

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

### **SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM PHILIP WALKER**

Salmon farming is firstly an un-natural activity! Its principal function is to make money for its operators/owners. It has no other natural merit whatsoever.

In considering its benefits, on the face of it these include:-

#### **Producing a foodstuff.**

There is questionable benefit in producing food that allegedly has carcinogenic side effects as has scientifically been proven.

#### **Creating employment.**

This government must be persuaded to assess the net advantage of jobs directly attributable to salmon farming, while not overlooking the impact on the rural economy of west coast Scotland upon which there has been a huge impact due to the consequential genocide of natural stocks of salmon and sea trout in west coast rivers. The cause is hardly coincidental as it has only happened since salmon farms arrived ! The spread of disease and sealice has killed natural stocks in almost every west coast river.

And the consequence ? The economy of rural Scotland has been destroyed. Not many years ago, fishing tourism on the west coast was buoyant. With the decimation of natural stocks, the government surely cannot be unaware of the impact on rural employment ?

We are talking about the decimation of Hotel businesses, B&B's, butchers, bakers, post offices, cafes and restaurants, wee shops, as well as direct employment of ghillies. Bailiffs, boat hirers, etc etc etc !

In its misguided enthusiasm for bolstering exports, a huge impact has been made on our home economy !

#### **What is the way forward?**

As ever, we seek to lock the gate after the proverbial horse has bolted. Awards to industry have been given to the perpetrators of a heinous crime ! How can there be any remaining doubt in any logical person's mind, that aquaculture is an awful mistake.... open sea cages breed sea lice and disease that operators cannot control. So, it must cease, or be stopped by immediate legislation.

Not wishing to destroy an industry, however dubious its health credentials, it seems pretty obvious that a better system must immediately be initiated ! Dry land units may have some merit and should be viable with a little initiative....

In conclusion, I am of the view that this government must take immediate action to force change upon an irresponsible industry which has wreaked havoc on natural

fish stocks in west coast rivers. Operators and owners of fish farms are jointly culpable and must face the fact that continued operation of open cage fish farms is indefensible!

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