

\$camon \$cotland, 23 April 2024

Complaints Filed Vs Wester Ross ‘Hand Reared’ Scottish Salmon

- Mowi-owned Wester Ross accused of misleading marketing & false advertising
- Images show feed pipes & automated feeding machines at ‘hand reared’ Ardmail farm

\$camon \$cotland has filed complaints against Mowi-owned Wester Ross Fisheries (also known as Wester Ross Salmon) for deceptively advertising and falsely marketing Scottish salmon as “hand reared”. A dossier of evidence detailing examples of images, marketing materials and advertising tag-lines is being sent to suppliers and regulators including Trading Standards at Highland Council [1].



\$camon \$cotland was tipped off earlier this month that [Wester Ross Fisheries](#) – [bought out by Norwegian giant Mowi in June 2022](#) – was using automated feeding machines at their salmon farm at Ardmail in Loch Kannaird near Ullapool. Images taken last week clearly show the use

of feed pipes and automated machines in operation with the sound of pellets rattling down feeders heard on the neighbouring Isle of Martin.



Photos show automated feeding systems already in operation at the “hand reared” salmon farm with feed pipes blocking the walkways (a health and safety hazard):



Plastic pipes extend the length of the “hand reared” salmon farm at Ardmair supplying feed into cages via an automated feeding system:





Despite claims by Wester Ross Fisheries (Mowi) that automated feeders, machines or cameras are not used, a [GaelForce 'SeaSight Controller'](#) is operating at the “hand reared” salmon farm:



The [GaelForce 'SeaSight Controller'](#) allows 'in-house experts' to monitor feeding without workers even being present on site:

SeaSight Control



Clear underwater video viewed through our user-friendly SeaSight Control software, designed to enhance feed monitoring and fish inspection.

Designed, built, and supported by our in-house experts, clear underwater video is viewed through our user-friendly SeaSight Control software, enhancing feed monitoring and fish inspection.

Allow yourself to take greater control over the monitoring of feeding and fish activity with crystal clear, high-definition video imagery and visually intuitive software.

Functions include camera pan, tilt, zoom, and focus control, as well as multi-directional movement control for SeaSight Double Winch.

“Our salmon are entirely hand reared, which means that people — not just machines or cameras — are on the water every day to feed and observe the fish,” [claim FAO27 in their marketing material promoting Wester Ross Salmon.](#)



- **The salmon are fed by hand** through every stage of life at Wester Ross. Hand rearing means that the farmers at Wester Ross Fisheries are on the water EVERY day to feed and observe the fish; no machines or cameras. This is an entirely hands-on operation.

Wester Ross’s “hand reared” salmon farm at Ardmair is now serviced by an automated feed barge – complete with a generator and other machinery - with feed pipes extending to the cages:



Wester Ross Salmon's [website](#) (as of 23 April 2024) still advertises itself as “hand reared for generations”, “artisan” and following “traditional hand-rearing practices”:



“Like the Loch Ness Monster, ‘hand reared’, ‘responsible’, ‘artisan’ and ‘sustainable’ Scottish salmon simply does not exist,” said Don Staniford, Director of \$camon \$cotland. “Retailers selling Wester Ross salmon are hoodwinking customers and are guilty of misleading marketing and deceptive advertising. The fact is that Norwegian giant Mowi now controls Wester Ross and has installed automated feeding systems leaving ‘hand reared’ salmon dead in the water. Mowi – the real monster in the lochs of Scotland - must immediately correct the Wester Ross Salmon website and inform all their customers that ‘hand reared’ Scottish salmon is now past its sell-by date. By buying the Wester Ross ‘artisan’ brand, the salmon farming multinational clearly wanted to have their fish-cake and eat it too.”

\$camon \$cotland's [complaint vs. Wester Ross \(Mowi\)](#) cites numerous examples of retailers, chefs and news outlets reporting on ‘hand reared’ Scottish salmon – including:

“By being hand-reared, there is no automation, machines, or cameras used in the salmon life-cycle,” [claim Buying Seafood](#).

