

BIM farm would destroy Galway Bay's salmon and sea trout in five years

BY DR RODERICK O'SULLIVAN

The Minister of the Marine plans to build four industrial-sized salmon farms along the west coast, starting with a 15,000 tonne per annum complex in Galway Bay. This could potentially become the largest salmon farm in the world.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) is applying for the license, intending to franchise out the complex of farms to an independent operator. The only candidate capable of running such an operation is a well-known multi-national; hence, all profits will go to Norwegian banks.

The Minister of the Marine, who wholeheartedly supports the complex, will ultimately decide himself on whether this colossal expansion will get his go-ahead. Bizarrely, this is the first time a Minister is indirectly applying to himself for permission to build giant salmon farms.

Having already paid out millions in consultancy fees, the taxpayer will shell out a further €70 million to build this highly controversial and potentially damaging complex. Whereas BIM claim the project will create 500 new jobs, the more likely figure is 65.

Hyper-inflation of employment prospects is a standard BIM ploy when extolling environmentally damaging projects or when shying away from legitimate objections.

Since its inception, BIM has distributed over a hundred million euros of State and EU grants to the salmon farming industry - Údaras na Gaeltacht has handed out €60 million. Surely the long suffering taxpayer deserves to know why the Department of the

Marine continues to lavish such eye-watering hand-outs on salmon farmers? BIM's complex will threaten the survival of wild salmon and sea trout.

Hundreds of thousands of wild salmon previously routed through Galway Bay; today only 20,000 remain and these will be attacked by the billions of lice that will infest BIM's rows of salmon farms.

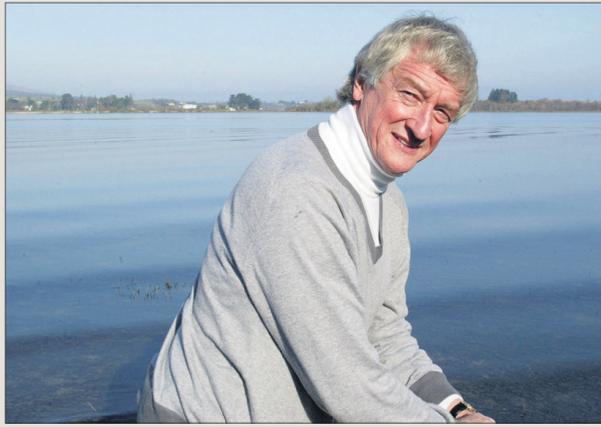
Lice only attack salmon and trout. Small pockets of these parasites previously preyed on salmon for four months, today, lice swarm around salmon farms all year round.

The wild salmon will be further attacked by the Caligus elongatus, another species of louse. Wild salmon swim around the Aran Islands on their way to spawn in the Corrib catchment and in the Costelloe, Spiddal and Kilcolgan rivers. Other shoals bound for rivers in North Mayo, Wales and England will be similarly at risk.

BIM insists lice will not kill Galway Bay's salmon because the proposed complex will be the only salmon farm on the globe to be untroubled by lice and any lice from the farms would remain distant from wild salmon. Both these claims are without any scientific basis and are based solely on BIM's wishful conjectures.

BIM appears unaware that lice have ten different stages of development and are particularly adept at locating salmon, irrespective of distance or geography. Were Galway and Connemara's fisheries to collapse, the resultant economic damage would be considerable. Job losses in the angling sectors would far outnumber any created by BIM's proposed complex.

BIM similarly dismisses the serious



Warning...Dr Roderick O'Sullivan.

problems posed by escapee salmon.

Carrying infective pathogens, escapee fish will fatally transfer their ailments to wild salmon which possess no natural immunity against the new and exotic diseases introduced by farmed salmon. Cross-breeding has already taken place between wild and farmed stock in Scotland and Norway. If similar cross-breeding takes place in Galway, irreparable genetic damage to wild stock will result. Farmed fish always break free; 150,000 escaped from the Bradan Feasa, 40,000 into Bantry Bay; 20,000 into Clew Bay.

BIM predict, with clairvoyant certainty, that none of its stock will abscond. BIM will score a double miracle - theirs will be the world's first lice-free and escape-proof farm. Back on planet earth, BIM's complex can be

expected to lose an average of 50,000 escapees annually.

BIM refuses to accept the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence from international agencies that blames salmon farming for the eradication of wild salmonids.

These include, the Norwegian and Icelandic governments, Scottish Wildlife Link, World Wildlife Fund, Friends of the Earth, Inland Fisheries Ireland and numerous sources of impeccable scientific pedigree.

BIM's complex will use 80,000 tonnes of fish-food annually, releasing vast quantities of wastes into Galway Bay. These will result from fish metabolism, uneaten food and faeces. Being fussy feeders, salmon only take food descending from the surface and will

not bottom-scavenge, hence all uneaten pellets drop to the seabed. An accepted figure for food wastage is 20% hence thousands of tonnes of uneaten food will pollute the ocean floor.

