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New Brunswick salmon farmers are environmental leaders, says trade body



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31 January, 2008 - SALMON farmers from Canada's East Coast are creating local solutions to the global challenge of seafood sustainability, according to a trade body.

The New Brunswick Salmon Growers' Association (NBSGA) made the comments in the same week that a Greenpeace report claimed the aquaculture industry is not a solution to overfishing and must dramatically change in order to become sustainable.

The Canadian aquaculture industry drew heavy criticism from Greenpeace, with Sarah King, oceans campaigner at Greenpeace Canada, stating: "Many of the most serious environmental impacts of aquaculture are happening here in Canadian waters, and it's time the Canadian government ensured the industry takes responsibility for the damage being caused."

However, NBSGA - which has been taking part in this week's international conference on seafood sustainability, organised by the Seafood Choices Alliance in Barcelona, Spain - said salmon farmers from Canada's East Coast are leaders in environmental stewardship and provide social and economic value to their coastal and rural communities.

In a statement issued to the press, it said they abide by rigorous, science-based environment and fish health and welfare programmes. Farms in the Bay of Fundy are organised and regulated by a Bay Management Area system that governs stocking, separation of sites and fallowing between crops.

A performance-based management system establishes stringent environmental quality standards, monitoring programmes, codes of practice, reporting requirements and regulatory responsibilities, NBSGA adds.



(Photo: Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

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Furthermore, it says that East Coast salmon farmers are also leaders in Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture, a method that combines several species of fish, shellfish, and plants in one operation.

"Many of the local solutions identified for aquaculture at this conference have already been embraced by our New Brunswick growers," said Dr Jamey Smith, executive director of the NBSGA. "Participation in this international conference and dialogue with fishery and aquaculture producers, suppliers and researchers, as well as non-governmental organisations is part of our commitment to sustainability and an opportunity to ensure we continue to be leaders in our industry."

"We have learned at this conference that the salmon farming industry on Canada's East Coast is already meeting or exceeding many of the recommendations being made by the non-governmental and certification organisations," says Dr Smith. "It is through dialogue with stakeholders that we are able to understand and then address concerns. While international conferences are valuable, this dialogue must also continue at home. It is in the best interest of our industry and our environment to carefully manage our farms to ensure the health of our salmon, the viability of our businesses and other marine resource users, and the confidence of communities and consumers."

The NBSGA will also attend the World Wildlife Fund Salmon Aquaculture Dialogue that follows the Seafood Summit from January 31 to February 1.

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