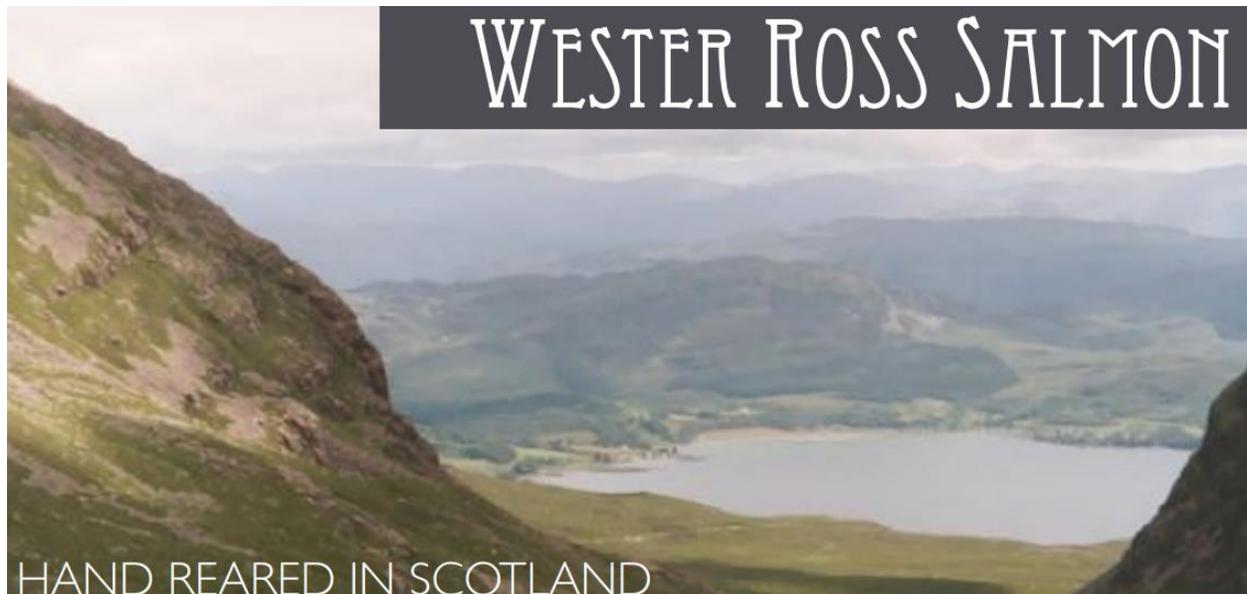
“Wester Ross Fisheries is the oldest independently operated salmon farm in Scotland and have been hand rearing their fish for generations,” [claim Salmon Scotland on their website](#) (despite the fact that Norwegian giant Mowi bought the company in 2022). “Their fish are hand reared, hand fed and slowly grown, favouring traditional and natural practices over modern, automated system.”

Harbor Fish Market in the USA [claim on their website](#) that Wester Ross Scottish Salmon is “a business that does absolutely everything by hand” and “there are no machines or cameras.”

Universal Seafood in the USA [claim on their website](#) that Wester Ross Scottish Salmon “is hand-reared and fed sustainable fishmeal and treated with uncommon care.”

Gourmet South Meat Market in the USA [claim on their website](#) that Wester Ross Scottish salmon is “hand reared and sustainably fed”.

An [online brochure published by Wester Ross Salmon](#) claims:



HUSBANDRY & HAND REARING

Hand rearing means that we are on the water EVERY day to feed and observe the fish — not machines or cameras.

Our farm is an entirely hands-on operation, despite the fact that hand rearing requires three times more labor than at conventional farms.

This close proximity allows for close observation — and meticulous attention to animal welfare.

Wester Ross salmon is a **certified Freedom Food by the RSPCA** (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) for our animal welfare practices, and we are an active member of the RSPCA salmon working group.

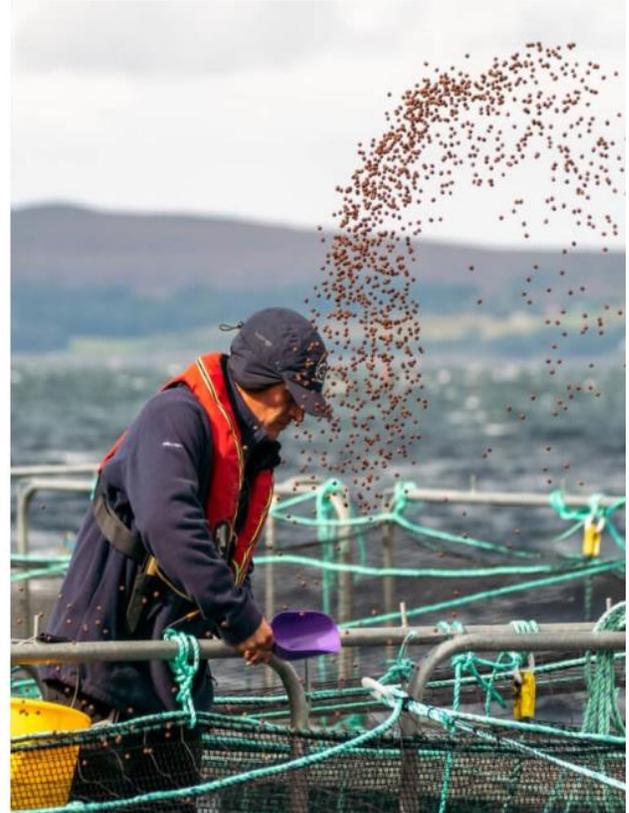


Wheeler Seafood in the USA still market Wester Ross Scottish Salmon as “nurtured by hand, not machines” [claiming on their website](#) that it is ‘artisanal’ which they define as “a product made in a traditional non-mechanized way”:

Nurtured by Hand, Not Machines

.....

