



HEDERMAN

Independent Review of Aquaculture Licensing,
C/O Deirdre Morgan – Secretary to the Independent Review Group,
Department of Aquaculture Food and the Marine National Seafood Centre,
Clonakilty,
Co. Cork.
aquaculturereview@agriculture.gov.ie

9 February 2017

Dear Mrs Moylan and members of the Independent Review Group,

Independent Review of Aquaculture Licensing

We are writing to express our concern at the constant threat to our 35 year old business and current curtailment to our expansion plan that is posed by the limited and frequently interrupted supply of organic salmon from Marine Harvest due, we understand, to licensing issues.

Smoked Salmon is an iconic Irish food product, and if the state does not act quickly to support and grow this sector, we risk losing out to the many new sources of competition from countries which do not have the advantage of these products being indigenous food products. Ireland also lags far behind Scotland and Norway in fresh fish production, despite the fact that we have ideal conditions for producing fish and particularly those with the added organic value.

We are one of many Irish SME employers in this industry that are negatively affected by the lack of a reliable supply. However we also need you to understand how it affects us in particular.

First some background: We are the only smoked salmon producers in Ireland with an authentic timber smoke house where salmon are hung for smoking. This is a unique traditional method, which is crucial to our high-end quality and story.

We have gained an international reputation for the quality of our smoked fish, provisioning international State events and food halls, overseas embassies, sporting fixtures such as the Ryder Cup and preminent chefs such as Rick Stein and Richard Corrigan.

This year we are also official partners to Rolls Royce due to the quality and integrity of our fish. According to the international food industry critics, our smoked fish is not just Ireland's best, but the best on the world stage. This means we also attract media, sales *and tourism* from the UK, mainland Europe and the US, Ireland's key trading partners.

We could not do this without the quality of salmon provided by Marine Harvest's Irish Organic farms, for several reasons:

- 1) To produce the quality we make, we require fish with good muscle tone that will withstand the hanging process which produces particularly tender and fine fish. Any other fish simply tears through the tenter hooks and ends up on the floor of the smoke house because its fat content is too high and muscle structure too poor.

- 2) We require fish that has flavour that is consistent with Marine Harvest Irish organic stock, which is given a higher proportion of marine feed than conventionally farmed fish. We have tried alternative organic stock but none compares to that produced in Ireland by Marine Harvest.
- 3) As with all niche foods, provenance is absolutely crucial to the value of our brand, and therefore the value of brand Ireland which we promote through our reputation, our high end profile in the food industry and the quality press coverage in international media and Tourism Ireland's promotional films.

In summary we are wholly reliant on Marine Harvest Ireland to supply us with fish of suitable organic quality. The fish also needs to be delivered fresh very rapidly post harvesting. When we have to freeze stock to guarantee continuous supply, our fish loses quality. This also increases our overheads and production costs (for example: deep-freezing and frozen storage, stock logistics, stock loans, thawing time, and production time).

Furthermore, in recent years we have invested heavily in new smoke generators & ecommerce. We have increased employment, and expanded our capacity due to the increased demand for our product and growth of our business. However our potential has been seriously curtailed due to the disruption caused by lack of reliable stock.

Cobh, Midleton and Cork City where our business is based, need employment and need the tourism that we generate but this is not just an issue for us or our area. It is an issue for other smokers, seafood producers— both established and aspiring businesses - and rural communities throughout Ireland, and for the Irish economy.

We are confident there is very significant potential for growth in this sector and in Irish exports, but only on condition that Marine Harvest Ireland is in a position to supply. The stunting of Ireland's seafood and smoking industries' growth is also a huge lost opportunity for Ireland, in revenue, in exports, in employment, and in brand reputation for the food industry as a whole.

We strongly urge you to you to facilitate in every possible way the expansion of Marine Harvest in Ireland, with due consideration to their commitment, perseverance and tolerance, and the excellent, peerless quality of their husbandry and raw materials.

Yours sincerely

Frank Hederman & Caroline Workman



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DIAMOND JUBILEE SHOWCASE 2017
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