



MAR 11 2009

Dr. David Suzuki
< wildorca@island.net >

Dear Dr. Suzuki and co-signatories:

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding your concern over the potential spread of the infectious salmon anemia virus (ISAV) into British Columbia (B.C.).

Let me assure you that measures are in place to deal not only with ISAV but with all fish pathogens of concern. Highlights of existing measures to prevent the spread of fish diseases from other countries and other parts of Canada to B.C.'s fish farms are as follows:

- For aquaculture purposes, B.C. has a strict importation policy of fertilized eggs only for any salmonid species.
- Under the B.C. Atlantic Salmon Importation Policy, only surface-disinfected, fertilized Atlantic salmon eggs from sources certified by a Local Fish Health Officer (LFHO) are permitted for import into B.C. No live Atlantic salmon or unfertilized eggs are allowed to be imported.
- Any facility serving as a source of eggs for import into B.C. must undergo rigorous health testing under the *Fish Health Protection Regulations* before eggs can be provided to B.C. culture operations. This applies to all facilities whether within Canada or abroad. To import into B.C., a facility must be compliant with Canadian laws and regulations.
- Imports of fertilized eggs from qualifying facilities are held in strict quarantine and isolation for up to one year, and the resulting progeny undergo rigorous health testing before introduction to ocean farms. A condition of the import agreement is that results of the fish health testing must be reported to the LFHO on a monthly basis, while fish are in quarantine. Fish are only released from quarantine if all reports from screening come back as satisfactory. Any signs of a disease problem must be reported within 24-hours to meet import requirements.

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- Upon completion of the quarantine and isolation period, the Minister issues licences for all introduction and transfers of fish pursuant to Section 56 of the *Fishery (General) Regulations*, and only issues licences to transfer fish in the absence of disease agents of concern that may be harmful to the protection and conservation of fish. Fish may only be transferred to sea cage pens with written approval through the LFHO and corresponding Section 56 licence.
- Site, vessel, and visitor-related fish-health protocols (including the use of foot baths and disinfection of any equipment used with fish or sediment monitoring) are in place in accordance with the industry-wide Fish Health Management Plans in British Columbia.
- With respect to ISAV, there is no strong evidence that ISAV is transmitted from adult to young via reproductive products and there is no evidence for ISAV occurring within eggs.
- In addition to surface disinfection mentioned above, all shipping materials are disinfected before disposal. The disinfectant and disinfection protocol that is used is highly effective against ISAV and other salmonid pathogens.

I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the policies and procedures in place to protect against the spread of ISAV. Thank you for your concern for our wild salmon stocks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gail Shea', written in a cursive style.

Gail Shea, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Gordon Campbell, M.L.A.