
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

INDUSTRY MEETS FISH HEALTH REQUIREMENTS IN B.C.

VICTORIA – Increased fish audits and a decline in sea lice numbers were reported in the Province’s 2007 Fish Health Report released today, confirming B.C.’s commitment to uphold high standards of fish health in the province’s aquaculture industry.

The annual Fish Health Report, which included 118 random audits, is part of the Province’s management plan to closely monitor aquaculture operations to ensure a safe and sustainable industry that protects wild salmon. This includes a science-based, comprehensive fish health management program comprised of on-farm health management plans, mandatory monitoring, reporting of disease events and an audit of industry reported information.

In 2002, there was no data on sea lice or the potential impact on wild stocks in B.C. As a result, the Province initiated an on-farm lice monitoring pilot project that was extended in 2003 to include the entire B.C. industry. Government has since implemented the monitoring program as a part of the Fish Health Management Plans and has also instituted the audit and verification program.

During the 2007 fish health reporting period, assessments at 57 farms resulted in the examination of 3,380 live fish as part of the sea lice audit. The outcome of the audit showed that sea lice counts were at their lowest level since the inception of the monitoring program in 2003.

Laboratory tests for data in the report are performed at the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands’ Animal Health Centre (AHC), which is one of only two labs in Canada accredited as a full-service diagnostic laboratory that meets all the requirements of the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.

B.C. is the world’s fourth-largest farmed salmon producer, with a 2007 farm gate value of nearly \$404.7 million. It accounts for close to 3,000 jobs in coastal communities and annual wages of over \$50 million. Women and First Nations fill over 50 per cent of aquaculture jobs.

Further details of the report are available at www.agf.gov.bc.ca/ahc/fish_health/fish_health2007.pdf

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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