

FEB 01 2012

Minister of
Fisheries and Oceans



Ministre des
Pêches et des Océans

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

Gaye Smith
Former Chairman
Temagami Stewardship Council
< gayesmit@bmts.com >

Dear Gaye Smith:

Thank you for your correspondence of October 28, 2011, and January 6, 2012, regarding Infectious Salmon Anaemia virus (ISAv) and aquaculture in British Columbia. I regret the delay in responding.

Further to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) response of July 29, 2011, regarding your concerns about aquaculture, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify that there are stringent federal regulations in place to protect Canada's aquatic species (farmed and wild) from disease. Full details are included in the attachment regarding preventing the spread of fish pathogens. These measures include fish health reporting. As well, DFO conducts regular random audits of fish farms for fish health, which include testing for viruses including ISAv.

I will provide an overview on these issues to help clarify recent reports. DFO and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have worked together over the past months to respond quickly to the test results that were reported to the media in October 2011.

ISAv is a member of a family of viruses known as orthomyxovirus, and can cause a disease known as Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA). It is important to note that there is a large difference between the presence of ISAv and the presence of the actual disease ISA. Initial unconfirmed positive results are termed "presumptive positives" and must be repeated by a reference laboratory using validated tests and testing methodologies before results are confirmed.

DFO's Gulf Fisheries Centre (GFC) in Moncton, New Brunswick, is the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP) reference laboratory for ISAv. Under the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) terms of reference, a "reference laboratory" is designated to pursue all the scientific and technical problems relating to a named disease or specific topic, in this case, ISAv. The GFC laboratory uses a test that has been validated according to OIE criteria to ensure that the test correctly establishes animal disease status.

All test results that have been reported in the media as positive for ISA or ISAv were initial unconfirmed positives, including those of DFO scientist Dr. Kristi Miller. These samples were re-tested at the GFC reference laboratory and were not confirmed. Further information is available in the DFO/CFIA press release at < www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/newsroom/news-releases/infectious-salmon-anaemia/eng/1323652434998/1323652434999 >.

.../2

Canada
