

CABINET SECRETARY MEETING WITH MR NEIL MANCHESTER, HENDRIX GENETICS: REJECTION BY NORWAY OF SCOTTISH DERIVED SALMON OVA: TUESDAY 5 JUNE, 3.30-4.15PM: T3,25: SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

<i>Date and Time of Engagements</i>	Tuesday 5 June 3.30-4.15pm
<i>Where</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T3.25, Scottish Parliament
<i>Key Message</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive of aquaculture, a key sector helping to sustain economic growth particularly in rural, coastal and islands communities. • The industry's 2030 Vision includes targets to double the value of the aquaculture sector to about £3.5 billion and 28,000 jobs by 2030. • The Scottish Government is disappointed by the Norwegian decision to refuse the import of Scottish derived Atlantic salmon ova.
<i>Who</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Neil Manchester, Hendrix Genetics
<i>Why</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to discuss the options open to Mr Manchester following the continued decision by the Norwegian Government to ban the import of salmon eggs from Scotland
<i>Official Support Required</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <Redacted – personal data> • <Redacted – personal data>
<i>Briefing contents</i>	<p>Annex A – Biography Annex B – Summary Annex C – Support for Aquaculture EMFF Annex D – Support for Aquaculture SAIC Annex E – Background to Norwegian Ban Annex F – Correspondence from Neil Manchester Annex G – Key Stats</p>

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**Annex B
Summary**

Issue

- The Norwegian Environmental Directorate continues to decline the import of Scottish derived Atlantic salmon ova.
- The decision by Norway has had a negative impact on Argyll based operations of Hendrix Genetics.
- Mr Ewing is meeting Mr Manchester to discuss the various options going forward.
- Mr Manchester will raise the issue of government funding to invest in key sustainable developments in their Argyll operations (see Annex F).

Lines to Take

- The Scottish Government is disappointed by the Norwegian decision to refuse the import of Scottish derived Atlantic salmon ova.
- The Scottish Government does not consider Atlantic salmon ova of Norwegian origin to be an alien or locally absent species according to the definitions provided in EU Regulation and our position is that we have no plans to restrict their import into Scotland.
- The Scottish Government is unable to provide legal advice on the Norwegian Government's decision to prohibit the import of Scottish derived Atlantic salmon ova into Norway under Norwegian laws. If you wish to challenge this decision then we would advise you to seek independent legal advice to determine whether or not there are legal grounds to do so.
- Helpful to understand the level of support received from the SSPO/sector and to what extent they have already lobbied the Norwegian Government on your behalf.

Scottish Position

- Currently the vast majority of eggs used in Scottish salmon farming production are imported from Norway and until the Hendrix Genetics initiative, there was no suggestion of reciprocal trade.
- We do not consider Atlantic salmon ova of Norwegian origin to be an alien species according to the definitions provided in EU Regulation and our position is that we have no plans to restrict their import into Scotland.

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**Annex E
Background to Norwegian Ban**

Background

- In 2016, the Norwegian Environment Agency declined the import of Scottish derived Atlantic salmon ova from Argyll based Hendrix Genetics because they considered Atlantic salmon of Scottish origin to be an “alien species”.
- Emphasis from Norwegians that escaped farmed salmon with partial Scottish origin increases the likelihood of adverse effects on Norwegian wildlife stocks in addition to the adverse effects with Norwegian fish farms.

Genetic: Scotland into Norway

- Norwegian authorities outline molecular genetic studies that show Norwegian and Scottish salmon have genetic inequalities "If genetic intrusion from exposed / escaped fish should occur, it is possible that this will have a greater negative impact on the indigenous population when there is a high degree of inequality between exposed / escaped fish and wildlife fish than if the difference between these is small."
- The Norwegian Environmental Directorate further states that only importation of farmed salmon be allowed where it can be documented that it is only of Norwegian origin.

Imports of marine fish

- In recent years various marine species have been imported into Norway, among other things halibut from Canada, Iceland/ Scotland and cod from the Faroes.
- The Norwegian rules for imports of marine species were changed on January 1, 2016, when regulations on foreign organisms came into force. Imports of marine organisms are now assessed by the same rules as for example imports of Atlantic salmon.

Alien Species – Definition

- The Norwegian Ministry refers to the definition of foreign organisms in its nature diversity act as "foreign organism: an organism that does not belong to any species or stock that occurs naturally on the spot." They argue this does not include the term *only the species level*, but also the file level. They define file as "a group of individuals of the same species living within a demarcated area at the same time."
- The Ministry's assessment is that material, which is of partial Scottish origin, does not belong to any of the 400 stocks of Atlantic salmon that occurs naturally anywhere in Norway, and that the material in question is thus a foreign organism according to the definition of their Nature Diversity Act.

Risk

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- The Norwegians also argue that the fact that the application concerns the import of a foreign organism is not decisive for whether permission should be granted or not. The decisive factor is the **risk** associated with the material in question.
- When assessing the application, "particular emphasis shall be placed on whether the organism and any accompanying organisms administered may pose a risk of adverse consequences for biodiversity."
- They state that no permission can be granted if there is "reason to assume that the introduction or expulsion will cause material adverse consequences for biodiversity."
- They see there being a high likelihood that genetic confusion between Norwegian wild salmon and escaped farmed salmon from partially Scottish origin will increase the loss of genetic diversity.

International Responsibility

- The view of the Ministry is that Norway has a special international responsibility to conserve the *villacs*, as Norway's seas and coastal areas and watercourses today constitute some of the most important living areas for Atlantic salmon, and about one third of the total global population exists in Norway.
- The Norwegian goal for Norwegian salmon management is to preserve and rebuild salmon stocks of a size and composition that ensures diversity within the species and exploits its production potential.

Wild Atlantic salmon – Norway

- Salmon stocks have been declining since the mid-1980s, and the salmon to Norwegian rivers has reduced by between 50- 65 per cent since the mid-1980s.
- The number of Norwegian populations of wild ash has declined to about 400 stocks.
- About 50 populations are extinct or have so few individuals that they are at risk of being eradicated. According to the Norwegian Environmental Protection Agency's salmon register, about 45 percent of salmon stocks remain in a very bad or bad state.

Trade Policy

- The Ministry indicates that they have allowed the import of farmed salmon from outwith Norway if it is documented that they originated from southern Norway.
- They state it is up to each State to assess the risks on the importation of genetic material, as well as how well they will protect themselves against that risk.
- Norway has adopted a high level of protection against alien organisms through the adoption of the Nature Diversity Act and the Regulations on Foreign Species in accordance with this Act.

EEA Agreement

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- The Norwegians argue that regulation of alien species is not harmonized in the EEA. The EFTA States therefore decide for themselves how they will regulate this, as long as it does not conflict with what is otherwise provided by the EEA Agreement.

Rainbow Trout

- Regarding imports of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), the Ministry indicates that the species has been used for fish farming since approx. 1900.
- During a period in the early 1900s, rainbow trout were stocked in lakes and rivers to create better fishing opportunities for the general public, and it was not believed that it could grow in Norway. Occurrence in Norwegian nature is attributed to the substantial escape from fish farms.

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