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Sent: 03 February 2017 16:35

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Subject: Opinion on the move towards Electronic Signatures on export health certificates

Dear All,

I am contacting you due to your involvement in various aspects of certifying salmon for export, with the aim of developing support and identifying any issues in advance of proposing a change towards the use of electronic signatures on Export Health Certificates.

The Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation represents the vast majority of salmon farmed in Scotland and I have been tasked with co-ordinating a move towards making the process of exporting salmon more efficient from a time, cost and bureaucratic position.

Currently there is a significant challenge affecting our members which export to China, where each batch requires an approved signature on the EHC. Due to significant resource restrictions on Local Authority personnel, it is not always possible to get the required signature in the timeframe required for this perishable product which is produced 7 days a week. This is becoming more of a challenge and starting to restrict trade.

One way of helping to reduce the burden on Local Authorities and improve efficiency would be to use an electronic signature. This has been discussed in the past and is common practice for other official documents like the required certificate of origin (for export to China). There should be no change in risk or audit frequency for that matter, but it does require a change in procedure to be progressed by DEFRA and presented to the Chinese Authorities.

I would greatly appreciate your support and would gladly take on any comments around how this could work with the aim of improving current practice. I look forward to your feedback.

Best Regards

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