

Demo as salmon industry alliance marked

Food: 25 years of Label Rouge accreditation

BY KEITH FINDLAY

Scottish salmon producers celebrated 25 years of the prestigious Label Rouge accreditation at a seminar and dinner in Edinburgh yesterday.

Speakers from the industry, Scotland Food and

Drink and market researcher Kantar Worldpanel outlined changes the sector has experienced in recent years, particularly in farming techniques and consumer eating trends.

But there was also a protest outside as invited guests, including interna-



RED RAGE: Protesters against farmed salmon highlight problems with lice, seal culls and overuse of antibiotics

tional buyers, gathered to discuss the key role of farmed salmon in Scotland's food exports.

Don Staniford, an arch critic of "factory" salmon farming over many years, and supporters were at the seminar venue to highlight concerns ranging from seal lice, seal kills and artificial colourings to the use of antibiotics and chemicals.

Mr Staniford said: "Consumers should give Label

Rouge the red card and immediately stop buying Scottish salmon."

John Robins of Animal Concern and the Save Our Seals Fund added: "Salmon producers should be red in the face with embarrassment."

"With all the difficulties they are having and the environmental damage they are causing, they have nothing to celebrate."

France's prestigious La-

bel Rouge accreditation was awarded to Scottish farmed salmon in 1992. It was the first time a product from outside France had achieved the status.

Exports to France have been key to the development of Label Rouge Scottish salmon ever since, helping to boost sales to 8,000 tonnes a year.

Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation chief executive Scott Landsburgh

said: "Being awarded the Label Rouge in 1992 was significant in developing the export market in France and has subsequently opened many other markets for Scottish salmon around the world."

"Originally produced as a niche product for the premium French market, it is now sought-after in Switzerland and Germany, and further afield in the Middle East and Japan."

AQUACULTURE Salmon farmer creates 25 jobs

Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) said yesterday it had received planning permission to build a new smolt hatchery at Barcaldine in Argyll.

The salmon producer is investing £35million in the facility as part of a total £70million spend anticipated over the next few years.

It is expected the hatchery will create up to 25 permanent jobs.

SSF director Jim Galagher said: "I am delighted by the positive decision from the local authority and support from the community."

"We are pleased that this decision has been taken so quickly and because of this investment, Argyll will benefit from high-quality jobs and training opportunities."