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## Trial date closer for Cooke execs

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### Environment Canada poison charges

The trial by judge and jury of Cooke Aquaculture CEO Glenn Cooke and two other executives is inching closer, according to Paul Adams, Crown counsel with the Public Prosecution Service in Halifax.

Kelly Cove Salmon, Cooke, VP Michael Szemerda and Randy Griffin were charged by Environment Canada in 2011 with at least 19 charges relating to Fisheries Act violations regarding the discharge into the marine environment of "deleterious substances". After several reports in 2009 of sudden massive lobster kills near Cooke salmon farms in New Brunswick, Environment Canada raided Cooke offices and seized documents and records relating to the use of illegal pesticides, including cypermethrin.



At a December hearing in St. Stephen, provincial court justice Julian AG Dixon set dates for the judge and jury trial to proceed, which will include a Feb 15 hearing to set an agenda for the trial. A Month-long preliminary inquiry was to have begun on Jan 14.

An Environment Canada press briefing paper described the charges: "Environment Canada is alleging that Kelly Cove Salmon, a division of Cooke Aquaculture, and three of its senior company officials allegedly released a cypermethrin-based pesticide into the waters of Maces Bay, Passamoquoddy Bay as well as the waters surrounding Deer Island and Grand Manan Island between November 2009 and November 2010. Cypermethrin is not authorized for use in marine environments, and is harmful to crustaceans including, but not limited to, lobster and shrimp." Millions of dollars in fines and decades in prison are possible consequences if the trio is found guilty.

Robert Robichaud, regional operations manager for the Environmental Enforcement Division of Environment Canada told SouthCoastTODAY that, over a two-year period, two investigations were conducted on the allegations that Glenn Cooke, Griffin, Szemerda and Kelly Cove

participated in the dumping of [noxious pesticide cypermethrin](#) into the waters of Passamaquoddy Bay and Maces Bay and the waters near Grand Mannan and Deer Island. [Several media reports](#) appeared during that time. The pesticide contains lethal amounts of fast-acting neurotoxins described as "highly toxic to fish, bees and aquatic insects." Pamela Parker of the New Brunswick Salmon Growers Association told reporters when the pesticide dumping allegations first surfaced, "We want the public to know that salmon farmers are extremely diligent at protecting marine environment. We only use products authorized by Environment Canada, and we only use them in accordance to prescribed method of treatment." Robert Robichaud said that the use of cypermethrin as alleged against Cooke is absolutely prohibited by Canadian regulations encoded in the Fisheries Act.

### **Losing battle with sea lice**

"Many industry observers believe that Cooke and other industrial producers are fighting a losing battle in trying to raise millions of salmon in close proximity in large salmon feed lot operations. It is generally agreed that the control of sea lice on farmed salmon has hit a brick wall, with applications of the common - and legal - chemical Slice needed at double and triple strength to have any effect on the outbreaks and epidemics which are a common occurrence throughout the world on salmon farms.

In addition to regular outbreaks of sea lice in New Brunswick, Norway, Chile, Scotland and elsewhere, the continued incidence of ISA virus in large farms in Chile, Norway and elsewhere has come home to Canada, with recent reports of ISA in salmon stocks in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Cooke Aquaculture, whose income is reported at \$500 million per year, has recently began a major expansion of industrial salmon farms in Nova Scotia with farms near Digby, Lunenburg, Shelburne and elsewhere. The firm owns farms in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Maine, Chile and Spain. A Cooke subsidiary in Chile was named throughout 2012 government reports on the possible spread of the immune salmon anemia virus (ISAv) similar to the strain which devastated the Chilean industry in 2007, resulting in the slaughter of millions of fish and the loss of more than 7,000 jobs.