

[FishyLeaks](#), 8 January 2013

Whistleblower at Scottish Salmon - The Company Who Kicked the Viper's Nest

Leaked [internal emails](#) from a whistleblower inside the [Scottish Salmon Company](#) reveal the utter contempt foreign-owned salmon farming companies have for local communities in the Western Isles of Scotland. "Let the locals get used to it" is the privately held view of a company publicly [listed](#) on the Norwegian Stock Exchange, [registered](#) in Jersey and [owned](#) by a who's who of Swiss and Norwegian banks and investors (over 85% of [Scottish salmon farming](#) production is now controlled by foreign - mostly Norwegian - interests exported to overseas markets such as [China](#)).

One community on the Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides is disparaged by the Scottish Salmon Company's 'Environmental Manager' Rebecca Dean as a "[vipers nest](#)" despite a [company policy](#) which advocates "building strong relationships with the community".

"Yes, there is a biomass strategy target, and I am well aware of it and we will max out what we can, where we can," [writes](#) Rebecca Dean. "But Plocrapol is a guaranteed vipers nest, with the huge delays that will create, and the demands on Council (and The Scottish Salmon Company) time, could be better spent on other sites that may be less oppositional (couldn't get much worse than Ploc...well, there is always Arran of course...or Toa, but)."

"Let's spend the energy fighting those battles, and filling the Council's time," [writes](#) the Scottish Salmon Company's 'Environmental Manager' who recommends focussing on expansion in the Uists. "We might as well try avoid, for now at least, the ones we are certain will be lengthy, tiring, negative PR battles."

"I absolutely agree we look where there is less chance of time consuming opposition," [replies](#) the Scottish Salmon Company's CEO [Stewart McLelland](#) who admits expansion at their [disease-ridden](#) Isle of Arran farm at [Lamlash Bay](#) is "difficult". "This way we ensure we get the good publicity and demonstrate the advantages of working together," he [writes](#). "What we need to do is have a session just on the Hebrides to discuss strategy then tactics."

With these [leaked internal documents](#) published via [FishyLeaks](#) and the prospect of further revelations, the Scottish Salmon Company's policy of avoiding what it refers to as "angst" and "hoo-haa" has now come back to bite it on the corporate ass.

"The Scottish Salmon Company is a venomous snake in the grass," said Don Staniford of the [Global Aquaculture Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture](#) who received the leaked documents anonymously in the mail. "Thanks to this brave whistleblower the Scottish public can now see the poisonous bile being spewed by this shameless Swiss/Norwegian-owned company. Local communities across the Highlands and Islands are now fighting back against the deadly diseases and PR poison being peddled by the foreign-owned salmon farming companies choking the lifeblood out of the Scottish coast."

Read the leaked emails from the Scottish Salmon Company in full [online here](#) (and enclosed below)

Contact: Don Staniford: 07771 541826

Notes to Editors:

[1] Leaked E-mails from the Scottish Salmon Company:

From: Rebecca Dean
Sent: 02 March 2012 13:48
To: Stewart McLelland; Brian Floyd
Subject: Plocrapol

Hi

Have you had a chance to see if we are legally bound by the SPA to try for 14 x 100s at Plocrapol??

My instinct is, that if we are not, we should not do it, not yet anyway.

We get the 14 x 70s on site, we get (hopefully next week) the permission for the barge and the extension to the mooring area to hold the 14 x70s...and we leave it there, for now. Let the locals get used to it, then maybe increase from 70s to 100s in 2-3 years time.

We are going for new Ploc, round the corner, as well as trying for another site to the north (Loch Claigh) and still looking for more. In addition we are trying for the 3 sites in Uists. Lets spend the energy getting those, fighting those battles, and filling the Councils time with those, rather than also including a modification to existing Plocrapol and the angst, time, delay, hoo-haa, that will cause.

Yes, there is a biomass strategy target, and I am well aware of it and we will max out what we can, where we can.

But Plocrapol is a guaranteed vipers nest, with the huge delays that will create, and the demands on Council (and TSSC) time, could be better spent on other sites that may be less oppositional (couldn't get much worse than Ploc...well, there is always Arran of course...or Toa, but)

The Strategy and Spreadsheets need and expect something but there are no definites we will get any of them. We might as well try avoid, for now at least, the ones we are certain will be lengthy, tiring, negative PR battles.

Thoughts?

From: Stewart McLelland
Sent: 02 March 2012 14:50
To: Rebecca Dean; Brian Floyd

Subject: re: Plocrapol

Rebecca,

I agree with your thinking. What we need to do is have a session just on the Hebrides to discuss strategy then tactics. It may be that we actually give up the existing Plocrapol site. This would need to be linked to an overall plan.

My thinking was that we look at other locations and make sure we have the tonnage potential, then move the existing plocrapol site but on our terms. This way we ensure we get the good publicity and demonstrate the advantages of working together.

If we can gain our tonnage from new sites the I would potentially give up the existing Plocrapol site.

Arran is difficult as we need an alternative to the 2013 S1. Again I am happy to do this but not sure if we can.

On Toa can you chase the mooring information then we can decide what we do with this.

I absolutely agree we look where there is less chance of time consuming opposition. When Brian is back from holiday we should get some time on our strategy for Hebrides etc.

