

# Salmon farming in Scotland

## Follow up information from the evidence session on 2 October 2024 with Salmon Scotland

**25 November 2024**

Dear Finlay,

RAI Committee evidence session 2nd October

During evidence sessions that have formed part of the Committee's 2024 work, updating the 2018 inquiry into salmon farming, Sir Edward Mountain MSP has repeatedly referenced and misrepresented mortality figures that were originally provided by Mr Ben Hadfield (Mowi COO Scotland, Ireland, Faroes and Atlantic Canada) during the previous parliamentary committee 2018 inquiry.

Therefore, Mr Hadfield would like to clarify Mowi's position in advance of the Committee concluding its work on the 2018 committee recommendations.

When referencing the evidence provided by Mr Hadfield in 2018, Sir Edward Mountain has stated that levels of mortality have risen. In response to the statement by Mr Hadfield, that the Mowi Scotland ambition is to return to mortality rates of 5%, Edward Mountain stated that this was wishful thinking and that 'best in class was circa 7%', before asking the evidence panel if 7% was accurate.

Mr Hadfield has now had time to reflect and review the evidence he gave in 2018 and would like to make the following comments:

Mortality for the sector, measured in tonnes of fallen stock, has increased since 2012, while the number of deceased individuals has remained broadly similar. This situation has been corroborated by evidence provided to the Committee by Mr Charles Allan, Head of Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate. The average weight of farmed salmon mortality has increased due to environmental factors, most noticeably the endemic presence of Amoebic Gill Disease; a factor present in Scottish waters since 2011. The sector has been open and transparent about these challenges, and provided extensive evidence to the Committee during its session on 2nd October. These challenges have also been explained to Sir Edward on many occasions.

During the sectors 2018 evidence session, Mr Hadfield stated a desire and aim to return to mortality rates of 5%, as experienced in 2011. We must clarify that this 5% relates to the level of biomass lost to mortality as a percentage of stock held in the sea in a calendar year for Mowi Scotland Limited. In 2011 Mowi Scotland experienced a relatively low level of mortality, with 5.2% of the average biomass in the sea that year dying. This was not a whole production cycle mortality for Mowi Scotland.

It was, as stated at the time, the biomass of salmon lost in a year as a percentage of the company's overall estimated biomass in the sea. Production cycle mortality during this period was c. 15%, with a production cycle taking over 18-months in the sea.

Furthermore, Sir Edward has attributed Mr Hadfield as saying the 'best in class mortality was 7%'. Again, we must clarify that Mr Hadfield said the 'world-wide best in class mortality was 7%, in Mowi's Faroese operations'. Mowi's Faroese operations frequently record c. 7% mortality as an average of the standing yearly biomass in the sea.

In 2023 the mortality was 7% of the biomass in the sea and up until the end of September 2024 the biomass lost in the most recent calendar year has been 5.9% of biomass in the sea. Sir Edward has confused these Faroese figures with Scotland and did not allow the sector panel the opportunity to provide fair, accurate and informative context to explain the figures.

Mr Hadfield is therefore happy to provide the Committee with these historical figures supporting his statement to the 2018 evidence session.

Yours sincerely

Tavish Scott

CEO Salmon Scotland

(for and on behalf of Mr Ben Hadfield, Mowi COO Scotland, Ireland, Faroes and Atlantic Canada)