

**Email communications between CFIA investigator, Gary Kruger and
Alexandra Morton March 20 – April 3, 2013**

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/19/2013 3:50 pm >>>

Dear Dr. Klotins:

I am writing to inquire about the CFIA's test results on my sample that tested positive for HPR0?

Thank you,

Alexandra Morton

From: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 20 March, 2013 4:29:37 AM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>

Good Morning,

I am forwarding your question for answer by the Western Area of CFIA Operations as they are conducting the investigation.

Regards, Kim

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/19/2013 3:50 pm >>>

Dear Dr. Klotins:

I am writing to inquire about the CFIA's test results on my sample that tested positive for HPR0?

Thank you,

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 20 March, 2013 11:07:53 AM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>

Hi Alexandra

Thank you for your enquiry. Since we will never be able to determine the exact origin of the samples from a regulatory perspective, due to chain of custody issues, we will not be conducting any further testing to confirm this finding. The best we can do is to try and narrow down the origin through DNA testing, but I have not received those results yet.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/20/2013 1:17 pm >>>

Dr. Kruger:

I am astonished. When a person becomes ill from eating tainted food, the CFIA is known to step in and trace the food to source and stop the spread of the infectious agent, even though the victim does not have chain of custody.

In this case, we have an incident with a "reportable" disease, that is being sold to the United States and elsewhere, and this sample of Skuna Bay fish has tested positive for ISA. Skuna Bay fish is being shipped over the border with the understanding that British Columbia is ISA - free.

Attached is the label on the box that this fish came from, it names the farm and the date the fish was harvested.

The CFIA is responsible for preventing pandemics, ISA virus is known to spread and kill large amounts of salmon.

I do not understand your position and request that you immediately return my samples to Dr. Kibenge's lab because they were requested by the CFIA for testing.

On the Skuna Bay website it says: Tamper proof and traceable seals on the box indicates that after our approved salmon selectors have sealed up the carton, the

next person to touch the fish is the chef. No person intervenes in this chain.

Please let me know when you will be returning my samples to Dr. Kibenge's lab

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 21 March, 2013 8:57:45 AM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher
Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca

Hi Alexandra

Thank you once again for your message. As you know, the CFIA takes reportable animal diseases very seriously and follow up with an investigation when we are notified of these diseases. Unfortunately, we are unable to confirm ISA from the samples that you have submitted to Dr. Kibenge for reasons previously provided. Please feel free to review section 7.2 of the OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals which describes how ISA can be confirmed. You will notice that it refers to the farm of origin among many other factors. Since there is no fish left at the farm of origin, we cannot obtain further samples.

http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/aahm/2010/2.3.05_ISA_2009%20.pdf

Dr. Kiberge's laboratory is a private laboratory and is not approved by the CFIA for the purposes of conducting work for the National Aquatic Animal Health Program. While we do follow up on these lab reports, it is critical for the CFIA to be able to confirm these findings prior to taking on eradication efforts, etc. In addition, I'd like to remind you that after thousands of tests, the CFIA has not been able to confirm the presence of this disease in BC. The CFIA has undertaken a surveillance initiative in wild salmon last year and the plan is to include farmed salmon this year. Testing for ISA by DFO (research projects) and the industry via other private laboratories continues as well, with no notifications of suspicious positive results to the CFIA.

I do believe that we share a common goal as part of the CFIA's mandate to ensure the protection of the animal resource base, including wild and farmed salmon in BC. I would therefore encourage you to continue to work with us in collaboration, so as to ensure that we meet this goal.

If I may, I'd like to make a few more comments:

- There is absolutely no evidence that ISA is a zoonotic disease within the scientific community
- You are completely correct: The CFIA has a responsibility for preventing pandemics and the ISA virus is known to kill cultured Atlantic salmon. Since ISA is not zoonotic and since BC is free of this disease, no country (including the US) has placed any restrictions on BC salmon.
- The exact same principal applies here as what the CFIA would do with tainted food. We have the responsibility to trace it to source whether it is a food safety related issue or, in this case, an animal health related issue. We, were provided with the pictures that you had attached and followed up with the Skuna Bay Company. No fish were left from that harvested population to sample. The CFIA will continue it's surveillance program for finfish on the west coast.

