

Minister
of Agriculture and
Agri-Food
and Minister for the
Canadian Wheat Board



Ministre
de l'Agriculture et de
l'Agroalimentaire
et ministre de la
Commission canadienne du blé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

FEV - 9 2012

Quote: 170779/
171260

Ms. Gaye Smith
RR 3
Paisley, Ontario N0G 2N0

gayesmit@bmts.com

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing in response to your correspondence co-addressed to other members of Parliament regarding the health of wild salmon in British Columbia (B.C). I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Please be assured that the protection of Canada's natural resources continues to be a top priority of the Government of Canada. There are stringent federal regulations in place to protect Canada's farmed and wild aquatic species from disease. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), which has regulatory and enforcement authorities under the *Health of Animals Act and Regulations*, leads the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP). This program is designed to prevent the introduction and spread of significant diseases of finfish, molluscs and crustaceans into and within Canada.

The legislative authority allows the CFIA to exert import controls for aquatic animals at the international boundary. This authority also requires notification of disease to the CFIA, which then can respond with appropriate measures to control the spread of disease, develop and implement eradication programs where feasible, and implement movement controls within Canada to control the spread of diseases that occur here. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) provides laboratory support for diagnoses and validation tests for the NAAHP.

The NAAHP program is consistent with international standards set by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This consistency is important because it is Canada's obligation as an OIE member country to set standards for the safe trade of aquatic animals from and into Canada.

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I am pleased to note that infectious salmon anemia (ISA) has not been found in B.C. The CFIA and DFO collaborated to assess the initial test results through scientifically sound and internationally recognized procedures, which included additional testing to verify the presence or absence of the ISA virus. All results to date for the virus are negative. These results are consistent with the findings of an independent laboratory in Norway, which also tested samples associated with this investigation and provided a report to the CFIA.

You may be interested to learn that the CFIA is developing a surveillance program for ISA and other infectious salmon diseases that applies to both farmed and wild fish in B.C. and will be undertaken in 2012. If ISA is not present in B.C., then the province will be able to declare freedom.

In addition, I would like to add that on December 10, 2011, the CFIA introduced requirements for all aquatic animals (finfish, molluscs and crustaceans) imported into Canada. A permit will be required for any species listed in Schedule III of the *Health of Animals Regulations*. Additional information on ISA and the import program for aquatic animals and their products is available on the CFIA website at www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/aqua/aquae.shtml.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Gerry Ritz, PC, MP

c.c.: The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, PC, MP