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18 December 2012

### Persistent Breach of Sea Lice Levels on Irish Salmon Farms

Dear [Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine](#),

Why is the Irish Government permitting salmon farming companies like Marine Harvest and Mannin Bay Salmon to flagrantly flout sea lice protocol levels?

The latest data ([November 2012](#)) from the Marine Institute reveals that Marine Harvest is breaching the protocol level by over three times with over 44 sea lice per farmed salmon at Lough Swilly. Mannin Bay's 'organic' salmon is breaching the level by nearly three times.

Aquaculture, MEFS, Marine Institute



Sea Lice Report November 2012						
Bay	Company	Site	Stock	Date	Mean no.s of Ovigerous Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish	Mean no.s of Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish
Mannin Bay	Mannin Bay Salmon Co. Ltd	Corhounagh	Atlantic salmon, 2011	16/11/12	5.56	15.23
Killary Harbour	Rosroe Salmon Ltd	Inishdeighil	Atlantic salmon, 2012	28/11/12	0.00	0.25
Clew Bay	Clare Island Seafarms Ltd	Portlea	Atlantic salmon, 2011	04/11/12	1.20	5.28
	Clare Island Seafarms Ltd	Seastream Inner	Atlantic salmon, 2012	30/11/12	0.30	4.46
	Curraun Blue Ltd	Curraun	Rainbow Trout, 2012 (1)	22/11/12	0.24	6.80
Mulroy Bay	Marine Harvest Irl.	Cranford A	Atlantic salmon, 2012 S½	13/11/12	0.33	19.67
	Marine Harvest Irl.	Glinsk	Atlantic salmon, 2012	13/11/12	0.19	2.22
Lough Swilly	Marine Harvest Irl.	Lough Swilly	Atlantic salmon, 2011	13/11/12	6.23	44.88

#### Elevated Lice Levels

Elevated sea lice levels are levels which are in excess of treatment trigger levels set out in "Monitoring Protocol No. 3 for Offshore Finfish Farms-Sea Lice Monitoring and Control" (DMNR 2000) & "A strategy for improved pest control on Irish salmon farm" (DAFF 2008). A notice to carry out a sea lice treatment (NTT) is issued on the basis of elevated sea lice levels. Treatment triggers during the spring period (March, April, May,) are from 0.3 to 0.5 egg bearing female (ovigerous) sea lice per fish. Outside of the critical spring period, a level of 2.0 egg bearing female sea lice per fish acts as a trigger for a NTT.

Elevated sea lice levels were recorded at:

- Corhounagh, Mannin Bay, Mannin Bay Salmon Company Ltd.
- Lough Swilly, Marine Harvest Ireland

Nor is this breach of the sea lice protocol level an isolated incident – Marine Harvest's Lough Swilly site has breached the level for the last five months ([July](#), [August](#), [September](#), [October](#) & [November](#)) and has breached the level 8 times this year (also in [March](#), [April](#) & [May](#)). Mannin Bay Salmon has also consistently flouted the sea lice protocol level – with breaches

in 11 of the last 12 months ([December/January](#), [February](#), [March](#), [April](#), [May](#), [June](#), [July](#), [September](#), [October](#) & [November](#)).

In [October 2012](#) Marine Harvest’s feedlot in Lough Swilly was infested with 54 sea lice per fish – breaching the sea lice protocol level by almost five times along with Mannin Bay’s ‘organic’ salmon feedlot at Corhounagh.


  
 Aquaculture, MEFS, Marine Institute

Sea Lice Report October 2012						
Bay	Company	Site	Stock	Date	Mean no.s of Ovipigerous Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish	Mean no.s of Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish
Mannin Bay	Mannin Bay Salmon Co. Ltd	Corhounagh	Atlantic salmon, 2011	24/10/12	9.36	26.59
Killary Harbour	Rosroe Salmon Ltd	Inishdeighil	Atlantic salmon, 2012	23/10/12	0.00	0.10
Clew Bay	Clare Island Seafarms Ltd	Portlea	Atlantic salmon, 2011	05/10/12	0.34	1.69
	Clare Island Seafarms Ltd	Seastream Inner	Atlantic salmon, 2011	10/10/12	0.00	0.66
Bealacragher Bay	Curraun Blue Ltd	Curraun	Rainbow Trout, 2011 (1)		Harvested Out	
			Rainbow Trout, 2012 (1)	18/10/12	0.06	0.52
Donegal Bay	Eany Fish Products Ltd	Inver Bay	Rainbow Trout, 2012 (1)	09/10/12	0.00	0.23
			Rainbow Trout, 2012 (2)	09/10/12	0.00	0.32
	Ocean Farm Ltd	Ocean Inver	Atlantic salmon, 2012	09/10/12	0.02	0.13
	Ocean Farm Ltd	Mc Swyne's	Atlantic salmon, 2011	09/10/12	3.49	16.72
Mulroy Bay	Marine Harvest Irl.	Cranford A	Atlantic salmon, 2012 5/6	24/10/12	0.94	6.03
	Marine Harvest Irl.	Glinsk	Atlantic salmon, 2012	24/10/12	0.83	6.38
Lough Swilly	Marine Harvest Irl.	Lough Swilly	Atlantic salmon, 2011	24/10/12	9.35	54.00

