

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND

SUBMISSION FROM OCEAN KINETICS

We are based in Lerwick in the Shetland Islands with additional facilities in Aberdeen supporting our UK mainland operations. Our business started in 1993 as a marine engineering company serving the aquaculture industry in Shetland. Since then we have grown significantly and now provide services to the energy, renewables and utilities industries. Employing up to 90 staff, at any given time approximately half our work force are employed in aquaculture.

We have been involved with the Scottish farmed salmon industry since its inception in the early 1980's when Shetlander's were pioneers in establishing it.

Despite many setbacks the global demand for high quality protein has seen it prevail and it is now an established significant asset to rural communities such as Shetland in terms of both numbers employed and contribution to the local economy.

Ocean Kinetics are committed to strengthening our workforce through apprenticeship programmes and have trained almost one hundred young people into qualified engineers since our formation. This would not have been possible in the absence of an aquaculture industry.

According to the only properly reviewed scientific papers available the incidence of sea lice is actually decreasing in Scotland. We have seen the industry work tirelessly in Shetland with new technological solutions to address this issue and have helped develop measures ourselves. It's partly these innovative non-chemical methods that are helping to reduce the amount of sea lice in pens and demonstrates the commitment of the industry in addressing these problems.

We also cannot find evidence to suggest any correlation between salmon farming and a decrease in wild salmon returning to Scottish rivers. Shetland has a great history and local knowledge of wild sea trout and salmon fishing and most of us have seen our grandfather's photos of good catches and prolific fly fishing in the early to middle part of the last century. This had diminished completely by the 1970's when we were boys and that was long before the first salmon cage arrived here.

We have the North Atlantic Fishery College and Shetland seafood quality control both providing monitoring and inspection services to the industry here. Shetland is a maritime centred island with a long history and tradition of supporting livelihoods from the sea. We are rightly proud of our knowledge and appreciation of quality seafood and know the high standard of farmed salmon that is produced here.

This is not least because of the strong tidal flows and harsh conditions which provides Shetland with such an optimal environment in which to grow farmed salmon. .

Despite negative and sometimes ill-informed criticism of the farmed salmon industry, in these islands it plays a huge part in the economy and community and should continue to be supported by the Scottish government at all levels.

Ocean Kinetics
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