

Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation  
Election Briefing

***A strong voice for Scottish Salmon***



The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO) is the representative body for the Scottish salmon farming industry, providing a trusted source of information and a strong voice for the sector. We represent companies across Scotland who directly employ 2257 people, predominantly in rural areas such as Highlands, Argyll & Bute, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland.

***Scotland's largest food export***

Salmon is Scotland's number one food export with a total value of £494m in 2014. Our biggest markets include USA, France, Germany and China. Valued as a high quality fish, it is also recognised for its health benefits and as one of the most important sources of essential Omega-3 fatty acids.

***Quality and provenance***

Scottish provenance signifies excellence and attracts a premium price as a result.

Our members work to the highest standards in the world and are independently audited against the industry Code of Good Practice with over 500 compliance points applied across the entire production process.

- **Scottish farmed salmon was the first non-French food to receive Label Rouge, awarded by the French Government to food judged to be of superior quality and taste**
- **Protected Geographical Indication was granted by the EU in 2004, setting Scottish farmed salmon alongside top of the range products such as Parma Ham, Champagne and Scotch Whisky**
- **We are also proud to be a leading participant in the stringent RSPCA Assured animal welfare scheme covering every stage of a farm animal's life, including husbandry, transportation and harvesting.**

***Critical to national and local economy***

Salmon farming is one of Scotland's economic success stories. Jobs in our industry are high quality and well paid. It is estimated that the industry supports around 8000 jobs in Scotland, with a significant number of these in the communities where salmon is farmed.

- **Western Isles: 343 jobs plus £26m local industry spend.**
- **Shetland: 448 jobs plus £30m local industry spend.**
- **Orkney: 139 jobs plus £4m local industry spend.**
- **Argyll & Bute: 460 jobs plus £40m local industry spend.**
- **Highlands & Islands: 741 jobs plus £85m local industry spend.**

In 2014, our members spent £185m with suppliers in areas where farms are located. Some 2720 businesses supply the industry in those five areas, further increasing economic benefits.

***Part of your local community***

SSPO members are supportive of their local communities, many of which have suffered long-term depopulation or struggle to attract new families to the area.

Our member companies are at the heart of their local areas and help communities remain viable for the long-term; participating in local services and contributing significant resources to local charities and initiatives.

- **In 2014, salmon farming in Scotland employed 91 young people on Modern apprenticeships, plus two undertaking National Progression Awards.**
- **Our staff, on average, remain in the sector for 8.57 years, making salmon farming stand out as one of Scotland's most trusted employers**

## Environmentally responsible and innovative

Our farms are subject to extensive environmental regulation from a variety of bodies such as Marine Scotland, SEPA and SNH. Our members estimate that there are inspections of some sort almost every day of the year.

To ensure we are transparent, our members publish environmental data for 30 farm regions and work with other local groups to identify where we can collaborate more effectively to protect the environment.

- £5m invested in use of cleaner fish since 2012.
- New well-boats introduced with state of the art hygiene facilities.
- A fish wash filtration system is being trialled in Shetland along with other new technologies.
- High level of industry investment to create and operate the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC).



## The issues for salmon farming

### Accelerate planning reform

- It can take between 2 and 3 years to get a new farm approved for production.
- Investors lack confidence in planning system.
- Some Councils remain negative towards the industry.
- Salmon farmers must be involved in plans re Crown Estate rental income.

### Build on provenance - support exports

- Provenance alone cannot compete with market forces.
- We want salmon to be a lead product in local food marketing campaigns in 5 key production regions.
- Salmon is major contributor to Scotland Food & Drink Export Strategy.

### Upgrade infrastructure

- Better transport links would help us to get to markets quicker.
- Rural Digital connectivity is vital for our hi-tech industry.

### Minimise threat to exports

- Currency fluctuations and better resourced competitor countries are undermining our offer.
- Current insufficient tonnage cannot withstand market challenges.

## We want to work with all MSPs to:

- **Streamline the planning system to increase production;**
- **Create jobs to grow local economies and build sustainable communities;**
- **Improve digital and traditional infrastructure to benefit productivity;**
- **Improve our ability to contribute to Scotland Food & Drink Export Strategy.**