BIM's complex will annually discharge 1,100 tonnes of suspended solids i.e. filth, fish faeces, rancid wastes; 740 tonnes of ammonia; 340 tonnes of phosphorous, and 2,000 tonnes of nitrogen. According to BIM - abracadabra - these pollutants will simply "disappear".

The truth is nitrogen and phosphorous cause water pollution, ammonia is toxic to aquatic creatures and the phosphorous loadings equate to 174,000 humans.

The total pollutant mass roughly equates to the discharges of a moderately-sized city. Neighbouring shellfish concerns will be at risk from these wastes, yet BIM glosses over the numerous prosecutions taken by Scottish and Canadian shellfish farmers for loss of their livelihoods due to salmon farming pollutants.

The Minister of the Marine (via the Marine Institute) holds dual responsibility for the protection of wild salmon and for salmon farming.

Despite 60% of farms having excessive lice infestation, no action is ever taken against the guilty farmer. No license is ever revoked, no farmer is prosecuted.

For ten years the State regulators allowed the use of chemicals that were banned throughout the developed world as either cancer-causing or environmentally dangerous i.e. Malachite Green, Di-chlovros, and Ivermectin.

Two papers published this month, bluntly accuse salmon farming for the death and destruction of wild salmon. The Cohen Commission in British

Columbia, the largest investigation into salmon mortalities took three years to prepare and cost €32 million. Blaming salmon farming for the eradication of wild salmon, the Commission recommends:

- No more salmon farms to be placed in wild salmon migration routes
- All threats posed by salmon farms on wild salmon - proven and unproven - should be removed
- Protection of wild salmon to have priority over salmon farming interests
- Regulatory Authorities with dual roles in promoting salmon farming and protecting wild salmon should be relieved of their duty to promote salmon farms.

The Scottish Oceans Institute Report starkly blames salmon farms for the eradication of 39% of our wild salmon.

This staggering statistic, based on twelve years of analyses by scientists from Norway, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand, not alone shocked the investigators but will equally shock anybody reading of such wanton decimation of our endangered wildlife.

Ireland's salmon farming industry, despite the wealth of evidence incriminating it in the deaths of wild salmonids has only been allowed to expand due to State financial, legal and political support.

Both the above reports ominously warn that should the Minister of the Marine wish to license BIM's proposed complex, he will be responsible for the extermination of Galway Bay's salmon and sea trout within five years.

Dr Roderick O'Sullivan is a writer, environmental scientist and international authority on salmon farming.

Senator wants new bank for SME's

GALWAY Senator Lorraine Higgins has called for the establishment of a government working group to access the feasibility of setting up a new bank to cater for SME needs.

"Currently Irish banks are not playing their part to help stimulate the Irish economy. Studies have shown that our banks' loan rejection rate is second only to Greece in the Eurozone. The lack of funds available to SMEs is strangling our economy; we must encourage

new institutions to set up here to work constructively with businesses," she said.

"The UK has already granted a licence to a new bank called Metro Bank. This bank targets more than half of all its lending to the SME sector and commercial enterprises, and is exactly the type of lender that Irish SMEs need. While government schemes like the Micro Financing Funds are very welcome, our SMEs need regular access to business-friendly lending

institutions.

"The crux of the problem here is that all the banks currently operating in the market are retail banks. There is no properly focused business bank and it is high time for one to enter the market. We need to ensure there are banks out there that are financing cash flow businesses. We need to ensure that officials get the proper training vis-à-vis consideration of business plans so that viable business plans are approved for

finance.

"Initiatives like the Action Plan for Jobs, the schools building programme, and the capital spending on infrastructure are all proof of the government's commitment to restoring our economy, but I believe that the creation of a new business focused bank will play an integral part in our recovery. Considering that 99% of Irish businesses are SMEs, it is imperative that we do all we can to help them," she added.

Ballinasloe native awarded new cancer research grant from €1.65m investment

GALWAY native, Dr Aileen Ryan, has been awarded a Research Fellowship grant at the annual Irish Cancer Society Research Awards. Dr Ryan, who is based in NUI Galway, has been working on colorectal and gastrointestinal tract (colon) cancer.

A total of nine Irish Cancer Society Research Scholars, four Research Fellowships and five Research Scholarships were announced at the ceremony that will ensure new research projects in a range of cancers.

Dr Ryan, from Ballinasloe, has been awarded the Research Fellowship grant for her work on colon cancer. The aim of her research is to further our understanding of how cancer cells interact with our immune system.

"Colon cancer is one of the most common causes of cancer-related deaths in Ireland and represents a significant health problem," said Dr Ryan.

"Through our research, we aim to discover the factors that control the immune system's interaction with colon cancer and how blocking these factors would enable us to develop new drugs that could, in turn, be used to strengthen our immune response to cancer.