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Elevated sea lice levels were recorded at:

- Corhounagh, Mannin Bay, Mannin Bay Salmon Company Ltd.
- McSwynes, Donegal Bay, Ocean Farm Ltd
- Lough Swilly, Marine Harvest Ireland

In [September 2012](#), Marine Harvest’s feedlot in Mulroy Bay was infested with 58 sea lice per farmed salmon with Lough Swilly infested with a staggering 71 sea lice per farmed salmon (both over five times the sea lice protocol level)!


  
 Aquaculture, MEFS, Marine Institute

Sea Lice Report September 2012						
Bay	Company	Site	Stock	Date	Mean no.s of Ovipigerous Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish	Mean no.s of Lepeophtheirus salmonis per fish
Mulroy Bay	Marine Harvest Irl.	Cranford A	Atlantic salmon, 2012 5/6	21/09/12	10.79	58.06
	Marine Harvest Irl.	Glinsk	Atlantic salmon, 2012	21/09/12	0.41	2.35
Lough Swilly	Marine Harvest Irl.	Lough Swilly	Atlantic salmon, 2011	21/09/12	11.05	71.72

#### Elevated Lice Levels

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Elevated sea lice levels were recorded at:

- Corhounagh, Mannin Bay, Mannin Bay Salmon Company Ltd.
- Cranford A, Mulroy Bay, Marine Harvest Ireland
- Lough Swilly, Marine Harvest Ireland

For more details visit [FishyLeaks](#)

The damning revelations come in the wake of a scientific paper published by the [Royal Society](#) in November which concluded that sea lice from salmon farms are killing wild salmon. Minister of State with responsibility for Natural Resources Fergus O'Dowd, TD (copied into this letter), [welcomed](#) the report stating “from the results of this detailed study, it is crucial that sea lice levels are maintained below these protocol levels”.



However, the latest ‘National Survey of Sea Lice on Fish Farms in Ireland – 2011’ [published](#) in February 2012 revealed that 50% of Irish salmon farms breached sea lice levels in 2011 compared to 40% in 2010 and 24% in 2009. The sea lice crisis is clearly getting worse not better and is spiralling out of control.

It is shameful that the Irish Government continues to allow salmon farms across Ireland to flagrantly flout sea lice protocol levels. Shame on Ireland and shame on the [Norwegian-owned](#) multinational Marine Harvest Norway which now controls over 60% of Irish salmon farming production.



That the Marine Institute “declined to comment” when the Sunday Times Ireland [reported](#) on this issue at the weekend (16 December) is wholly unacceptable for a public agency funded by the Irish taxpayer. Moreover, when the Donegal News first [broke the news](#) last month (30 November) the Marine Institute was at pains to stress that the information “should not be cited or passed on without prior permission of the Marine Institute”.

The 2009 [complaint](#) on sea lice filed with the European Commission by [Salmon Watch Ireland](#) clearly fell on deaf ears and was ignored by the Irish Government who are now proposing a series of super-size (and undoubtedly sea lice infested) salmon feedlots starting with a 15,000 tonne farm in [Galway Bay](#). How can the Irish Government even contemplate doubling salmon farming production when current production is already infested with sea lice (and other infectious diseases)?

The Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture ([GAAIA](#)) will now be raising this persistent breach of sea lice protocol levels with the European Commission (DG Environment is copied into this letter) and has published the information online via [FishyLeaks](#) for the world to bear witness to Ireland’s sea lice problem. GAAIA is also supporting a [boycott](#) this Christmas of sea lice infested Irish farmed salmon.



In the meantime, GAAIA would appreciate an answer to the following basic question: Why is the Irish Government permitting salmon farming companies like Marine Harvest and Mannin Bay Salmon to flagrantly flout sea lice protocol levels?

Yours sincerely,

Don Staniford

Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture

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