

The News

July 4, 2012

Sobeys scolded for selling most farmed fish

To the editor,

Greenpeace has recently scolded Sobeys for distinguishing itself as the grocery chain that sells the most harmfully fished or farmed seafood of any major Canadian food retailer. Open net-pen farmed salmon are at the centre of this controversy.

David Smith, Sobeys' vice-president of sustainability, claims that the jury is still out on the impact of open-pen salmon farming, stating that "there's lots of science on both sides" of the open net-pen salmon farming debate. Sadly, Mr. Smith is poorly informed on the sustainability of a product that likely constitutes the majority of Sobeys' seafood sales (perhaps this is the real reason Sobeys continues to peddle this environmentally harmful product). The science on this issue is clear: open net-pen salmon farms pose huge risks to marine biodiversity, wild salmon stocks and our province's internationally recognized lobster fishery. They rely on huge chemical inputs to control disease and pesticides, and in the event that fish need to be killed (as was the case recently due to an outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia, or ISA), they collect huge taxpayer subsidies to underwrite their poor practices.

Mr. Smith, and all seafood customers, should become more informed on this subject. A great place to start would be by watching the free online documentary recently produced by legendary Nova Scotian journalist Silver Donald Cameron titled "Salmon Wars." The documentary is available online at www.salmonwars.com/download.

Individual consumers can affect real change by demanding sustainably produced products from their local retailers. Sobeys would be wise to become a leader in selling sustainable seafood; as more and more consumers become aware of the real risks associated with open net-pen salmon farming, retailers who offer a sustainable alternative (in this case, closed containment) will see their sales, and their sustainability reputations, rise as a result.

Matt Miller

❖ **COMMENT:**

JOYCE MORRELL

- July 5, 2012 at 21:33:37

Well, Davis, maybe the jury is still out for you, but you don't live next to a salmon farm. I do. For 39 years I have run an inn on a point overlooking Friar's Bay on Campobello, NB, Canada. I have watched aquaculture in this small bay grow from a small family enterprise to a large industrial feedlot operation. The Welshpool wharf used to be the heart of this village and it had fishing and boating activity and was a pleasure to have nearby. It is now dead and they killed it. When they clean the cages they cleaned them within yards of the wharf and the houses, and we could smell them for days. The lively wharf used to be used by sailboats and visiting tour boats, but no more. Occasionally we would be asked by a visiting sailboat owner if they can tie up here, but once they understand about the cages, they go elsewhere. Guests that would have stayed with us now leave because of the noise from the feeders. Aquaculture has displaced the scallop grounds that used to be the best on the island. The herring that used to mob the bay move on. Growth that could have come in around a vibrant fishing and tourist community has been stopped by a stinky, noisy, smelly industrial feedlot in our backyard. Aquaculture has replaced what could have been good growth with dirty industry's negative impact. Who knows how many jobs have been foregone? Aquaculture has taken our community's future and turned it into their profit. They are able to take what they want and the devil take the communities that suffer from it. I cannot even sit in my front yard because the feeder's whine is so oppressive it drives me inside. This goes on for hours. This is not acceptable to us. We worked for years and years to build up this business and they are able to harass us with their oppressive noise? They take their profit out of our business and our quality of life and I am fed up. The 700,000 overcrowded

salmon in this small bay put an immense amount of feces into the water. The lice problem is legendary in Charlotte County. When Cooke's treated the fish with peroxide, which they did many times, the whole bay would smell very odd and sick for days. Our beautiful bay that should be so full of life has nothing moving in it. I have seen huge changes in this small bay, the red necked grebes that always came like clockwork did not come this year, The kingfishers that nested here are gone. No porpoise come here now, no minke whales come here now, no mackerel jump in season here any more. No baby pollock live in the shallow water any more. No krill pile up on the beaches in the fall any more. No osprey dive for fish here any more. No salmon leap, no tuna jump, no basking sharks cruise by, no herring boil the water, no jellyfish come up on the beaches. No eiders dive; the loons that come by do not linger, neither do the visiting seabirds. Our whales, porpoise and herring are struggling. A disturbed environment, with reduced food sources kills biodiversity. Controls on aquaculture are not working, despite all claims to the contrary. We are losing herring, lobster, feed, and the species that feed on them to pesticides. The whole area is overloaded with waste, chemicals, pesticides and other by- products. This is nuts. There is no meaningful oversight. The water is unmoved by a living creature most of the time. Is this all aquaculture? Maybe not, but when the cages lie fallow, you can see the bay bounces back. Certainly aquaculture has made major changes in the composition and appearance of this bay and most of that is negative. If the aquaculture industry is indeed doing this legally, it needs much tighter restrictions. The aquaculture waste, lice, disease, chemicals and pesticides affect the bay extremely negatively. Why is the aquaculture industry allowed to dump waste into public lands, maximizing profits at the expense of the bay? Why are they allowed to harass the neighborhood with their feed bowers, their diesel fumes? Why are they allowed to cover the whole cove with buoys (outside their leases) that prevent any other user from coming in? Why are they subsidized for slaughtering diseased fish? Why can they now sell ISA diseased fish? This alone makes me never want to touch another farmed salmon. Aquaculture has taken the life from our cove and turned it in to their profit. If they turn this bay into a dead zone we have given our priceless heritage away carelessly and freely to the aquaculture industry. If they ruin my business and take away my use of the property and even my ability to reasonably sell the inn, as they well might with this horrible noise, what recourse do I have? Why is this allowed? Where are the government's priorities? Something is very