



Agenda item 6.7(d)
For decision

Council

CNL(00)26

Report of the Liaison Meeting with the Salmon Farming Industry

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1. Last year the Council agreed that it wished to revise the process of liaison with the aquaculture industry in order to develop closer, more open and broader cooperation so that the industry throughout the North Atlantic could participate. The aim was to organise a new liaison meeting early in the year 2000 to focus on the development of Guidelines on Physical Containment and other relevant issues. Following a meeting between the Secretary and representatives of the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA) in Norway in August last year, arrangements for a 'fresh start' Liaison Group meeting were made. This meeting was held in London on 10 and 11 February 2000. The report of the meeting is attached.
2. The meeting was well attended both by representatives of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI) and NASCO Parties and there was a good spirit of cooperation and a commitment to work together on issues of mutual concern. Progress was made in agreeing a Constitution for the Liaison Group (contained in Annex 4 of the report) and guiding principles in the form of a Declaration to serve as a basis for future cooperation between the salmon farming industry and the authorities dealing with wild salmon interests (contained in Annex 6 of the report). The Liaison Group decided that there was a need for consideration of the technical aspects of guidelines on containment by a smaller Working Group with technical expertise and Terms of Reference for this Group were agreed (contained in Annex 7 of the report). This group met in Brussels on April 6 and 7 and has been requested by the Liaison Group to produce a progress report by 20 May. This report will be tabled separately as document CNL(00)27 for consideration by the Council.
3. The Council is asked to consider the report of the Liaison Group and decide if it can accept the report and, in particular, if it can accept:
 - i) the Declaration detailing principles for cooperation between NASCO and NASFI;
 - ii) the Constitution for the Liaison Group;
 - iii) the proposal that the Liaison Group provides a better forum for cooperation between NASCO and the salmon farming industry than NGO status but that one or two representatives of the Liaison Group be invited to attend future NASCO meetings;
 - iv) the proposals for future areas for discussion and cooperation:
 - how the salmon farming industry might assist with restoration and enhancement of wild salmon stocks (it was proposed that NASCO might hold a Special Session on this subject);
 - fish health interactions;
 - overfishing of the salmon's prey;
 - mechanisms to support research of interest to the Liaison Group;
 - v) the proposal to hold a second meeting of the Liaison Group in North America in February 2001.

Secretary
Edinburgh
17 April 2000

*Report of the Meeting of the
North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO
Liaison Group*

*Thistle Kensington Park Hotel, de Vere Street, London
10 and 11 February 2000*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dr Malcolm Windsor, Secretary of NASCO, opened the meeting and welcomed delegates to London. He made an opening statement on behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). This statement is contained in Annex 1.
- 1.2 An opening statement was made by Mr Trond Williksen on behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI). This statement is contained in Annex 2.
- 1.3 A list of participants is contained in Annex 3.

2. Adoption of a Constitution

- 2.1 The Liaison Group adopted a Constitution to guide its work, SLG(00)6 (Annex 4).

3. Election of a Chairman and a Rapporteur

- 3.1 The Liaison Group elected Mr Andrew Thomson as its Chairman and Mr Richie Flynn as its Rapporteur, both to serve for a period of two years.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

- 4.1 The Liaison Group adopted its agenda, SLG(00)7 (Annex 5), after including a new agenda item 2, Adoption of a Constitution.

5. Summary of the Work of NASCO

- 5.1 Dr Malcolm Windsor made a brief presentation summarising the work of NASCO, covering the following aspects: harvest restrictions; scientific advice; fishing for salmon in international waters; by-catch; catch statistics; habitat issues; predators and prey; the precautionary approach; and impacts of aquaculture. He stressed that NASCO does not believe that all the problems facing the wild salmon stocks are caused by aquaculture, and that such a belief would be ridiculous. Equally, however, he stated that NASCO does not believe that there are or can be no adverse genetic, disease and parasite and other impacts from aquaculture. That would be equally ridiculous. He stressed that the NASCO Parties have obligations under an

reporting procedures. The plan or plans will be based on cooperation between industry and the relevant authorities and should include the allocation of responsibilities under the plan or plans and a timetable for implementation. The Liaison Group recognised that in some countries action plans are already under development so the international and national or regional initiatives can take place simultaneously.

