

The British Retail Consortium and Fidra host:

A workshop to discuss Responsible Sourcing, Transparency and Traceability of Farmed Scottish Salmon

Objectives of the workshop:

- To explore how the supply chain can support the salmon farming industry to minimise or mitigate environmental impacts as identified by the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee;
- To explore opportunities to increase transparency and information at point of sale by the supply chain, to increase consumer confidence and access to environmental performance data.

Concluding remarks

All participants of this workshop agreed that a single, centralised database presenting as much relevant information as possible is to be the most desirable scenario. This will be valuable for retailers, suppliers and other stakeholders that do not have the capacity to thoroughly assess individual sources themselves.

In addition, participants agreed that such a system could be used by the whole supply chain to assess, and clearly show, how salmon farms are performing. No retailer should be sourcing salmon from a farm that is performing poorly in terms of environmental impact or is in breach of environmental regulations. By clearly demonstrating this, retailers and their suppliers will be verifying the performance of their own supply chain as well as showing a desire for minimising environmental impacts.

Discussions were had about whether the name of the farm, or similar, being printed on the labels of individual salmon products, can make a retailer easily accountable when linked with an extensive database as described.

Alternative systems such as block chains, certification websites and individual industry sustainability dashboards can provide the same information, however it is often more fragmented.

Participants in the workshop are encouraged to consider the most comprehensive way in which the public traceability and transparency of Scottish salmon products can be improved. Further feedback is welcomed on the additional form attached to the email.

Audiences:

- Shareholders
- Blue/green bank bonds / Investors
- Scottish Government / Policy Makers / Politicians
- NGOs / influencers
- Retailers
- Public / consumers
- Auditors / Standard setters
- Suppliers – 1 up, 1 down supply chain
- Feed industry
- Boards
- Processors
- Universities / researchers
- Local communities

Data / Information gathered:

- Annual customer survey (by retailers)
- Monthly information re: salmon and trout populations and health etc.
- Survey on recognition of certification logos
- Statutorily required information
- Spatial data e.g. seabed use
- Online pdf report e.g. as required by ASC standard

Barriers:

For retailers

- Retailers may be reluctant to provide information due to cost, limited capacity and lack of customer interest/concern
- Lack of consistent messaging between brands e.g. what they list on the label, how they refer to a farm/site name/location etc.
- Consumer needs quick, clear information
- Complex industry with complex supply chains makes naming farm complicated for retailers

For industry

- Managing wider context e.g. poor weather, political direction, disease outbreak etc.
- Compliance failures throughout sector
- Poor communication and lack of trust leads to decreased sharing of data
- Lack of science e.g. in relation to stocking densities
- Industry often has to be reactive and suffers short term costs
- The competitive nature of the industry makes it inconsistent
- Limitations in resource, time, capacity and infrastructure
- Lack of information about what customers and NGOs are looking for from industry
- Lack of social acceptance around aquaculture
- Immediate public reporting of data and farm name would be problematic as suppliers would not have a chance to react and remedy
- Some companies hiding behind industry bodies
- 'Brand' of Scottish salmon = pressure on industry

Government / regulatory

- Gaps in regulation and effective framework
- Self-reporting = lack of external data verification
- Limitations in resource, time, capacity

Media

- Fear of negative media reports from data
- Negative press – good news is not news!
- Anti-aquaculture rhetoric & campaigners
- Polarised sector

Solutions:

For retailers

- On pack labelling
- Individual alignment of supply chains
- Younger generation desire more available information – retailers are happy to provide this and be accountable, demonstrating they are acting responsibly
- **For industry**
- Attendance at events like agricultural shows and COP26 etc.
- Standardised, simplified, digitised data sets across supply and value chains
- Standardised and centralised database e.g. BarentsWatch (good example of Government enforcement and thorough data) &/or Global Gap (simple data for consumers)
- Equivalent of independent quango for salmon farming – e.g. like Seafish but specific for salmon farming
- Creation of an Industry Working Group
- Tour boat / open week(s)
- Offshore farms – Norwegian farms could provide case studies – currently a risky option

Government / regulatory

- Enforced consistency across reporting e.g. with Norway's BarentsWatch
- 3rd party, visible auditing and independent verification
- Government to lead on data and regulation

Media

- A good industry PR strategy
- Tell the full story through context
- Celebrate positive stories and outcomes

Type of stakeholder	Number attended
Retailers	7
Certification schemes	3
Government	3
Industry	6
Transparency schemes	1
NGOs	2

