

Council

CNL(07)30

Incentivising the Industry - A Discussion Document from the International Salmon Farmers' Association

At the Liaison Group meeting between NASCO and the North Atlantic salmon farming industry in March 2007 (see CNL(07)18), the industry indicated that they would develop a discussion document on how NASCO could further support the salmon farming industry. I have now received the attached document from the industry and have been asked to issue this as a Council paper together with the guiding principles for cooperation between NASCO and the industry that were developed by the Liaison Group in 2001 (Annex 1).

Secretary
Edinburgh
29 May, 2007

***Incentivising the Industry -
A Discussion Document from the International Salmon Farmers' Association***

A paper for the June 2007 Council meeting of NASCO

Following the meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO Liaison Group held in Boston USA on 9th/10th March 2007, the industry representatives were invited to submit a paper to the next meeting of NASCO to consider ways in which NASCO and its accredited NGOs might be more supportive of a sustainable salmon farming industry, as was agreed in the Liaison Group's "Guiding Principles for Cooperation."

1. Statement of principle and objective

The North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO), recognizing the importance of conserving and enhancing wild salmon stocks and of supporting a sustainable salmon farming industry, have agreed to the establishment of guiding principles for co-operation. The objective is to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements in order to make recommendations on wild salmon conservation and sustainable salmon farming practices, and to maximize the potential benefits and minimize the potential risks to both.

The industry has supported wild salmon conservation efforts around the world, both by collaborating on local conservation projects and by continuously improving management practices to address concerns.

It was felt by the industry contingent that much of the Liaison Group's time has been focused on the industry's shortcomings, without the appropriate recognition of its many successes. It was also felt that many of the claims around the potential negative effects of the industry were based on unsound or incomplete data. It is acknowledged that this aligns with the precautionary principles adopted by NASCO, which state that: "*the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures.*"

The following approach is offered by ISFA in an effort to ensure that (i) a balanced approach is taken by NASCO in its consideration of, and comment on, the salmon farming industry and (ii) certain practical measures might be adopted by NASCO in order to support a sustainable and successful industry.

1. Recognition

- (a) Of the economic and social contribution of the worldwide salmon farming industry: its importance to remote rural and coastal communities and its contribution to schools, families and jobs as well as the spin-off to other industries in the supply network. Recognition of the importance of the substitution of fish from the more traditional catch fisheries with sustainably farmed salmon.
- (b) Of the nutritional value of eating salmon, such as the benefits of Omega 3 fatty acids, and the important role that farmed salmon has played in both the health of the individual and in taking the pressure off wild salmon consumption and exploitation.
- (c) Of the achievements of the industry in compliance with a comprehensive suite of regulations, the management of fish health and welfare, the development of, and adherence to, sea lice strategies, codes of containment, codes of good practice and the level of professional leadership provided by the industry in the technical and scientific disciplines. Further recognition is appropriate for the investment the industry has made in infrastructure improvements, in research and development, and in joint initiatives with wild fish interests and conservation groups.
- (d) Of the numerous ‘levers for control’ of the industry in relation to legislation and regulation (for example: Scotland has 10 different statutory bodies, 60 different pieces of legislation, 43 European directives, 3 European Regulations and 12 European Commission Decisions.) Similar regimes exist in all North Atlantic salmon farming countries.

2. Review

- (a) Of the precautionary principles which underlie much of the thinking of NASCO and its accredited NGOs. It must now be clear to NASCO that we are able to demonstrate a responsible and well established, high quality/low impact industry that is acutely aware of its environmental responsibilities. This is evidenced by industry’s acceptance and delivery of 1(c) and 1(d) above.
- (b) Of the Liaison Group’s agenda and activities to provide a more balanced approach to the matters discussed and the action plans. We suggest a move away from the perceived view that the industry is invited to these meetings to account for its shortcomings and to follow an agenda which is almost entirely devoted to sea lice, containment and genetic issues, without recognising the significant achievements of the industry in these and other areas.
- (c) Of the way in which NASCO interfaces with the industry on an international level, so as to provide for a cohesive and well understood approach to the issues which concern them. It is equally important that NASCO’s interactions reflect the fact that their constituent government agencies are already proactively engaged in promoting the sustainable development of their aquaculture industries.

3. Support

- (a) For the promotion of farmed salmon as the preferred and healthy choice for consumers and an affirmation of the advantages of having a salmon farming industry.
- (b) For representations to Government and competent authorities for the fair and equitable access to medicines for the safe and effective control of sea lice and other approved medicines.
- (c) For the development of an international strategy for the sustainable and incremental growth of the salmon farming industry over a defined period.
- (d) For the promotion of the achievements of the industry and the wide range of positive initiatives the industry has adopted to ensure a safe and secure future.
- (e) For existing and new research projects that are designed to generate objective scientific information to fill gaps in knowledge about the industry's impacts on the environment, on habitat and its interaction with other species.
- (f) For the establishment of a NASCO salmon farming award or scholarship for high achievement or for a special initiative in the area of best practice or conservation.
- (g) For the preparation of, and distribution of, a regular (at least annual) joint press/media statement on an agreed positive area of industry activity.
- (h) For the joint condemnation of speculative and unsubstantiated commentary from anti-industry activists.
- (i) For the dissemination of information on best practice and collaborative problem-solving activities.

SLG(01)11

Guiding Principles for Cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (hereinafter referred to as “the Parties”)

1. Statement of principle and objective

The North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing wild salmon stocks and of supporting a sustainable salmon farming industry, have agreed to the establishment of guiding principles for cooperation. The objective is to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements in order to make recommendations on wild salmon conservation and sustainable salmon farming practices, to maximise potential benefits and to minimise potential risks to both.

2. Principles for cooperation between NASCO and its Contracting Parties and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry

- 2.1 The Parties are committed to responsible management of wild salmon stocks and responsible salmon farming and to working in cooperation and to establishing a better mutual understanding;
- 2.2 The Parties recognise the importance of sustainability and environmental stewardship;
- 2.3 Salmon farming and wild stock management both require a risk management approach;
- 2.4 Decisions respecting salmon management and salmon farming should be based on the best available science and the Parties recognise the need to improve information for decision-making in relation to wild salmon stocks and salmon aquaculture;
- 2.5 The Parties agree to work cooperatively when consideration is given to the application of the Precautionary Approach to salmon aquaculture;
- 2.6 Social, economic and environmental costs and benefits should be integral to decision-making whenever possible;
- 2.7 The Parties are committed to the sustainability of wild salmon stocks, recognising that a wide and complex range of factors and activities has adverse effects on wild salmon abundance.