

FF Members Meeting

11th November 2015 @ 10:00; Stirling Court Hotel / University of Stirling

Agenda:

1. Introductions
3. Agenda Review
4. RSPCA Assured/Freedom Food Presentation
5. Licence Fee and Membership
6. Seals
7. AOB
8. General Q & A

Notes from the meeting and next steps.

The heart of the session was really about the seals issue.

Clearly all accept that we do need to look to do more as a collective body, opportunities remain and despite numbers of kills coming down much still needs to and can be done.

The current emotion and focus of the Mail article was a bit of a surprise to the group. With the exception of M&S there has been no negativity or concerns voiced by retailers or other main groups from the food service sector that source Scottish salmon

The feedback back is that customer feedback or complaints from these actions has almost been zero. Numbers of seal kills are coming down and generally consumers accept that this is part of farming in general.

The Staniford protest at M&S was monitored but created no customer responses to retailers.

The aspiration for **zero kills** remains as the whole process around making a seal kill does impact the salmon business in terms of time, cost and stress for all involved. The feeling that **one seal shot is one too many** remains as despite being an important industry for Scotland the killing of wild life does not sit comfortably with anyone. Of course the protection and welfare of the salmon also has to be taken into account.

The representatives from the industry attending today, in particular Marine Harvest & Scottish Sea Farms would love to host representatives from the RSPCA up to Scotland to witness first-hand the operation, the systems and the processes employed. This would provide an opportunity for the industry to be questioned first hand.

Next step -  to make the offer to the RSPCA and in particular to the Trustees most concerned.

A discussion around the various technologies available and employed was had. Scottish Sea Farms have employed new enforced nets at a troublesome site producing good results to date. Marine Harvest employed a similar tactic with a change in type of ADD with similar results.

We are seeing numbers come down and the potential is that the year-end number for 2015 could be circa 42. This would represent a further drop of 19% year on year.

All agreed that there is no "one fits all solution" and the question is what is the best "toolbox" to have?

The agreed next step was to hold a "Brainstorm Session" to review all current practice, what current equipment is in use - what's best, what other technology is out there and what else and who could help us?

The idea being to have a group session of around 30 people from across the industry and related to it.

Perhaps headed by the SSPO ([REDACTED]) & the RSPCA and facilitated by [REDACTED] (Sea Mammal Research Unit)

A selection of Operations Managers and senior leadership from the producers, a cross section/representation from the retailers and presentations from each of the manufactures of the ADD equipment and Nets.

This way we have scientific, government, research, retail, manufacturer and producer experience around the one table for the first time.

Next Step - [REDACTED] to ring and chat through with Scott at SSPO

Next Step - [REDACTED] to list some prep questions ready for the group to consider and research prior.

Next Step - [REDACTED] to re energise the idea of a DVD showing the practises, systems and equipment employed within the industry. All were happy to contribute to the costs.

Question is do we try to add to the RSPCA STAG event or go for January when all is quieter?

Next Step - [REDACTED] to seek advice from [REDACTED].

Next Step - In terms of identifying the Operations population from the producers that would be ideal to attend, [REDACTED] would take this forward with his contacts. He would also take the responsibility to personally invite and ensure that they attend.

Next Step - [REDACTED] would compile a letter of invite for all with [REDACTED].