

Fish Tales

Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia can explain away all your farmed salmon concerns

by MILES HOWE



Melissa MacLeod, Public Engagement Coordinator of Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia (photo: Miles Howe)

K'jipuktuk (Halifax) - The Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia (AANS) represents a mixed bag of smaller-time suppliers, consultants, producers and processors across the province. Yet it was not farmed mussels or oysters offered on a platter at today's 'Taste of Nova Scotia' celebrations. Instead, a smattering of bright pink chunks of farmed Atlantic Salmon, in tiny muffin wrappers, was the only seafood available for noshing.

This is curious, because of the AANS's 30-odd clients, only one, [Snow Island Salmon](#), actually produces farmed salmon. Is it a question of barely being able to give the stuff away? Or perhaps farmed salmon is in desperate need of a quality public relations campaign?

A conversation with Melissa MacLeod, the Public Engagement Coordinator with the AANS, revealed not much more than industry platitudes in response to the multi-pronged public concerns about, and criticisms of, farmed salmon. It would appear that there is no negative issue with farmed salmon that cannot be reduced to the absent-minded gesticulations of one-sided research slanders.

Lobster habitats, and lobster themselves, have been destroyed by the effects of salmon farming. This much has been documented. Yet "if done right," this shouldn't happen. Case closed.

Farmed Atlantic salmon have escaped in the hundreds of thousands, but this too shouldn't really matter, and is trivialized to an example of "If your cat escapes from home, it doesn't know how to feed itself." Perhaps this is a poor analogy, especially in light of the dwindling song bird population.

As for Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA), a disease that increasingly seems commonplace in Nova Scotia farmed salmon pens (two suspected outbreaks in under a month and counting), it can be dismissed as nothing more than a disease that occurs in the wild. Besides, it isn't anything that a salmon farmer wants anyway.

And as for the recent secrecy involving identifying the pens where the recent ISA cases have occurred? Well, we all probably ate a diseased chicken or two sometime ago, and that didn't kill us, right? Besides, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency says it's fine. Farmed Atlantic salmon in a tiny muffin wrapper, anyone?

Please enjoy the following interview with Melissa MacLeod of the AANS

<http://halifax.mediacoop.ca/audio/fish-tales/11767>