

17th August 2018

Steve Farrell – Clerk to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

rec.committee@parliament.scot

Dear Mr Farrell,

Salmon Farming Mortality Data

I wrote in April to advise the Committee Members that the SSPO had fulfilled the commitment made in February to publish farm-by-farm sea lice data. I also stated that we were working on an initiative to expand our industry transparency to include farm-by-farm mortality data. This letter is to confirm that we have now released this data.

Your administrative advice to us was to send such correspondence to you, in order that you could inform the Committee. I would be grateful, therefore, if you would pass this letter on to members of the Committee and if appropriate, publish it on the Committee's webpage.

Our data is collected from 100% of all Scottish salmon farm operators, including companies outwith SSPO membership and so is fully representative of the industry. It has now been published on our [SSPO website](#) and reports information for January to April 2018. We intend to publish data for May 2018 next month, once data collection and analysis is complete. We will then continue to publish the data on a rolling monthly basis thereafter.

The data shows the monthly industry mortality averages as follows: January: 1.35%, February: 0.94%, March: 1.49%, April: 1.32%. Around 60% of stocked farms had less than 1% mortality. Companies have been reporting mortality data to the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) for many years.

This new reporting goes beyond what is required by regulation and offers more detail on the causes of mortality (ranging from extreme weather incidents, jellyfish, algal blooms, marine predators and disease). It is, to our knowledge, the first voluntary reporting of mortality figures in any farm sector worldwide and puts the Scottish salmon farming sector at the forefront of transparency on survival reporting.

Fish health and welfare is a priority for salmon farmers who take a long term view of ensuring that health and survival rates improve and that Scotland can lead in fish health status. The SSPO and its member companies are committed to contributing to the collaborative 10 year "Farmed Fish Health Framework" that will help deliver an ambitious and measurable road map for increasing farmed salmon survival to help underpin the sustainability of a sector vital to Scotland's rural economy.

I have written in similar terms to Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Mairi Gougeon, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment. If you, or any Committee members have any questions on the attached, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Hesketh-Laird
Chief Executive