



STATEMENT REGARDING STRATEGIC SALMON HEALTH INITIATIVE POTENTIAL DIAGNOSIS OF HEART AND SKELETAL MUSCLE INFLAMMATION AT A B.C. FISH FARM

For Immediate Release

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The BC Salmon Farmers Association joined as a partner of the Strategic Salmon Health Initiative in 2013 because we believe that more investigation into the health of wild and farm-raised salmon is imperative. The findings announced by the SSHI investigators regarding a potential diagnosis of Heart and Skeletal Muscle Inflammation (HSMI) in fish from one Atlantic salmon farm in B.C. are important. However, there is no consensus amongst the scientific community about the finding as the fish sampled in this farm showed no clinical signs of disease. Government and industry should expedite the science, provide necessary funding, and work collaboratively for the sake of the aquaculture industry and for wild salmon.

The SSHI investigators utilized the latest diagnostic technology to test 500 heart samples from four Atlantic salmon farms in B.C. for 45 microbes with pathogenic potential and did not find any diseases considered of significant importance to the World Organization for Animal Health including Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA), Infectious hematopoietic necrosis (IHN), Infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN) and Salmon Alphavirus (SAV).

The single farm identified in 2013 as having fish with a potential diagnosis of Heart and Skeletal Muscle Inflammation had an overall healthy population of salmon, which showed normal behavior and growth rates, which are not consistent with HSMI. In addition, government fish health experts identified liver and gill lesions in the same fish that are not typical of HSMI.

There have been no diagnosed cases of heart and skeletal muscle inflammation in either wild or farm-raised Pacific salmon.

The specific cause of HSMI has not been established, however it has been associated with the Piscine Orthoreovirus (PRV). Neither in Europe nor in British Columbia have researchers been able to prove that PRV is the cause of HSMI.

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For more information visit BCSalmonFarmers.ca

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