



Council

CNL(01)74

Observations and Recommendations on Transgenic Salmon

NGO Statement

Greenpeace International



**Observations and Recommendations on Transgenic Salmon as
proposed to the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of NASCO
Mondariz, Galicia, Spain
4 – 8 June 2001**

Presented by Greenpeace International

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Greenpeace International supports the NASCO's Guidelines on Transgenic Salmon, adopted at the 14 annual meeting in June 1997, which obliges member states to:

"take all possible actions to ensure that the use of transgenic salmon, in any part of the NASCO Convention Area, is confined to secure, self-contained, land-based facilities."¹

1.2 Greenpeace recalls the 'Agreement On Adoption Of A Precautionary Approach' that was adopted by the Council at its Fifteenth Annual Meeting in June 1998, in which the parties agreed to apply a precautionary approach to the conservation, management and exploitation of salmon in order to protect the resource and preserve the environments in which it lives.

1.3 Furthermore, Greenpeace recalls the finding in the Agreement on Implementation of the Oslo Accord, adopted by the Council in June 1999, that containment measures are currently not adequate to deal with the problem of escaping transgenic salmon.

2. OBSERVATIONS

2.1 The NASCO Secretariat has noted² that the North Atlantic Commission's Discussion Document for Revision to the Protocols for the Introduction and Transfer of Salmonoids proposes (though has not yet agreed) a different approach to that agreed by the Council, in that:

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... reproductively viable transgenic salmonoids may be introduced to land-based facilities only where the possibility of escapement is minimal, but transgenic salmonoids may be used in marine and freshwater cages if they are reproductively sterile."

This position is not consistent with the NASCO guidelines and the precautionary principle and that any release of transgenic fish to the environment is not acceptable.

- 2.2 Greenpeace shares the ... doubts that 100% sterility can presently be achieved in a commercial situation", expressed by the NASCO secretariat³ (Ref 3) and further note that regardless of the sterility issue transgenic fish may negatively disrupt the ecology of salmon streams if or when they escape.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Greenpeace proposes to the annual meeting of NASCO that member states:

3.1.1 In light of the different approach to transgenic salmon proposed within the North Atlantic Commission, reaffirm their support for NASCO's agreed Guidelines on Transgenic Salmon.

3.1.2 Institute national legislation or adopt binding rules to ensure those guidelines are implemented.

3.1.3 Agree that due to the international and transnational effects of any release of transgenic salmon, no unilateral approvals of any release of transgenic salmon outside contained, land based systems, may be granted by individual member states.

3.1.4 Actively participate in the preparatory work on the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol under the Convention of Biological Diversity and offer to support the secretariat on the Biosafety Protocol with regard to transgenic salmon.

3.1.5 Actively participate in the preparation of the Fifth Ministerial Conference for the Protection of the North Sea, in March 2002, which will address the issue of genetically engineered fish.

3.1.6 Seek reliable and enforceable measures of liability and redress regarding the potential environmental and commercial impacts of rearing transgenic fish in contained facilities. Strict unlimited liability should rest with the technology provider and full insurance cover for any potential damage resulting from such operations should be a mandatory prerequisite for experimental as well as commercial rearing of transgenic fish.

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3.1.7 Address the question of effective monitoring to ensure that no transgenic fish escapes into open water and to require appropriate identification and monitoring provisions and technologies from experimental and commercial users of transgenic fish.

3.1.8 Ensure that full public environmental impact assessments in consultation with other parties are carried out prior to any experimental or commercial use of transgenic fish.

References:

¹ NASCO Guidelines for Action on Transgenic Salmon (1997)

Council CNL (97) 48 annex 1, para 'b'

² NASCO (2001) Transgenic Salmon - CNL (01) 29 item 4

³ NASCO (2001) Transgenic Salmon - CNL (01) 29 item 3