitmore**

I am writing to you as I am increasingly concerned about the negative effect salmon farms are having locally in the Clyde, alongside which I live, and nationally and internationally.

On so many fronts the current practices are damaging our seas through pollution and creating problems for wild salmon and it is evident that the industry is unsustainable in its present form.

The current practice of open water cage containment of high numbers of fish is creating vulnerability to disease as has been witnessed in the published mortality figures and measures to reduce parasite burdens are resulting in the release of toxic chemicals into our seas. Added to this is the untreated release of huge quantities of waste matter beneath the cages which is causing pollution often in areas of high biological value and in some instances in so called protected areas such as Marine Protected Areas. Escaping farmed salmon are damaging our wild salmon population which in turn is causing impact on our salmon rivers and the income derived from sport fishing.

The governments declared objective of increasing aquaculture significantly has to be challenged unless radical changes are made to practices. On shore containment would overcome many of the failings of the present system and would go some way to make the industry more acceptable.

As the word gets around of the damage and pollution the industry is causing the outcry for change will become louder and better stewardship and more environmentally acceptable and sustainable practices will need to be put in place if salmon rearing is to continue to be part of Scotland's food production sector.

We hear much about how great Scotland's food and drink industry is. Animal husbandry, crop production and whiskey distilling may all be in good shape in terms of their environmental credentials. The Scottish salmon industry is lagging far behind and getting away with lax regulation and low environmental standards.

Much as I have enjoyed eating salmon in the past, now that I am more aware of the cost to the environment and the level of chemicals and their rearing I no longer eat farmed salmon. I believe there are many more doing likewise.

Malcolm Whitmore