Professor Cliona O'Farrelly, Chair of the Irish Cancer Society Research Advisory Committee (left) and Ray D'Arcy are pictured presenting a Irish Cancer Society Research Fellowship to Dr Aileen Ryan

This approach to cancer, we hope, could potentially result in better treatments and consequently a better prognosis and quality of life for patients with colon cancer," she added.

The Fellows and Scholars awards are designed to foster home-grown cancer research talent in Ireland and to ensure new research projects are commenced in a range of cancers including breast, oesophageal, colorectal, gastrointestinal and

prostate cancers.

The research projects span a wide range of research areas and will investigate a number of potentially important topics, such as the response of cancer cells to chemotherapeutics and how they interact with our immune system.

The Irish Cancer Society's vision for cancer research is based on achieving world-class discoveries across all cancer types to improve outcomes for

the thousands of patients that are diagnosed each year in Ireland.

This year, the Society took a major step forward in delivering its vision for cancer research in Ireland, by allocating €7.5 million in funding to establish the first Collaborative Cancer Research Centre to stimulate collaboration and enable sharing of resources, by linking together already established cancer research disciplines and institutions in Ireland working towards a common goal.

Cancer is a major cause of death and illness in this country and each year there are over 25,000 new cases diagnosed as well as over 7,500 deaths which accounts for almost 25% of the annual national death toll.

Cancer rates are expected to increase and it is estimated that by 2020, 40,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Ireland each year.

Over the past 30 years, cancer research funded by the Irish Cancer Society has led to major advances in cancer research and more than 650 important research findings have been discovered. To find out more about the Irish Cancer Society research programme visit www.cancer.ie.

Tribune's Turkey Takeaway

30 turkeys to be won

We've teamed up with Martin Divilly, Champion Butchers, Westside to provide all Tribune readers with a chance to win one of 30 turkeys over the next three weeks. Simply complete the coupon below and return it to us and you'll be entered in our weekly draw for 10 turkeys. You can enter every week between now and Christmas.

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Completed entry forms to be returned to:
'Turkey Competition' Connacht Tribune, 15 Market Street, Galway. Closing date: Noon, Wednesday, 12th December, 2012.
Winners will be notified each week. Winning vouchers must be collected from the Connacht Tribune Offices by noon on Thursday, 20th December.
Turkeys can ONLY BE COLLECTED Between 8am - 8pm on Sunday 23rd, December and 8am - 1pm Monday (Christmas Eve) 24th December
For full Ts & Cs see www.galwaynews.ie/about-us

THE CONNACHT TRIBUNE GalwayCityTribune

Homeowners' anger over Council's botch-up on household tax demand

BY DECLAN TIERNEY

GALWAY County Council has been urged to "get its house in order" and not be wasting time and money by chasing those who have already paid the household charge.

The stinging attack comes from a former member of the Council who said that he had been inundated with complaints from householders who were less than impressed about getting warning letters in the post.

Deputy Paul Connaughton jnr. said that the Council was pursuing householders who had paid the charge and he urged the local authority to review their system so as not to send reminders to people who had already paid.

Galway County Council has admitted that there are some inconsistencies in the database which records who have paid



Paul Connaughton Jnr. highlighted problem.

the charge and those who have not.

Those who have received notifications of an outstanding household charge in error are required to contact the central bureau or Galway County Council to prevent them receiving further reminders in the post.

Recently a new round of reminder letters were sent out to houses across the county

and the local authority conceded that some of these have gone to people who have already paid the €100 charge.

The Council has advised those who have received reminder letters in error to contact the bureau and provide proof of payment.

Galway County Council has apologised for any inconvenience caused by inconsistencies in the Local Government Management Agency database.

Deputy Connaughton said that it was a ridiculous situation that householders were now obliged to prove that they had paid the charge.

"In the past week, I have been inundated with complaints from people all across East Galway who, despite the fact that they paid their household charge on time, recently received letters asking them to pay up and warning that they now face a charge of €128.

"Given that over two thirds

of householders in County Galway have paid the charge, the Council should be concentrating their resources on the remaining third, not wasting money writing out to those who have already paid.

"Another problem for those who have already paid is that they are being asked to ring a number in Dublin, despite the letter having been issued by Galway County Council, and are placed on hold for a lengthy time before they can speak to a member of personnel.

"This is placing an extra cost on householders at a time when few can afford any additional cost. The Council have to get their house in order", Deputy Connaughton added.

He said that the price of writing out to people who have already paid their household charge will have to be borne by the taxpayer who were already under enough financial pressure.

TURKEY WINNERS - WEEK 1 Carmel Dervan, Ballinasloe; Martin Geary, Newcastle; Joe Cahalan, Loughrea; James Gavin, Knocknacarra; Josephine Folan, Newcastle; Teresa Hodgins, Loughrea; Belinda Hopley, Ballybane; Ger Melia, Moycullen; Margaret Guiheen, Bohermore, and Donna Meehan, Turloughmore.