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Don Staniford
By email salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com

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Dear Mr Staniford

WELFARE AT SCOTTISH SALMON FARMS

Thank you for your email of 29 May to Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, and Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary of the Rural Economy and Connectivity. I have been asked to respond on their behalf.

As you outlined in your letter to the Cross Party Group of Animal Welfare, the information you have referenced has been extracted from case files published by the Scottish Government's (SG) Fish Health Inspectorate. Descriptions, including clinical observations, should be regarded in the context of the full information provided in the case notes and not as standalone comments.

The observations noted concern a small proportion of fish within an aquaculture sites' population. All fish are subject to a number of pressures in the environment, particularly naturally present pathogens. Farmed fish are no exception, and it should be expected that some will experience health challenges.

Fish Health Inspectors will report any significant case of poor welfare to Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) veterinarians, responsible for overseeing the requirements of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. If APHA suspect that an offence may have been committed under the Act, there are various enforcement options including issuing advice, warning letters and care notices, and the option of passing evidence for a potential prosecution to the Procurator Fiscal to consider.

You ask what action the SG is taking to protect the welfare of fish on salmon farms in Scotland. We take protection of animal health and welfare seriously, and published Scotland's 10 Year Farmed Fish Health Framework in May, to ensure that a strategic focus on fish health and welfare is maintained over the longer term. This can be found on the SG website at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00535697.pdf>

The Framework, developed in collaboration with the sector, will drive further improvements to fish health and welfare in Scotland. Key areas of activity will include the development of an action plan to tackle the underlying causes of mortalities on Scottish fish farms, and the development and dissemination of guidance on operational best practice for physical sea lice treatments. The SG website will be updated on a regular basis as we progress the various work streams detailed in the Framework.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

PP *Fiona Watt*

Jill Barber

Aquaculture Health, Welfare and Innovation Manager