The CFIA has the authority to obtain samples for testing and the samples from Dr. Kibenge's laboratory no longer belong to him. It is now the CFIA's property and the CFIA has the authority to determine how this sample will be disposed of after we have conducted our testing. I do not see any reason why we would not allow the return of the samples to Dr. Kibenge from a regulatory perspective, as the material is non infectious having been preserved in ethanol. However, there will most likely be nothing left after our testing is completed. Dr. Kibenge may request in writing to have the samples returned after completion of our testing.

I hope this further helps to address your concerns and if you have any other questions please feel free to contact me again.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/21/2013 1:16 pm >>>
Dear Gary

I really appreciate your willingness to explain, and I have further questions.

I remain unclear, are you running PCR testing for ISA virus in my SK samples or not? From your first message it sounded like you are not, but now you are saying you are going to use up all the tissue in testing.

Can you tell me what tests you are going to do to use up such a large amount of tissue? You have samples that were frozen and samples in RNA Later, that is a lot of tissue for PCR testing.

It seems to me that since Grieg rears its fish right there in a local hatchery and likely produced the fish that went into the Williamson site, that you should be testing that hatchery. Rumours reached me that they just killed a large number of fry. I can't verify that, but you could. You could also test adjacent sites as this virus is known to spread horizontally.

I would like to see the tests the CFIA has done on all of my samples. There has to be a reason so many labs have reported positives, but the CFIA cannot. I would really like to know what protocol the CFIA is using.

Have you seen the attached email from Dr. Miller? Apparently Dr. Saksida reported ISA positives to the CFIA in BC farmed chinook salmon. Are you aware of this? Also see the large number of positives reported by DFO's Kyle Garver and Miller. In addition, have you seen the email where Gagne reported a weak positive in the highly degraded Rivers Inlet samples (attached)? A weak positive in degraded samples is not a "negative."

Gary, there is something not right here. The CFIA cannot keep brushing off the positive results from so many labs, including those who have tracked this virus around the world and DFO's own labs, without telling us exactly what tests are being used. Dr. Gary Marty, for example, uses an ISAv testing protocol validated only within BCMAL. He is the only lab I know of that has tested BC salmon for ISAv and cannot find any positives, weak or otherwise. BCMAL, of course, is the agency that developed salmon farming in British Columbia. They are a well known advocate for the industry, sometimes at the expense of the facts. For example, while Dr. Mark Sheppard worked for BCMAL, as the vet in charge of farm salmon health, he advised the Minister in charge of salmon farms that no live Atlantic salmon eggs had been imported to BC so there was no concern about ISA virus reaching BC as it had Chile. This is simply wrong, according to the DFO website ~27 million presumably live Atlantic salmon eggs had entered BC by that time and Sheppard was the man in charge of their health! I have attached Sheppards "confidential" briefing as it has become an exhibit so you can read his words. So an in-house BCMAL validated ISAv test that is producing results contrary to the rest of the scientific community bears scrutiny.

I asked Con Kiley for the negative results on my ISAv positives in the Fraser River and he sent results for Salmo salar.... none of the salmon I tested in the Fraser were Salmo salar. I wrote back to him and never heard back.

I think it is very important that the CFIA test my SK samples. Please confirm that you are going to do so and forward the protocol, which lab, who signed off on the results and the results.

Thank you so much,

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 21 March, 2013 4:02:43 PM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher
Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca

Hi Alexandra

Thank you for the additional information. I want to assure you that we are not brushing off the "positive" results from so many labs. You may not even be fully aware of the massive investigation that we launched in 2011 based on suspicious results from Dr. Kibenge's lab. I think part of the problem is that laboratories that deals with reportable aquatic diseases have not been properly educated in the use of appropriate terminology and seems to have a tendency to incorrectly report their suspicious findings as positive. This inaccurate and inappropriate use of the word "positive" unfortunately seems to alarm the media and the public, because they do not understand what it means to confirm a disease. They also do not seem to understand the limitations of the PCR test. All of the suspicious initial findings for ISA in BC could never be confirmed by the CFIA. We have enough data and scientific evidence that we do not currently have ISA in BC, and that all the suspicious findings to date were just that - suspicious, unconfirmed false positives.