8. Future Areas for Discussion and Cooperation

- 8.1 The Liaison Group discussed possible areas for future discussion and cooperation between NASFI and NASCO. There was support for consideration of how the salmon farming industry might assist with the restoration and enhancement of wild salmon stocks. The Liaison Group recognised that the salmon farming industry has considerable experience in hatchery techniques and in reducing costs associated with rearing salmon. Furthermore, there is considerable genetic experience in the industry but, to date, there has been little communication between geneticists working in the salmon farming industry and those working with the wild stocks. The industry also has some experience with triploid salmon which would be of interest to those involved with management of wild stocks. The Group recognised that, while there were already cooperative initiatives underway involving the industry and those concerned with restoration and enhancement of wild stocks, there would be benefits from enhanced dialogue in the future, and that the Liaison Group would be an appropriate forum for this dialogue. There was also support within the Group for a Special Session within NASCO on the restoration and enhancement of wild salmon. The Canadian Commissioner for Aquaculture Development indicated his willingness to consider funding such a session.
- 8.2 The Liaison Group also agreed that fish health interactions would be a good topic for discussion at a subsequent meeting given that evidence is increasing that the mechanisms of transmission of diseases and parasites between farmed and wild salmon are more complex than originally thought. The view was also expressed that there is concern that some pelagic fish species, which may be the food of salmon, are being overfished and that this issue should be discussed by the Group.
- 8.3 The Liaison Group also agreed to discuss at a subsequent meeting possible funding mechanisms in order to support research which may be of interest to the Group but which may not otherwise be able to attract funding.
- 8.4 The Chairman proposed that background papers on these topics be submitted to the NASCO Secretariat so that they could be distributed before the next meeting of the Group.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 The Liaison Group agreed that development of a Press Release would be premature due to the need for approval by the Council of NASCO and by industry. However, where there was informal media contact, the message from the meeting could be positive, highlighting the progress made in agreeing guiding principles for future

**Opening Statement by Dr Malcolm Windsor
on behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
(NASCO)**

First, a warm welcome to this Liaison Meeting to our colleagues in the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry. We were very pleased to be able to invite you to participate in what we see as a fresh start in the process of finding ways that salmon farming interests and wild salmon stock interests in the North Atlantic can live happily together. We thank you sincerely for coming to this meeting and for focusing with us on matters of mutual concern.

If I can refer briefly to a little history. A Wild and Farmed Salmon Liaison Group was set up in 1997. It involved NASCO and the International Salmon Farmers' Association (ISFA). It held its first meeting two years ago in March 1998. It agreed its Constitution and it held a very useful exchange of views both then and at a second meeting in December 1998. However, it has to be said that, for various reasons, it made little or no progress on substantive issues. Moreover there was little representation from North America, so today is a fresh start to the process of cooperation between us.

As our colleagues in the salmon farming industry will know, NASCO and all of its member Governments are very keen that salmon farming and wild salmon stocks should prosper together and, as an initial measure, we held a special session on aquaculture as part of our Annual Meeting in Westport, Ireland, last June. This was an opportunity for Canada and Norway to explain what measures they had in place to minimize impacts between aquaculture and wild stocks and to consider what additional measures may be necessary. Although sometimes it must seem so to you, in industry, we do not just focus exclusively on salmon farming. We are well aware and openly accept that there are many factors that may be adversely influencing wild salmon populations, such as marine conditions, acid rain, habitat damage, climatic changes and predators. Those from the industry who attended our Annual Meeting will be aware that NASCO is addressing a wide range of issues concerning conservation of the wild salmon stocks. These include the establishment of regulatory measures, measures to reduce unreported catches, the possible by-catch of Atlantic salmon in pelagic fisheries, elimination of fishing for salmon in international waters and protection and restoration of freshwater habitat. We are, therefore, considering many pressures on the resource and are taking action on many fronts to safeguard the wild stocks. I will come back to this later.

NASCO is emphatically not anti-salmon-farming, but we do have real concerns about impacts on the wild stocks. We cannot stand by and risk genetic, disease and parasite damage to wild stocks and, as a matter of fact, we do not think it is in the aquaculture industry's interest either for this to happen. What we are seeking is a win-win situation, where the wild stocks are maintained at healthy levels in their genetically diverse form and the salmon farming industry is sustainable and seen as environmentally friendly so that it will have a competitive advantage over other foods.

**Opening Statement by Mr Trond Williksen
on behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI)**

Ladies and Gentlemen: On behalf of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry I would like to express our gratitude to NASCO for the arrangements made for this meeting, which the salmon farming industry regards as a new start to the process of cooperation which we started in 1997. The North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry believes that there are significant areas of common interest for the salmon farming industry and NASCO. The industry is committed to the principles of environmental sustainability and environmental stewardship in order to protect the environment, on which we depend. This includes the preservation of wild salmon stocks. In view of this common interest, the industry recognises the need for a continuing and positive dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

With regard to our agenda for the meeting, it will be important to develop a sound basis for future cooperation and a lasting dialogue built on mutual trust. Our aim should be to establish the basis for a partnership with the objective of protecting the wild salmon stocks while allowing for the development of a responsible, sustainable salmon farming industry. If we achieve that during our meeting here in London we will indeed have made progress.

