

Fish welfare: a critical success factor for aquaculture: Making welfare work – Scottish Atlantic salmon

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the Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals (RSPCA)

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Who are the RSPCA?

- The oldest and largest animal welfare organisation in the world
- Founded in 1824, before the police
- We have rehoming centres, clinics and hospitals all over England and Wales
- In 2012 over 130,000 animals rescued
- We have our own specialist scientific departments and work with all animals



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These images are what we are usually associated with in the UK



This former racing greyhound - with open sores, threadbare coat and fleas - was the thinnest RSPCA staff had ever found alive.



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Why fish?



- Only involved with farmed terrestrial species
- Freedom Food established in 1994
- Approached by salmon farmer from Scotland in 1999-2000

The different roles....



- Develops welfare standards with industry, vets, researchers
- Independently monitors scheme members
- Administers/markets the scheme
- Formally assesses scheme members at least once/year



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Do we need to discuss welfare?

- Do fish feel pain?
- Welfare is more than health
- Commission COM 229, 2013- Sustainable aquaculture guidelines
- Com 511, 2002, updated 2006





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Could the animal model used for other species be used for fish?

- Handling/management
- Crowding
- Health Planning
- Environmental
- Slaughter/killing
- Transport



What do we look at?

- Fish behavior, physical characteristics
- Inputs and outcomes
- Setting intervention levels
- Action plans for when these are exceeded
- Based on ideal scenarios – animal needs
- Processor reports
- Must be prepared to make decisions



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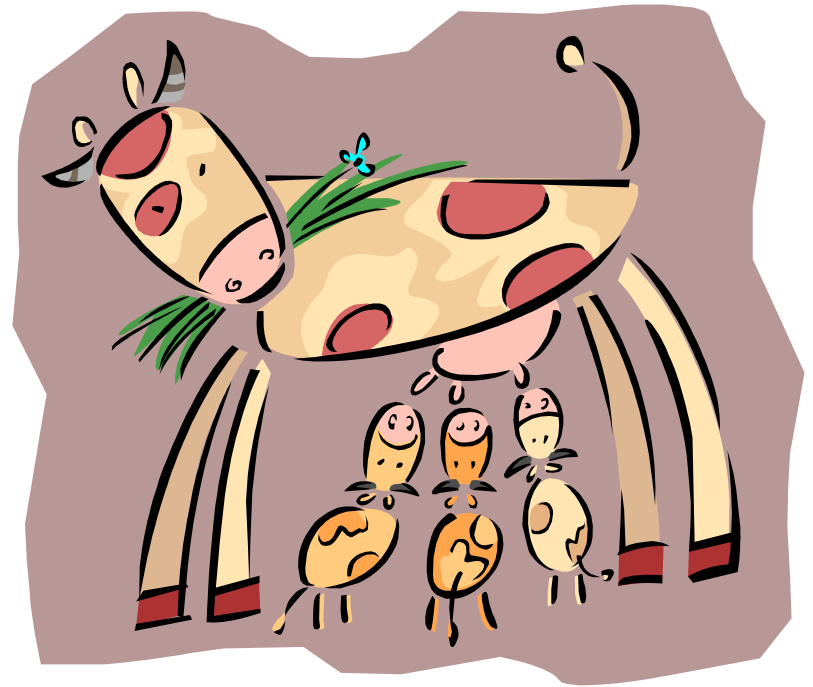
Handling

- Observe the simple things
- Look at the water at the end of the process
- Is there evidence of excessive scaling etc
- How are the fish behaving?



Health Planning

- Alien concept for fish?
- Poor medicine availability
- New diseases
- Biological controls
- Improve mortality rate
- Set targets



Health Planning - Vaccination



Even worse for processing



Health Planning – Sea Lice



- Lack of medicines
- Resistance
- New treatments
- Wrasse/lumpfish welfare
- Breeding
- Sustainability

Crowding



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Crowding 2



Environmental – water quality and.....



Slaughter/killing



Slaughter/killing 2



Wellboat Transport



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Observe all stages of the journey



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Flesh quality is important



Does the consumer really care?

- Mintel (May 2010)
Animal welfare is Britain's No 1 food concern (approx 40% worried about this)
- Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD)
2012 report noted that 30% of shoppers expected to continue to buy higher welfare products
- McDonald's – Freedom Food pork

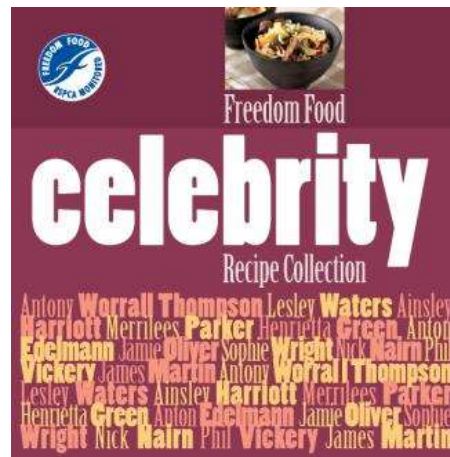


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Celebrity Support



Jamie Oliver – “I support Freedom Food because higher standards of farm animal welfare ultimately benefit everyone. Plus there is no welfare organisation more well respected than the RSPCA.”



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Aquaculture - challenges

- Aquaculture - many species
- Fastest growing sector
- Oceanic aquaculture
- Species-specific biology
- Animal centric



In our experience - Good welfare is good business

- Fish have a better life
- Producer makes more profit
- Third party verification/retailer needs
- Identify problems - find solutions
- Better to work together in partnership
- Consumer confidence is absolutely critical



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Thank you for your attention

Any Questions?

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