We do not, however, take this disease lightly. Between April 2012 and December 2012, over 4,200 wild salmon samples were collected from B.C.

waters, as well as from processing plants and hatcheries (wild salmon). To date, more than 3,500 of those samples have been tested so far, all with negative results. This is part of our official CFIA surveillance program - not done in private labs. And as I mention, the plan is to expand on this by including farmed salmon.

I can literally spend hours and hours explaining how diseases are confirmed, and for ISA it certainly is not done through screening tests such as PCR. The previous link (from the OIE website that I provided below) plus this link, explains how ISA can be confirmed:

<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/back-fiche/2011/201111108-eng.htm>

I also thought to add the old well known methodology developed in 1884 to demonstrate the complexity of disease confirmation:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koch's_postulates

We are a fact-seeking regulatory science based agency. It would be unacceptable and immature to implement certain measures based on assumption and suspicion (just like with any other regulatory agency).

I have looked at so many lab reports regarding ISA in the last two years, that I cannot say with certainty whether I have seen that report from Dr. Miller (PCR results) or remember Dr. Saksida's suspicious report, but all these laboratories are well aware of their legal obligation to notify us, so if this was within the last two years, we would have received it and followed up on it. As for Dr. Gagne's email, yes I have seen that, and once again these are PCR tests. All it means is that it would prompt the lab to try and confirm whether that is a false positive or whether they really have a virus. In that case they tried to confirm it and couldn't - which means that it wasn't ISA.

My apologies for the confusion about what we are doing with your recent samples. We collected the homogenates from Dr. Kibenge. I think he still has the rest of the samples. We rendered these homogenates non infectious by preserving it in ethanol. We are not interested to try and run a PCR test on these samples and as described before we will not be able to confirm the disease any ways. So as such, all we are able to do is try and narrow down the origin of the samples by running DNA analysis. I can let you know of the results once we obtain them.

I appreciate that it might appear as if some facts are not adding up, but it is mostly due to inappropriate use of language that leads to confusion. As I mentioned before, there is no hidden agenda. We will continue to look for ISA and if it is confirmed we will notify the OIE (under international law), immediately notify our trading partners (so as to prevent the possible spread of disease to their countries) and

take whatever other measures are appropriate and necessary at the time.
I personally am much more concerned with IHN than ISA.

Canada is the 5th largest exporter of seafood in the world. One would think that if any of these countries had a concern with ISA in BC, they would have banned our salmon by now. But they haven't, so they must be just as confident as we are that we do not have the disease. I really appreciate working with you, and as before please do not hesitate to contact me or share any information you may have.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

From: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 21 March, 2013 11:07:11 PM PDT
To: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher <Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca>

Dear Gary

Sorry, now I am very confused about what testing the CFIA has done on my Skuna Bay samples.

In the first email you said:

"there will most likely be nothing left after our testing is completed"

This made it sound like the CFIA was going to run confirmatory tests for ISA virus

But in the next email, you say the CFIA took the homogenate of my samples from Kibenge's lab and put it in ethanol to make it non-infectious and then decided

" We are not interested to try and run a PCR test on these samples and as described before we will not be able to confirm the disease any ways."

Why did you take the samples if you are not interested in running tests? Why did you say the tests would use up the whole sample?

In Canada, confirmation of ISAv requires culturing the virus, and this can only be done with live virus.

When you put my sample in ethanol, didn't that kill the virus? Making it impossible to culture?

When you said in the previous email that *" we are unable to confirm ISA from the samples that you have submitted to Dr. Kibenge "* that would be because the samples were put in ethanol?

But what really is confusing me, Gary, is that the CFIA did not take the homogenate from the lab, they took the fresher samples.

