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 Responsibility

B.C. salmon farmers unveil sustainability report

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By James Wright

Inaugural transparency dispatch details environmental, social, economic impacts

The British Columbia Salmon Farmers Association (BCSFA) on Tuesday released its first annual Sustainability Progress Report, a review of its environmental sustainability and social commitments, animal welfare practices, economic contributions and more.

“The information presented within this report speaks to the drive felt among our members to create a vibrant sustainable industry for future generations in B.C. on all levels – environmentally, socially and economically,” said BCSFA Executive Director Jeremy Dunn.

BCSFA provided an advanced copy of the report – to be released on Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 27 during the Global Aquaculture Alliance’s annual GOAL conference in Vancouver – to the *Advocate* for review.

“Thinking about aquaculture globally is something that we in B.C. need to do more of,” Dunn added at GOAL. “Our goal is to be better than we are now. But we are much better than we were 10 years ago. We want to show our progress and the trends over time and the good work that we’re doing.”



Salmon farms in British Columbia generated CDN \$411.5 Million in GDP for the province in 2013.

“Where we want to go from here, is to reduce antibiotic use on our farms, and drive innovations in health management. The goal is not to use antibiotics at all,” said Stewart Hawthorn, managing director of Grieg Seafood BC Ltd.

According to the report, B.C. salmon farmers produce approximately 71,500 metric tons (MT) of fish annually; Atlantic salmon comprises 94 percent of the total, with chinook, coho and steelhead accounting for the remainder. Production has been consistent over the past decade, the group said.

Other key points made in the report include:

- B.C. salmon farmers in 2014 reported an average 93.6 percent rolling survivability rate of stock (based on total number of surviving fish in the sea over 12 months)
- Sea lice (*Lepeophtheirus salmonis*) management, regulated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), has kept sea lice populations near or below the agency’s management trigger of three lice per fish, after a spike to nearly five motiles (all free-moving life stages of the common salmon louse, including females)
- The composition of oils and proteins used in salmon feeds over the years shows a decreasing reliance on marine proteins, while proteins from vegetable and animal sources is increasing; the



British Columbia's salmon farming industry's forage fish dependence ratio (FFDR) has decreased from 7.2 kg to 1.5 kg (per kilogram of farmed salmon) for fish oil and from 4.4 kg to 0.23 kg for fishmeal.

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- Site fallowing remains a common practice, as about 60 of the 109 licensed salmon farming facilities are operational at any given time
- The B.C. salmon-farming sector filled 4,977 direct and in-direct positions in 2013
- Farmed salmon – British Columbia's largest agricultural export – generated CDN \$411.5 Million in GDP for the province in 2013

BCSFA was also keen to point out that the feed conversion ratio for farmed salmon is far less than for terrestrial livestock. The 1.3 kg of feed for every kilogram of farmed salmon compares favorably to pork (2.8), chicken (1.9) and particularly beef (7.5).

“Sharing the information in this report is crucial to help British Columbians understand the issues that affect this sector and our ocean environment,” said Dr. Don Noakes, BCSFA Science Advisory Council Chair and Dean of Science and Technology at Vancouver Island University. “The industry has come a

long way from its beginnings thirty short years ago. I am encouraged by their efforts and will look forward to seeing them progress further in years to come.”

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