

Date: 09.02.17

Ref: Independent Review of Aquaculture Licencing Process

Dear Licence Review Committee Members,

By way of introduction my name is Julie Coyle and I am the Plant Manager at the Marine Harvest processing plant based in Rinmore, Fanad, Co Donegal. I have worked for Marine Harvest for over 25 years. For most of this time the main topic around the boardroom table has been licenses or more importantly the lack of licenses.

I am delighted that you are in the process of reviewing the current aquaculture licencing system because to my mind, it is not working. I know that Marine Harvest have applied for new and renewed licences in the past 6 years but to date we have not received a licence.

This has a direct impact on the staff that I am personally responsible for. Due to the lack of fish at sea available for processing there have been four lay off periods in the last four years. As you can imagine the loss of income during these layoff periods is a significant issue for all the processing staff. If the company had more sites then more fish could be put to sea and this would result in the opportunity for the staff to get more access to full time work.

I am from a coastal, rural community in Donegal and salmon farming has supported our area for the past 38 years which is an invaluable resource to our local economy. Over the past 25 years Marine Harvest have employed staff who have been able to build homes in the local area and rear their families based on income from salmon farming. Now their sons and daughters are employed by the company. Other businesses are operating in the community with direct links to salmon farming operations. Without salmon farming in the area I don't like to think about what would happen to this community.

During the recession it was widely reported that exports would strongly help the Irish economy. Marine Harvest currently export up to 85% of their stock. With more licenses the value of these exports will increase.

Recently I was told that 70% of the planet is covered in water but only 2% of the world's food comes from the sea. As a country we should be utilising the ocean's wealth to produce a healthy and sustainable food source. For this to happen we need the aquaculture licensing system to be sound, efficient and effective.

Sincerely,



Julie Coyle