The other issue on our agenda is containment so as to minimise escapes. This is an important issue for the industry which needs to be addressed, but it is complex in an international context, since very different local conditions need to be taken into account. This meeting of nearly forty people is not, perhaps, the best forum for detailed discussions on the issue of containment but it is important that, over the next two days, we discuss the principles and a framework for guidelines to reduce escapes.

Mr Chairman, this meeting is a good opportunity for NASFI and NASCO to have an open-minded discussion which we in the industry hope will be fruitful.

North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO Liaison Group

List of Participants

Ms Helen Ainsworth	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, London, UK h.ainsworth@fish.maff.gsi.gov.uk
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Ms Mary Colligan	National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, USA mary.a.colligan@noaa.gov
Mr William Crowe	Scottish Salmon Producers Organization, Perth, UK wcrowe@scottishsalmon.co.uk
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Ms Nell Halse	New Brunswick Salmon Growers Association, St George, Canada nbsganh@nb.aibn.com

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Mr Andrew Thomson	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium Andrew.Thomson@cec.eu.int
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Mr Hedin Weihe	Faroeese Home Government, Torshavn, Faroe Islands hedinw@fisk.fl.fo
Dr Ken Whelan	Marine Institute, Newport, Ireland kwhelan@iol.ie
Mr Trond Williksen	Norwegian Fish Farmers Association, Trondheim, Norway trond.williksen@nho.no
Dr Malcolm Windsor	NASCO Secretariat, Edinburgh, UK hq@nasco.org.uk
Dr Alexander Zubchenko	PINRO, Murmansk, Russia inter@pinro.murmansk.ru

*North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO
Liaison Group*

Constitution

The North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO Liaison Group (the "Liaison Group") is an advisory group established to provide an international forum for liaison between the salmon farming industry in the North Atlantic and the relevant authorities responsible for the wild Atlantic salmon stocks and aquaculture on issues of mutual interest, and to make recommendations for action. The Group will work by consensus.

The Liaison Group shall comprise industry members from each North Atlantic country and representatives from each member Party of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO).

The Liaison Group will meet on an annual basis, or at more or less frequent intervals if it so decides.

The Liaison Group shall appoint from among its members a Chairman and a Rapporteur who shall serve for a period of two years.

The office of Chairman and of Rapporteur shall be held alternately by representatives of NASCO and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry.

The Secretariat of NASCO and designated representatives of the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry shall, following consultation, make the arrangements for the meetings of the Group and shall share the administrative responsibilities.

***North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry and NASCO
Liaison Group***

Thistle Kensington Park Hotel, de Vere Street, London

10 and 11 February 2000

Agenda

1. Introduction
 - Opening remarks by the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry
 - Opening remarks by NASCO
2. Adoption of a Constitution
3. Election of a Chairman and a Rapporteur
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Summary of the Work of NASCO
6. Mechanisms for Future Cooperation between NASCO and the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry
7. Development of Internationally Agreed Guidelines on Containment
8. Future Areas for Discussion and Cooperation
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Place of Next Meeting
11. Report of the Liaison Group Meeting

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

Declaration

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 cooperation. The objective is to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements in order to make recommendations on wild salmon conservation and sustainable salmon farming practices.

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

- 2.1 The Parties are committed to working in cooperation and to establishing a better mutual understanding;
- 2.2 The Parties recognise the importance of environmental 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 A number of environmental factors and human activities can have an adverse affect on wild salmon abundance;
- 2.8 The Parties are committed to reversing wild salmon declines;
- 2.9 Salmon farming has the potential to be complementary and beneficial to wild salmon conservation.

Terms of Reference for a Working Group to Develop Guidelines on Containment

1. The Liaison Group decides to establish a Working Group to produce draft guidelines on containment to apply throughout the area covered by the NASCO Convention. These guidelines should have as their objective the prevention of escapes of farm salmon in the marine and freshwater environments. In carrying out this task the Working Group should:
 - (a) make appropriate use of document SLG(00)5
 - (b) make appropriate use of other codes of containment
 - (c) use such other relevant information available to it
 - (d) advise on future needs for research and development to update the guidelines in future.
2. The Working Group shall consist of members from industry representing salmon farming interests and members from NASCO Parties representing the relevant authorities. This group should communicate and consult widely and could invite other participants as appropriate. The members of the Working Group shall be appointed by 1 March 2000 and notified to the NASCO Secretariat who will inform the Liaison Group. The Working Group shall hold its first meeting during 6-7 April 2000 in Brussels, Belgium. The NASCO Secretariat shall provide the necessary coordination and administrative and other support. The Working Group shall appoint its Chairman.
3. The Working Group shall make a progress report to the Liaison Group before 20 May 2000 so that there is an opportunity for comment before the report is considered by the Council of NASCO at its Seventeenth Annual Meeting during 5-9 June 2000. The report will also be considered by the appropriate national industry organizations. The Working Group's full report should be available by 31 October 2000 so that it can be considered at the next meeting of the Liaison Group.