

Westpoint Shellfish Ltd.

Drombeg, Ardgroom, Beara, Co. Cork, Ireland.

Tel No: 003532774286/Mobile No: 00353863845377

Email: westpoint7@eircom.net

9th February 2017

Licence Review

I have been cultivating rope culture mussels in Cleandra Harbour (T5/369) since 1976. In that time, we have improved husbandry, efficiency, increased productivity and quality.

Most of our products are sold live to France directly, we do not use Irish intermediaries and in the last 5 years we have developed a mussel product called 'Mussel Bites'. (Beara Seafoods Ltd is a sister company). These are mussel meats rolled in oats and multi-grain. They come frozen, ready for oven baking. This award-winning product was in 29 SuperValu shops, fish shops and restaurants in Munster between 2014 - 2016. It was very popular and well received and we are presently talking to two potential industry partners with a view to scaling up.

1. I am very frustrated with the present licencing system and we have been waiting for our renewal (T5/369) since 2009.
2. We also applied for an offshore mussel cultivation licence in Nov 2004 (T5/490) which is still being processed. Recently we have been talking to UCC, The Marine Institute and BIM about the development of this site. We have decided to establish the biological status of this site and to do this we need a foreshore licence to carry out a feasibility study. This review, we hope, will make the granting of a foreshore licence easier to obtain for such studies.
3. I fully agree that the industry has to be regulated and I support most of the present regulations.
4. I propose finfish licences and shellfish licences should be assessed completely differently.
5. Unlike finfish farming, shellfish cultivation have a very low carbon footprint (86g/kg mussels) and do not use artificial feed, medicines and antibiotics.
6. For the most part finfish operations are owned by multinationals and the benefits usually end up abroad. Shellfish cultivation and particularly rope mussel cultivation are family owned enterprises and most of the financial activity generated stay local.

7. I propose that rope culture mussel licences should be granted only to suitable candidates. An industry average of tons produced per hectare should be established and a condition of the licence should be on 'use it or lose it' basis. We presently have situations where licences were granted to candidates who have treated it only as a hobby/other income. This has a bad effect on the industry as a whole with poorly kept and neglected sites rightly drawing condemnation from committed mussel farmers, other water users and the locals generally. It also has a serious effect on bay stocking density, carrying capacities etc.
8. I believe shellfish cultivation and in particular rope mussel cultivation has a very bright future. It has a very low carbon footprint, (BIM/LCA Study on Beas Seafoods Ltd completed Feb 2016). They are grown in 'Class A' waters. Shellfish cultivation and in particular rope mussel culture is a very efficient way of protein production. This will only be successful if the industry get the correct support from government to include efficient licencing, fair and enforced regulations and financial support for essential infrastructure.

The only impact of rope growing mussels is visual. Westpoint Shellfish Ltd has in the past conducted trials to further reduce the impact of the surface flotation.

Yours sincerely,


Ger Lynch MD