

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Too many questions left for fish farm

That was a warm and fuzzy letter from Cooke's Aquaculture PR person in the July 5, 2011 edition of the Advance. Now let's talk some hard facts.

The sale of Ocean Trout Farms to Cooke was never made public and Cooke's trucks arrived into Port Medway un-announced to off load hundreds of thousands of salmon smolts for the Coffin Island site. Why did the Minister of Fisheries and Cooke Aquaculture skulk around in the dark of night devising this nefarious scheme? What did they have to hide?

The feces from the last Rainbow Trout had hardly hit the ocean floor at the Coffin Island site when the first salmon smolt arrived. Why did the Minister of Fisheries and Cooke Aquaculture move so quickly? Would it not have been wiser to allow the site to lay fallow for six months, one year before proceeding?

Cooke's PR person fails to mention that the farm is like a sieve for escapees. 500,000 trout escaped during Hurricane Juan and showed up in Rivers from the Mersey in Queens County to the Musquidoboit River on the Eastern Shore. Another 13,000 trout escaped in March/April 2010 as a result of seals penetrating the nets. Why did the Minister of Fisheries and Cooke Aquaculture proceed before ensuring that future escapees will be prevented?

Cooke's PR person fails to mention the dump truck loads of dead Rainbow Trout making their way on a regular basis to the landfill site on highway 8. Of course the local population would still be in the dark if a dump truck hadn't overturned and dumped its load on the highway. I guess the little devils freeze their noses in the cold Atlantic waters and die.

Cooke's PR person fails to mention the disastrous effect of inter breeding of farmed versus wild salmon. In fact, she misleads the public by saying they are using local stock. The stock placed into the open pens off Cof-

fin Island are from Saint John, N.B. River Stock which are as foreign as if they came from Norway or Russia.

Cooke's PR person fails to mention why they abandoned their operation at Port Mouton. If it was efficient, clean, disease free and viable, why did they close it?

How many salmon smolt did they cram into the Coffin Island site? 500,000; 600,000; 750,000; 1,000,000?

Not one mention that the food used at the fish farm is "fish" based, full of antibiotics & colouring (otherwise the salmon would be white). That the fish are bathed in Hydrogen Peroxide to kill off the sea lice and other parasites. What happens to the dead sea lice, parasites and Hydrogen Peroxide when returned to the ocean?

Not once in this article or at any other time has Cooke Aquaculture ever mentioned of moving some or all of their operation to a land based closed containment site. No escapes, no Hydrogen Peroxide baths, no "freezing" noses... yes, less per contained site, however, a safe, clean environment for all to enjoy and harvest lobsters and shellfish. No need to divide communities and force people to take sides on weather or not a processing plant will be built. Build the processing plant in Shelburne and several contained sites adjacent to the plant. A much better solution for the planet.

Maybe its time the Minister of Fisheries/Environment took a step back and placed a moratorium on any further ocean sites until the matter is more closely looked at. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither should open pen fish farming on the Atlantic side of Nova Scotia. Err on the side of caution and for all residents of Nova Scotia even if it means non-resident corporations have to cool their jets!

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