Apparently the fresher samples were the ones put in ethanol? Has this been the procedure with all my samples?

When I wrote Dr. Klotins to ask about the results of the CFIA confirmation tests for ISA virus in my Skuna Bay samples, she forwarded my request to you, indicating you are leading the investigation. But the information you got from the east coast about what was taken from the lab is incorrect.

Furthermore, the positive PCR results was for the HPR0 variant of ISAv, which cannot be cultured. Thus a positive HPR0 variant of ISA virus is never going to be confirmed in Canada.

So just to confirm, the CFIA did no testing on my Skuna Bay samples?

alex

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>

Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?

Date: 22 March, 2013 9:19:51 AM PDT

To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>

Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher

Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca

Hi Alexandra

My apologies for the confusion. Initially I was told that they are going to be taking the homogenates, but then after that I was no longer in the loop because our inspector communicated directly with the lab and they must have decided that it is better to send the fresh samples, which is actually better. So to confirm, we are not doing any diagnostic testing and will not be doing any diagnostic testing for ISA whatsoever. No PCR testing, no virus isolation, no further diagnostic testing because such testing will be of no value to the CFIA at this time.

What we are doing is that we are doing DNA testing to narrow down the origin of the fish. This is part of any thorough investigation where the chain of custody was lost. If we are able to find a DNA match it will put us in a better position to focus on this site for possible future ISA testing.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/22/2013 11:36 am >>>
Gary

Why did the CFIA go the lab to take my Skuna Bay samples, if they did not intend to use them?

You can understand I have doubts about this investigation.

First you said there would be no testing due to chain of custody issues

Then you said the entire sample would be used up in testing

When I asked how you could use so much sample tissue you came back that only the homogenate was taken

When I pointed out this was wrong, the homogenate was left and the other tissue taken

you said the lab chose to give my samples away to the CFIA

You also talked about what it takes to confirm ISAv, which is culture of the live virus, but the CFIA apparently had my samples put in

ethanol, which will kill the virus, making culture impossible.
Now we are back to square one, CFIA is not going to do any testing of the Skuna Bay samples, due to lack of chain of custody. Why did you tell me earlier that the sample would be all used up in CFIA testing and there would be nothing to send back to the lab?

I would like to draw your attention to the Skuna Bay website:
<http://www.skunasalmon.com/>

"Tamper proof and traceable seals on the box indicates that after our approved salmon selectors have sealed up the carton, the next person to touch the fish is the chef. No person intervenes in this chain."

Indeed the name of the farm is on the box and in the pictures forwarded to you.

If the CFIA is not going to test a farm salmon sample that has tested positive for the ISA virus from a traceable, sealed box, from a known site and company, and the CFIA is not testing farm salmon themselves how will we ever know if farm salmon have ISA virus or not? I would like to know if this is what happened to all my samples taken from the lab by the CFIA. Were they all put in ethanol and never tested due to lack of chain of custody?

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 25 March, 2013 11:03:47 AM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher
Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca

Hi Alexandra

Yes, there is a complete lack of chain of custody. For more information, please see:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chain_of_custody
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DNA_profiling

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/25/2013 12:25 pm >>>

Gary

Is this true of all my samples that have produced positive PCR Results for the ISA virus? The CFIA has not tested any of them because I don't have chain of custody?

alexandra morton

On 2013-03-26, at 9:28 AM, Gary Kruger wrote:

Hi Alexandra

Yes, that is true. Members of the public cannot submit samples for reportable disease diagnostics. If you suspect a reportable disease, please contact the CFIA so that we can collect and submit samples to the appropriate laboratories if necessary.

Thanks
Gary

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P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
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Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/26/2013 10:31 am >>>

Gary

What I am asking is when the CFIA takes samples that belong to me from

the AVC lab in PEI that have produced positive PCR test results, does the CFIA run its own tests on these samples?

