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CBC News

CFIA orders ISA infected salmon destroyed

Harbour Breton plant in Newfoundland shutting down for extended period



picture: NovaNewsNow.com

Cooke Aquaculture is shutting down its Harbour Breton salmon processing plant in the wake of an order by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to destroy a large number of its ISA-infected salmon, CBC News has learned.

CFIA previously confirmed the ISA outbreak at the company's Hermitage Bay facility back in June, but the company had hoped to grow out and process some of the stock.

Cooke spokesperson Nell Halse said this latest depopulation order now means there won't be enough market-sized salmon currently available to operate the Harbour Breton plant.

"We brought in our employees yesterday and they have been given notification of a layoff. It's really all about loss of fish, or lack of market-ready salmon to go through the plant," Halse told The Fisheries Broadcast.

"Really, our hope had been we would have been able to grow the rest of the fish out to be able to market and harvest them. But we had been experiencing some mortalities and so we now have this depopulation order."

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Halse said the company will be forced to depopulate two cages at the site, but she couldn't say how many fish were affected, only that the number was "certainly significant for our Newfoundland operations."

"Overall its less than three per cent of our whole volume for North America," Halse said. "While it will have a short-term impact in Newfoundland, overall in our business it's not going to have a negative impact in the marketplace. We'll still be able to serve our customers and meet their requirements. It's an unfortunate circumstance that we are dealing with right now."

It's been suggested that the shutdown of the Harbour Breton plant could last up to six months or more, but Halse said the company wasn't entirely sure when the plant might get back up and running.

"It's a temporary situation," she said. "We are not sure how long this will be. But we are certainly working to be able to process again as soon as possible."

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/cfia-orders-isa-infected-salmon-destroyed-1.2420241>