

Jan 23, 2013

Chronicle Herald

Voice of the People

Fine dining?

Want to take your family out for dinner? Here is an invitation that may soon be offered.

Dinner Invitation:

Place: Province House, Halifax

Cost: Free

Sponsored by Premier Darrell Dexter and Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Sterling Belliveau

Menu: Farmed salmon from off the coast of Liverpool

A Jan. 21 Canadian Press article in The Chronicle Herald reported that about 240,000 salmon from a quarantined Cooke Aquaculture salmon farm near Liverpool are being shipped to the firm's fish plant in Blacks Harbour, N.B., for processing for the consumer market.

These salmon have been declared fit to eat by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency(CFIA). They are perfectly fit to eat. The only problem they have is that they are dying from infectious salmon anemia (ISA) — yes, all 240,000 of them.

Well, now that we know that fish which are dying are fit to eat, just maybe Cooke Aquaculture will get another \$25 million (with \$6 million being a forgivable loan) from Premier Dexter to open a new chain of restaurants.

Since the wild Atlantic salmon have almost disappeared, and with this news of the dying aquaculture salmon, it's easy to understand why the LaHave River Salmon Association has opted for roast beef at its annual dinner and auction this coming Saturday night.

Lowell R. DeMond, Bridgewater

Selling sick salmon

Re: "Cooke to process 240,000 quarantined salmon in N.B." (Jan. 21).

Cooke Aquaculture will sell feedlot salmon from the quarantined waters in the Liverpool Bay, Coffin Island site, to Canadian consumers.

In 2012, because of ISA outbreaks, CFIA ordered Cooke to destroy hundreds of thousands of salmon at its site near Shelburne Harbour, and quarantined salmon at the Coffin Island site. Cooke voluntarily destroyed 40,000 of the Coffin Island fish, but the remaining salmon from these ISA-infected waters are heading to market, apparently with the blessing of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

How can it be ethical to sell sick salmon to consumers?

As consumers, we only have one choice to protect our health and that is to boycott feedlot salmon. That means all Atlantic salmon sold as fresh, smoked or frozen because all Atlantic salmon sold at grocery stores or by fish mongers in Atlantic Canada come from salmon feedlots.

Enjoy life, eat healthy: boycott farmed salmon.

Darrell Tingley, Lunenburg

Sound appetizing?

Minister Belliveau stated in 2012 that when fish raised in open pens become diseased, "it's just a normal day" for the aquaculture industry — an accurate prediction of what Nova Scotians could expect from open pen fish farming.

Nova Scotian diseased salmon now has the dubious distinction of being processed and sold to consumers. The question is: Why would anyone want to consume this product? Cooke Aquaculture states (Jan. 21 article) that when ISA-tainted fish are processed, the plant must be disinfected. Sound appetizing?

Another milestone for Cooke Aquaculture and the Dexter government. What a way to put Nova Scotia on the map. Please pass the lobster.

Sindy Horncastle, Jordan Bay

Not much of a 'strategy'

Re: "Fish farm tests found wanting" (Jan. 17). Why was the Owl's Head salmon farm allowed to continue operation when the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture's own monitoring data showed pollution from the pens at the site over four times above the "acceptable" limit?

Why were specific monitoring locations actually moved away from areas showing higher levels of sulphide pollution, thus invalidating data consistency? Does this not actually breach the department's own policy and procedures? And is this also happening at other fish farm sites?

If this reflects Minister Sterling Belliveau's "aquaculture strategy" and his "science," then the waters around Nova Scotia, and our traditional fisheries, are indeed in danger from the pollution of open pen fin-fish feedlots. It is also one more reason why so many Nova Scotians have lost all trust in the current NDP government.

Dave Maynard, Spry Bay