

Rhoda Grant MSP

Dear Rhoda,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February.

### **Health & Safety within the salmon sector**

The Scottish salmon sector is committed to maintaining a robust safety culture across its 200+ operational sites. With 2,500 direct employees working in challenging maritime and industrial environments, the industry operates with transparency and strict adherence to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). While any processing environment involves inherent risks associated with heavy machinery and vessel operations, our sector's incident rate remains low compared to other primary production and high-risk sectors.

Over the last five-year period, the sector has maintained high safety standards across its diverse workforce:

- **Incident density:** With 138 incidents over five years across 200+ sites, the sector averages just 0.13 reportable incidents per site annually.
- **Absolute impact:** The total number of incidents in salmon aquaculture (28 in 2023/24) represents less than 0.05% of all UK workplace injuries, reflecting a highly controlled industrial footprint.
- **Continuous improvement:** The sector has invested millions to transition towards automated "closed-loop" harvesting and remote-operated feeding systems, specifically designed to reduce the human-to-machinery interface - the primary cause of site accidents.

### **Safety mitigation and evolution**

We recognise that behind every statistic is a colleague and a family; consequently, we view every incident as deeply regrettable and remain steadfast in our belief that all workplace injuries are avoidable. We are committed to:

- **Mandatory training:** All staff undergo specialised maritime and heavy-machinery safety certification exceeding standard land-based agricultural requirements.
- **Root-cause analysis:** Every reportable incident triggers a mandatory investigation to update the sector's Code of Good Practice.
- **Technological integration:** The industry is leading in the adoption of AI-driven monitoring and automated net-cleaning systems to reduce time spent in high-risk zones.

While the nature of maritime farming involves inherent mechanical risks, the Scottish salmon sector remains one of the safest primary production industries in the UK. We continue to work closely with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and other regulatory bodies to drive our incident rates toward zero.

### **Occupational Asthma**

Scotland's salmon sector recognises this matter and takes it very seriously. The health and safety of our people is of paramount importance. Our businesses are rightly subject to scrutiny, regulation and legislation on health & safety as set down by UK law. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible to Parliament for monitoring and enforcement in this area. I have attached the most recent HSE statistics on this matter.

Processing salmon creates bioaerosols in the air in the same way as flour in a bakery, sawdust in a sawmill or paint when spray painting. In all activities business puts in place mitigations to reduce any impact on an individual. For example, Mowi Rosyth does this through extraction systems, facemasks, and other measures that are constantly checked and refined. In addition, Mowi Rosyth pays for an independent company to monitor air quality on areas of the plant where fish are being processed. That provides regular information to allow further improvements and changes to be made.

This is not a new issue, and it is not unique to salmon processing. Other sectors of industry have been addressing this for years which is why HSE publishes statistics as you will see from the attachment. Our businesses report to HSE and these stats are published in the form that HSE requests. If there were significant problems, the HSE would be visiting plants and seeking further measures to mitigate any effects.

Following media attention, Mowi Rosyth has issued the attached statement to their employees to provide reassurance in the face of misleading claims. The company works extremely hard on ensuring that all staff have access to information, briefings and support on all aspects of health and safety in the workplace on a regular basis.

Furthermore, our businesses engage positively with trade unions and value their important contribution. For example, the GMB union is formally recognised at Mowi's Kyleakin feed plant. Choices about union membership are an individual matter for employees and not employers.

I hope this is helpful but please get in touch if you require any further clarification.

With best wishes



Tavish Scott  
CEO, Salmon Scotland