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 27 March, 2013 10:08:23 AM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Cc: Kim Klotins <Kim.Klotins@inspection.gc.ca>, Ray Fletcher <Ray.Fletcher@inspection.gc.ca>

Hi Alexandra

Thank you for your message. Yes, as explained a couple times below, the CFIA is running tests on these samples for DNA profiling.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com> 3/29/2013 12:00 am >>>

Dear Gary

Once you have run the DNA, what are the next steps the CFIA is going to take with these samples?

Will you be running any tests for ISAv?

Alexandra Morton

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 3 April, 2013 9:04:11 AM PDT

To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Hi Alexandra

It is too early to tell whether we would do any further tests. If there are any tissue left, we can return it to Dr. Kibenge, but as you know, they are in ethanol.

Thanks
Gary

Dr. Gary Kruger
P: (403) 292-5825 F: (403) 292-6629
Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

From: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 3 April, 2013 9:25:48 AM PDT
To: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>

Gary

The CFIA's role is to confirm, or not whether ISA virus is in this sample of Skuna Bay salmon raised near Gold River, in the Williamson farm site. The only way to confirm ISA virus in Canada is to culture it and this is only possible if the virus is active, "alive." When the sample was put into ethanol, as per the CFIA's instructions, the CFIA made it impossible to confirm ISA virus in this sample.

Why is the CFIA putting reportedly ISA virus - positive tissue into a solution that inactivates the virus, destroying any possibility of confirming the virus?

And you do realize that you have contradicted yourself again, earlier you said:

"to confirm, we are not doing any diagnostic testing and will not be doing any diagnostic testing for ISA whatsoever. No PCR testing, no virus isolation, no further diagnostic testing because such testing will be of no value to the CFIA at this time."

Why was the ISAv - positive sample put into ethanol?

Alexandra

From: Gary Kruger <Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 4 April, 2013 12:03:38 PM PDT
To: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>

Hi Alexandra

Thank you for your message. I actually did not contradict myself, but realize that the wording was not clear. As I mentioned before "we are not doing any diagnostic testing and will not be doing any diagnostic testing for ISA whatsoever. No PCR testing, no virus isolation, no further diagnostic testing because such testing will be of no value to the CFIA at this time." We may, however, do more DNA analysis if needed, which is what I meant.

I should point out that it is indeed not the CFIA's role to confirm, or not whether ISA is in the sample of Skuna Bay that you had submitted to Kibenge. We do not test samples for reportable diseases that was submitted by members of the public. We will, however, always follow up on these suspicious findings and determine the best course of action. Once again, if you suspect a reportable disease at the origin, please contact the CFIA so that we can determine whether to collect samples ourselves for further testing. Members of the public cannot participate in sample collection for reportable diseases in Canada or any other country.

Thanks
Gary

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Email: Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Area Program Specialist (Aquatics) - Western Operations
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1115 57 Ave NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9B2
www.inspection.gc.ca

From: Alexandra Morton <gorbuscha@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: ISA confirmation?
Date: 4 April, 2013 1:09:27 PM PDT
To: Gary Kruger Gary.Kruger@inspection.gc.ca
Gary

Thank you for this.

The lab which got the positive ISAv result in Skuna Bay salmon is the OIE lab for the Americas. It is the lab that diagnosed Chile with ISAv when no one else knew ISA was in Chile. That outbreak led to a \$2 billion loss. Here in BC, the stakes are extremely high because the wild salmon economy stands to be affected.

If the CFIA won't go to the farms, won't retest ISA virus positives from one of only two OIE reference labs for ISA virus, but went to the lab took the samples and has destroyed the evidence for ISAv confirmation, how exactly do you know the Skuna Bay salmon are not carrying ISA virus into the US, a country that has gone on the record specifically stating they do not want ISAv-infected salmon? "Morgan Lascinsky of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration said salmon with the virus would not be allowed across the border because American law prohibits the importation of any diseased animal." http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/02/01/infected_salmon_declared_fit_for_human_consumption_by_canadian_food_inspection_agency.html

How exactly does the CFIA know the Skuna Bay salmon from the Williamson farm, harvested in December 2012 did not enter the United States infected with ISA virus?

Alexandra Morton