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Farmed Salmon Exposed

Report reveals problems with access to information, countries reluctant to disclose data

SANTIAGO, Chile, VANCOUVER, British Columbia, OSLO, Norway – An access to information report commissioned by the Pure Salmon Campaign identifies critical gaps in existing practices to access to public information as well as exposes weaknesses in Chile's processes to answer request of information.

At the same time, a comparison by Pure Salmon and its allies reveals glaring disparities in the information available to concerned citizens in jurisdictions where the global aquaculture industry operates. While Scotland, and to a degree Norway, readily provided information on salmon farms operating in public waters, Canada and Chile lagged far behind.

The release of the Chilean report coincides with a second annual Global Week of Action sponsored by the Pure Salmon Campaign and its allies. During the week of October 29, groups in Canada, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Chile, Australia, Russia and the United States will draw attention to current aquaculture practices that continue to damage the marine environment and pose dangers to workers' safety and human health.

“The situation in Chile is not getting any better,” said Cristian Perez, Chilean representative, Pure Salmon Campaign. “Within the past year, Chilean salmon farms have experienced a sharp increase in incidents of sea lice, disease outbreaks, mortalities and chemical use in salmon production. Repeated requests for information about the operations of salmon companies by the Pure Salmon Campaign and its member organizations in Chile have been denied or significantly delayed by our government.”

“In Canada, salmon farms are profiting from their use of public waters, spreading sea lice that kill wild juvenile salmon and dumping waste into waters relied on by fishermen, First Nations and the tourism industry,” said Catherine Stewart of Living Oceans Society in British Columbia, Canada. “Yet when we filed an FOI request to discover the extent of the impact, the Provincial government sent sparse and unverified information on biocide use and an estimate of approximately \$9,000 to provide crucial information on escapes, diseases and antibiotic use.”

“The information available in Europe illustrates the extent of the problems with salmon farming,” said Don Staniford, European representative, Pure Salmon Campaign. “Scotland, and to a lesser extent Norway, must be congratulated for their transparency and public accountability. In Ireland, however, the tortuous process of extracting information from the government has been like trying to get blood out of the Blarney Stone.”

Pure Salmon and allied groups also compiled an FOI matrix that illustrates what information on salmon farming is available and where there is a lack of data. To view the report and the matrix, go to <http://www.farmedsalmonexposed.org/pdfs/chilean-transparency-report.pdf> and <http://www.farmedsalmonexposed.org/pdfs/matrix-of-available-government-information.pdf> , respectively.

To view more global statistics, go to <http://www.farmedsalmonexposed.org/global-statistics.html>. For more information on the Global Week of Action, go to www.farmedsalmonexposed.org.

The Pure Salmon Campaign, www.puresalmon.org, is a global project of the National Environmental Trust. It has partners in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and Chile all working to improve the way salmon is produced.

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