


  
Co. Cork

c/o Deirdre Morgan- Secretary to the Independent Review Group  
Dept. of Agriculture Food and the Marine  
National Seafood Centre,  
Clonakilty,  
Co. Cork.

9/2/2017

To whom it may concern,

RE: INDEPEMDANT REVIEW OF THE AQUACULTURE LICENCING PROCESS

I, Úna Ní Charra  Co Cork would like you to consider the following submission.

In terms of background I trained in Aquaculture in the early nineties in RTC Galway and UCC. I have worked in the areas of Salmon Farming and Mussel farming in Ireland and Carp, Catfish and Zander farming in Germany. I have also taught Care of the Catch Modules in BIM, and currently run a part time food safety business and work 4 days per week in the disability sector.

I have continued to train in areas such as filleting, food smoking and seaweed cosmetics and at this stage had hoped to have moved back to a more full time career in the marine industry, through seaweed and fish farming, but found the attempt at obtaining a licence to be too unwieldy and overwhelming. This being due to the time scale involved while also holding another job as is required to rear a family in a small rural area.

I would hope that this review would lead to a clearer, more concise and quicker route to obtaining a licence. I find the whole process and the length of times appeals take, to be absurd.

Unfortunately Aquaculture has received a lot of negative press, with a lot of people stepping on the band wagon to object to licences in quite a militant fashion, without the correct information or informed opinion to back it up. Indeed this is very much apparent in our local area and yet when you question the science behind their objections it's non existent in a lot of cases.

I came to this area from Galway as a result of fish farming and I would hope that by speeding up the licensing process there would be more employment and industry in our area as rural areas like ours are struggling, yet all the while the potential of our natural resources immense. This increase in the aquaculture industry would also lead to better infrastructure and investment in isolated areas and keep schools, shops and local business' such as engineers, welders, mechanics, sign writers, electricians and

all the other small local businesses going and therefore keep our towns and villages vibrant.

I travel extensively and it is particularly frustrating to see the range of aquaculture products and businesses abroad and not see the equivalent here. When I went into aquaculture as a youngster I was not expecting to hear people waiting years for licences and even more years in the appeals process all of which is not conducive to future development of the industry, or indeed attracting the youth into the industry a crime in itself considering the resources and training facilities we have on our doorstep. Aquaculture is not seen as a positive career due to uncertainty in the licensing structure.

As with every small rural village one becomes part of voluntary committees and as a member of our local festival committee, strive to make the marine an important part of the event through educational shore walks, boat tours out to the fish farms, coastguard talks and kids fishing competitions This whole area has vast potential in terms of Aqua Tourism and the chance to educate the general population including the objectors.

By also having a background in food safety, I am highly aware of the standards required and being achieved by the Aquaculture industry as alluded to in Food Wise 2025. Increasing the industries share in the food sector through more Aquaculture development thereby allowing for transparent and standardised codes of practice the aquaculture industry could be setting the standards in sustainability and development for other food sectors to follow.

I thank you for your time in considering this application and hope to see positive developments in this area in the not too distant future.

Regards,



Úna Ní Charra