

SSPO Press Release (EMBARGOED 00:01 23.03.21) – Scottish salmon farmers call for overhaul of export paperwork

The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation says there is an urgent need for post-Brexit export paperwork to be simplified to avoid damaging delays.

The key piece of paperwork at the heart of export delays to the EU should be completely redrawn and simplified, according to the Scottish salmon sector.

Tavish Scott, Chief Executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO), said there was an urgent need for the Export Health Certificate (EHC) to be re-designed.

Scottish salmon producers have had to cope with significant delays since the Brexit transition period ended on January 1 and the full effects of Brexit came into effect.

Despite improvements since January when it was taking many hours – and sometime days – to process orders of seafood for the continent, orders are still being held up because of the bureaucracy of the extra paperwork.

It now takes about two hours for each seafood load to be processed and given an export health certificate for transport to the EU and, in some case, this process is taking four hours or longer.

These delays mean salmon is not arriving in France on time, leading to lost orders, discounted sales and disgruntled customers.

Mr Scott has asked the UK Government to look into this issue as a matter of urgency and he raised the issue personally with Michael Gove MP, the UK Government's Brexit Cabinet supremo, on a recent call.

Mr Scott said: "Seafood exports are fundamentally important for both the Scottish and UK economies. Salmon is the UK's number one food export. So we need Government to reduce the costs and complexity that our sector faces."

Mr Scott said he had received a verbal assurance from Mr Gove that the UK Government would look to re-design, re-draw and simplify the export certificate, which can run to dozens of pages for each order.

One of the biggest problems with the certificate is that numerous boxes have to be crossed out by certifying officers, scoring out all products which the supplier is not exporting to the EU.



This often leads to confusion and mistakes, causing delays both in the UK and at the EU border posts.

Mr Scott added: "I welcome the commitment that the UK Government has given to initiate a system review of Export Health Certificates. They were never designed for perishable products like salmon and therefore never should have been the document we are forced to use as exporters.

"Progress on this is vitally important for our salmon sector and the seafood industry."

According to figures collated by the SSPO, Scotland's salmon producers are spending £200,000 a month on extra paperwork because of Brexit.

This £2.5 million annual bill will come on top of the delays, cancellations and problems which have already cost the sector millions of pounds in lost orders, lower prices and cancelled harvests.

Notes for Editors:

- Through January 2021 Scotland's salmon farmers incurred losses of at least £11 million as a direct result of the changes brought about by Brexit.
- In January 2021 the sector experienced an immediate loss of sales to the tune of 1,500 tonnes of product.
- Losses arose from extra paperwork, new layers of bureaucracy, and considerable delays which have resulted in lost orders, failed deliveries, unharvested fish and heavily discounted products at market.
- Scottish salmon is the UK's biggest food export and provides direct employment for 2,500 people and supports at least 10,000 jobs in the processing and supply chain.
- In Scotland alone 3,600 companies work with the sector.

Images attached to email (Copyright SSPO):

- Image of Tavish Scott, CEO of the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation
- Image of a Scottish salmon farmer working in Orkney

Contact:

Nathan Tyler (ntyler@scottishsalmon.co.uk) 07494 688841

Andrew Fry (afry@scottishsalmon.co.uk) 07983 597255