Regards

Stewart

[Rebecca Dean is environment manager; Stewart McLelland is CEO and Brian Floyd is production manager at [The Scottish Salmon Company](#)]

[2] Scottish Salmon's Disease Crisis:

In November 2012, the Scottish Salmon Company [reported](#) huge disease losses in their [Q3 2012](#) financial report to the Norwegian Stock Exchange. “Scottish Salmon profits hit by disease outbreak” [reported](#) the Herald (30 November 2012). “Experts have warned that the salmon industry stands to lose millions from a parasitic disease outbreak, with SSC estimating it could lose 1000 tons of fish, or 4% of its annual production”.

“Mr. McLelland admitted that the company’s starkly declining revenues stem from the amoebic gill disease and other biological challenges prevalent across the industry that have led to more fish deaths, lower growth and increased production costs for salmon farmers,” [wrote](#) Peter Urpeth of [Outer Hebrides Against Fish Farms](#) in a letter in the West Highland Free Press (7 December 2012).

“Mr. McLelland clearly thinks it is wrong for people to care about the impact his methods will have on the environment and the economy, but why should he care?” wrote Peter Urpeth of [Outer Hebrides Against Fish Farms](#). “When it all goes wrong here he and his Norwegian shareholders can do what fish farms have done across the globe, and move onto waters anew without a single consideration for local jobs, the local environment, the local economy and the mess they’ll leave behind.”

Read more about the Scottish Salmon Company’s problems with Chlamydia via “[Gill Disease: Scotland’s Dirty Big Secret](#)”

[3] Community Opposition to the Scottish Salmon Company:

Community opposition to the Scottish Salmon Company is growing across Scotland. On the **Isle of Lewis** and **Isle of Harris**, the campaign group [Outer Hebrides Against Fish Farms](#) is fighting expansion plans by the [Scottish Salmon Company](#).



Photo: Protestors outside Bays Community Centre, Harris, in December 2012

“Stewart McLelland’s Trump-like rant in last week’s Gazette was wholly inaccurate, and it is very worrying that the CEO of a company with such grave responsibility for the stewardship

of the environment should refuse to address a single point of fact we raised in our press release,” [wrote](#) Peter Urpeth of the [Outer Hebrides Against Fish Farms](#) in a letter published in the Stornoway Gazette (6 December 2012). “His company signs up to a code of guidance on good practice in farm fish production, established by the industry itself, and does so in order to secure planning permission for new sites. But that code of guidance is both ineffective and, due to such factors as the rapid spread of disease and the ineffectiveness of treatments for infestations, impossible for fish farmers to implement – let alone the times when it is simply not followed, as our figures revealed.”

“Last week we saw a load of 26 tonnes heading down to Uist to get buried,” said Harris fisherman Angus Campbell in an interview with [STV News](#) (11 October 2012). “It’s just incredible the amount of dead fish coming out of these sites.”

“Don’t be fooled by the oily handshakes of corporate Fish Farming PR,” [urged](#) the [Outer Hebrides Against Fish Farms](#) in November 2012. “Get the facts from independent sources...but remember a lot of the facts that shame this industry are hidden behind government supported nets of secrecy.”

Watch video reports via “[Salmon Farms Displace Fishermen in Scotland](#)” and “[Future of Fishing Compromised by Fish Farms](#)”

On the **Isle of Arran**, the [Community of Arran Seabed Trust](#) (COAST) has long campaigned against the Scottish Salmon Company’s [disease-ridden](#) salmon farm in [Lamlash Bay](#). In April 2011, COAST also filed an [objection](#) to the Scottish Salmon Company’s plans to discharge toxic chemicals into Loch Fyne.

Watch video reports via “[Scottish Salmon Stushie off the Isle of Arran](#)”; “[The Stench of Scottish Salmon Farming](#)” and “[Salmon Farm Disease Disaster in Lamlash Bay, Arran](#)”

Residents of the **Isle of Gometra** off the **Isle of Mull** are campaigning against the Scottish Salmon Company’s “[salmon factory](#)” (or what [The Scotsman](#) reported as a “blight on the horizon”).



ISLANDERS: Gometra residents are unhappy.

“Thousands of people come from all over the world to look at this landscape,” said Roc Sandford, owner of the Isle of Gometra, in an interview with [BBC News](#) (11 September 2012). “This is the one place in the world you shouldn't put a factory fish farm.”

Watch video reports via “[Scottish Salmon Farms Bully Island Residents](#)” and “[Don Staniford speaks at public hearing against salmon farms](#)”

The Scottish Salmon Company has also encountered opposition to plans to site a ‘mega’ salmon farm in **Loch Scridain** on the Isle of Mull. “As a local community we should have some say in what happens in our environment, as we, and our future generations have to live with the consequences,” wrote Carole Harvey in a [petition](#) to Argyll & Bute Council. “We find it objectionable from many points of view, the wildlife effect, the fishermen, the sea lice aspect, the wild stocks, the visual impact”

Residents on the **Isle of Eigg** successfully fought off the Scottish Salmon Company. “The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust is not satisfied with the community engagement efforts of the Scottish Salmon Company,” [reported](#) The Ecologist in September 2011. “Maggie Fyffe, administration secretary of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, said: 'They didn't really answer any of the concerns we had - environmental, visual and all the rest of it.' She added: 'They were trying to defend it as it would provide four or five jobs but they couldn't come up with any real benefits'.”



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