

Salmon farming in Scotland

Letter to Rhoda Grant, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, from Migdale Smolt and Migdale Transport, 30 May 2024

I am writing to you as a business owner and active participant in the Scottish salmon farming supply chain within your constituency. As a proud member of the local business community, I am keen to bring to your attention some work conducted by the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee (RAIC) reviewing the Scottish salmon sector.

The Committee has outlined a comprehensive workplan for a continuation to the inquiry, which includes examining various aspects of the salmon farming sector and its implications for our economy, environment, and communities. As an active business in the supply chain, I am particularly invested in ensuring that the Committee recognises the vital role that businesses like mine play in supporting the success and sustainability of Scottish salmon production.

Our companies, Migdale Smolt Ltd and Migdale Transport Ltd, have been an integral part of the aquaculture supply chain for 35 years. We are proud to employ 59 hardworking individuals from the local community and have consistently strived to contribute positively to the growth and development of the sector. We also rely on 409 of our own suppliers who, in turn, will be impacted by the success (or otherwise) of the Scottish salmon sector. Combined turnover is £17.8 million and annual wage bill is £3.7 million.

Migdale Smolt Ltd hatches Atlantic salmon ova and raises them to smolting stage in freshwater lochs for our customers on marine farms. Migdale Transport Ltd which was a natural evolution from the smolt production, also has expertise in live fish transportation, sorting and treatments using the latest technologies, including de-salination plants and advanced filtering systems installed on our wellboats of which 3 vessels are currently operating. With our latest systems we can remove not only sea lice but ensure their eggs don't re-enter the water column. Movement of fry, parr, smolts and cleaner fish are also moved by our line of 10 HGV specialist live-fish carrier trucks utilising also the latest monitoring equipment to exceed RSPCA welfare standards. Our dedicated staff are trained to ensure optimum conditions for fish and certified annually by RSPCA Assured and all our apparatus, whether on sea or land, functions with optimum levels of biosecurity.

It is worth noting that the Scottish salmon supply chain comprises over 3,600 businesses, each playing a unique and essential role in supporting the success of the sector. Every constituency across Scotland has some link to aquaculture through the supply chain meaning that Scottish salmon farming has a positive impact on every community across the country.

From suppliers of equipment and feed to transportation services, boat builders and marketing agencies, businesses like ours are instrumental in ensuring the continued growth and prosperity of Scottish aquaculture.

Considering the upcoming Committee work, I kindly request your support in highlighting the importance of the supply chain to the Scottish economy. Your advocacy and representation on behalf of businesses like mine can help ensure that the Committee is fully informed about the significant contributions of the supply chain to the success of the sector.

Thank you for considering my request. I am hopeful that with your support, we can collectively work towards promoting the interests and prosperity of the aquaculture supply chain in Scotland.

Should you or your office wish to visit again we would be happy to show you around.