

Statement from Food Standards Scotland and Scottish Government: public health risks associated with sea lice in Scottish salmon

Date: 2 July 2025

- Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is the Central Competent Authority for food safety and standards in Scotland. **FSS provides independent advice to Scottish Ministers and the public on food safety matters and does not consider sea lice on salmon to pose a public health risk.** Salmon lice, *L. salmonis*, is a strict ectoparasite, where all life stages live either as a free swimming pelagic naupilii or copepodid stage or as an adult parasitic stage living on the outside of the salmonid fish. This parasite is at no point to be found inside the product, as this is not a part of the parasite's lifecycle.
- All Scottish processing facilities operate under the principles of HACCP and are inspected and approved by the Competent Authority to ensure that food hygiene controls are being applied.
- Consignments can only be certified by a UK Animal and Plant Health Agency authorised Official Inspector (namely, a Food Competent Certifying Officer or an Official Veterinarian) for export if they are compliant with domestic fish health and food safety requirements as well as any requirements set out by the importing authority.
- There are also measures which apply to fish farms in order to protect farmed fish health in relation to sea lice. This includes:
 - The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2007 (as amended) which requires fish farms to take satisfactory measures in relation to the prevention, control, and reduction of sea lice (*Lepeophtheirus salmonis* and *Caligus elongatus*) on farmed fish.
 - The Fish Farming Businesses (Record Keeping) (Scotland) Order 2008 (as amended) introduced a legal requirement for fish farming businesses to maintain site specific records which help to demonstrate that satisfactory measures are in place to prevent, control and reduce sea lice.
 - The Fish Farming Businesses (Reporting) (Scotland) Order 2020 requires all fish farm businesses to report the average number of adult female sea lice on a weekly basis from each farm (excluding freshwater sites).

For queries please contact either Food Standards Scotland or Scottish Government at the address below:

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