



Closed containment salmon farm in Middle Bay, BC. (Photo Credit: Agrimarine Inc.)

Parliamentary committee endorses closed containment salmon farming



CANADA

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A Parliamentary committee on fisheries and oceans is pushing to get federal funding for closed-containment salmon aquaculture after agreeing to study the issue in October 2011. The point is to develop the salmon farming sector and prevent environmental mishaps while keeping the aquaculture method affordable.

"The debate is no longer centered on whether or not it is technically possible to raise Atlantic salmon in closed containment operations," states the report. "It is, rather, whether or not this can be done at a cost that will allow closed containment Atlantic salmon producers to be competitive with open-net pen salmon producers."

Most salmon farmed in Canada are Atlantic salmon and are raised in land-based hatcheries before being moved to the ocean and open-net pens. The committee considered a couple of non-permeable, solid-walled tanks to be located on land or in the ocean, and which filter waste feed and feces from re-circulated water so it doesn't pollute the surrounding ecosystem.

Still, closed containment will leave a carbon footprint, and committee members recommended that the government commission a study of the effect on coastal employment of a transition from open to closed containment, *Times Colonist* reports.

However, the technology is more expensive than open-nets and makes the industry less money back. Still, the committee notes that the technology allows for raising more fish faster and in densities three to seven times higher than in the ocean-based pens, the report reveals, according to *The Canadian Press*.

At the same time, the committee said it is aware that any commercial adoption of closed-containment systems will be contingent on both public and private financial aid to complete research and approach implementation.

The report recommends that industry and the government look at some "financing options" to help move all this forward and even create a dedicated fund for closed-

While the industry and its opponents all responded favourably to the report, critics said it was not ambitious enough.

"The needs of our fish have to be met and the needs of the business have to be met for there to be a viable aquaculture sector in British Columbia (BC)," said Colleen Dane of the [BC Salmon Farmers Association](#) (BCSFA).

What many members of the industry are wary about is the technology's long-term potential, and Dane said additional funds should be reserved to figure this out.

John Werring of the [David Suzuki Foundation](#) criticized the report for lacking specificity and drive and wondered what the government's response is going to be to these recommendations.

The committee is not advocating replacing open-net pens with closed containment systems altogether.

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