

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
Wednesday 25 February 2026
8th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

Salmon farming inquiry – 12-month follow up

Introduction

1. The Committee will take evidence on the progress made in implementing the recommendations in its '[Follow-up inquiry into salmon farming in Scotland](#)' report, published in January 2025.

Background

2. In April 2024, the Committee began a follow-up inquiry focused on how the recommendations in the Session 5 Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee's 2018 report, '[Salmon farming in Scotland](#)', were being implemented.
3. The REC report considered the state of the salmon industry in Scotland, identified opportunities for its future development, and explored how fish health and environmental challenges could be addressed. The REC Committee made 65 recommendations to address the concerns it identified and called for more research to improve understanding of the impact of open pen fish farms and to improve their regulation.
4. This Committee's follow-up inquiry was focused on the implementation of the main recommendations made by the REC Committee, spread across four key themes of fish health and welfare; environmental impacts; interactions between wild and farmed salmon; and salmon farm consents and planning.
5. The Committee's January 2025 report concluded that, although the 'status quo' has changed to some extent since 2018, the slow rate of progress in improving the regulation and enforcement of the industry needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency to future-proof the industry and to enable it to grow sustainably.
6. The report stated that, while some REC Committee recommendations had been implemented, the Committee remained concerned about the lack of progress and called on the Scottish Government to implement all outstanding recommendations as a matter of urgency. The Committee asked the Scottish Government to set out a clear timetable for the implementation of its own January 2025 recommendations over the next 12 months, including information about how implementation would be measured.

Evidence session

7. On 25 February 2026, the Committee will take evidence from a panel of stakeholders, including industry and regulators.

8. The session will focus on progress along the themes of:
 - information management and data
 - fish health, welfare and cleaner fish
 - science and innovation
 - environment - discharges and interactions with wild fish
 - spatial planning, consenting and community benefit
9. In advance of the session, [the Committee received written submissions from a number of organisations.](#)
10. In addition, SEPA wrote to the Committee to highlight the limitations in what it can say at this time about its role in the regulation of interactions between sea lice from marine fish farms and wild salmon and sea trout. This is due to the matter being subject to ongoing legal proceedings, including appeals to Scottish Ministers lodged by marine fish farm operators against licence variation notices issued by SEPA, as part of the implementation of the sea lice regulatory framework.
11. The session at this meeting will inform the Committee ahead of taking evidence from the Cabinet Secretary on 11 March 2026 on the Scottish Government's progress in implementing the recommendations.

Clerks to the Committee
February 2025