



# Burren Smokehouse

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Dear chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to wish you well and thank you for taking time to read my submission to your review committee which I will keep brief and to the point.

By way of introduction, my name is Birgitta Hedin-Curtin and I am owner of the Burren Smokehouse Ltd located in Lisdoonvarna in Co Clare. We currently employ 18 people and our company has an annual turnover of €2M. Our Brand is totally built during the last 28 years on local sourcing and a 100% Irish Product. We service the Food Tourism market showcasing the very best of Irish sourced and processed products. I want to spend my Euro in the Irish Economy knowing that this will sustain all year round employment in the Regional Western Seaboard and giving a future to our next generation to sustain a living on the West Coast of Ireland.

However, I am faced with a very real problem in terms of our product offering. Some months we are not able to source the product and we have to buy in advance. I cannot grow my business significantly as a result of a lack of raw material. This is because I cannot source enough of the product from our Irish suppliers due to the restrictions of the current licence process. Our point of differentiation as a business is based on our ability to offer a product produced in Ireland, with Irish provenance. The Irish Organic Salmon is a sought after world class product with a limited quantity due to the restrictions of the current licence process. This is an industry with a growth potential that cannot be achieved under existing circumstances. Ireland is awash with imports of lesser standard salmon from other countries and continents with the loss to the Irish economy and the ability of my business and that of the Aquaculture sector to provide increased local jobs for local people. There is obviously a major obstacle to farming and growing our own Irish salmon. I think this is an opportunity missed. The market is prepared

Are we unable to issue licences, if so, why? It seems to me that we are missing an open goal in terms of the opportunity to produce a niche product in our own country for which the market is prepared to pay a premium. Why is this the case, why is it so difficult to obtain a licence in Ireland? Is it a resources issue; is it a mind-set? We have great support from the Government for the sector with ambitious targets for export of Irish Food but we do need Irish raw materials that have a unique provenance to reach the Targets. It seems that in some areas the sector is supported while in other areas it appears to be worked against? I would therefore implore your committee to examine and resolve whatever red tape and any unnecessary layers of complication developed in the Irish aquaculture regulatory system.

Sincerely,

Birgitta Hedin-Curtin

MD, Burren Smokehouse Ltd