



OILEÁN MARA TEORANTA T/A IRISH SEASPRAY
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2nd February 2017.

Dear Chairperson,

We, as significant processors of Irish Origin Organic Salmon, would like to thank you for considering our submission to the License Review Group.

By way of introduction, my name is Seán Gavin and I am the Managing Director of Oileán Mara Teoranta (Irish Seaspray) based in Leitir Móir, Co Galway. We currently employ 35 fulltime and 8 part-time staff. We are the largest employer in this area. We have an annual turnover of €6m of which 98% is exported to retailers worldwide.

However, we are faced with a very real problem in terms of our product offering. All of our customers who wish to buy Irish Origin Organic Smoked salmon cannot do so. This is because we cannot source enough of the product from our Irish suppliers on a continuous basis, due to the restrictions of the current licensing process. Our point of differentiation as a business is based on our ability to offer a product produced in Ireland, with Irish provenance. We are currently unable to do this and are forced operate on short time. The Irish provenance of our raw material is our most important USP as otherwise we would not be able to compete with the larger and less expensive sources in Scotland and Norway used by processors/smokers on the continent.

It surprises and disappoints me that as an island nation we would not be in a position to capitalise on the significant opportunity on our doorstep. This is the third year in succession we have had to reduce/cancel/defer orders to significant retailers due to a lack of raw material. Clearly this position is not sustainable in the long term, as clients lose patience and source elsewhere, resulting in a significant loss to the Irish economy and the ability of our business and that of the Aquaculture sector to provide rural jobs in fragile rural economies. There is obviously a major obstacle to farming and growing our own Irish salmon. Are we unable to issue licenses, if so, why? Can we assume that as major processors and exporters of high value added product lines, that Irish origin raw material will be available to us on a 12 monthly basis and in significant volumes?

If this is **not** the case, then we have perhaps misunderstood the national strategy for rural and aquaculture development and our main competitive advantage of sourcing salmon in the country of origin does not, in fact, exist.

I trust that your board will act fairly and expeditiously to resolve the aquaculture licensing fiasco so that we can get on with growing exports and employing more people in rural Ireland and contribute to the ambitious targets which Government has set for itself in terms of the Blue Economy.

Yours Sincerely,

Seán Gavin.