Automation has dramatically reduced labor needs in salmon farming. Machine feeding and video monitoring have become an industry norm. But this reduces the amount of human interaction with the salmon. Industrial level farming produces generic salmon without distinct qualities. Respect for the animal is lost and humane treatment becomes more challenging. There is a bond between farmer and animal that makes a critical difference. WR farmers are on the water every day to tend their salmon. Wester Ross salmon are fed by hand three times a day. This is more efficient than machine spread feeding. Less feed is wasted and this keeps the seabed cleaner. The salmon are observed first hand Every Day by those who care for them. Their salmon are slowly grown to market size at a natural rate that takes more time. Natural growth is more humane. It rewards us with a firmer salmon that resembles its wild cousins in appearance and texture.



The above photo of Gilpin Bradley, former MD of Wester Ross Salmon, hand feeding the fish has been replicated in marketing materials and in media promotions. Celebrity chef Nadiya Hussein can [still be seen on BBC iPlayer](#) hand feeding Wester Ross Salmon:



BBC presenter Cherry Healey has also [promoted hand rearing at Wester Ross Salmon](#):

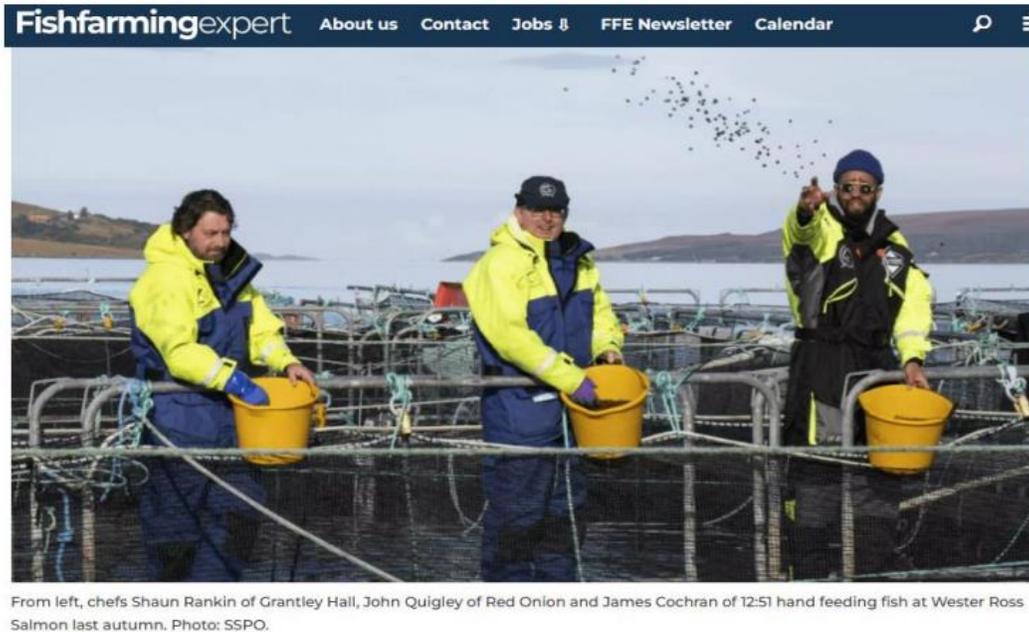


The Fish Shop in the UK still uses hand rearing at Wester Ross Salmon as an [online marketing message to customers](#):

Hand-rearing fish means that people are on the water every single day to feed and observe the fish, this requires three times the labour of conventional salmon farming but ensures close observation of the fish and meticulous attention to animal welfare. In fact, the fish are so well cared for they have never had to use any antibiotics.



Fish Farming Expert featured a photo of chefs Shaun Rankin, John Quigley and James Cochran hand feeding Wester Ross salmon in an article [published in May 2021](#):



Even the [sale to Mowi in June 2022](#) has not stopped Wester Ross marketing itself as hand reared:

The image is a screenshot of a social media post from 'Wester Ross Fisheries Ltd'. The profile information shows 2,110 followers and a post from 8 months ago. The text of the post reads: 'Our brand ambassador, Michelin star chef Shaun Rankin, presents his exquisite Baked Salmon in Soya Sauce with Tender Stem Broccoli, Garlic, Lime & Sesame Seeds! 🍷🌿 Elevate your dining experience with this flavourful masterpiece. 🌿🌟 Recipe available on our website, <https://wrs.co.uk/chef> #ChefRankin #SalmonSensation #TasteTheExcellence'. Below the text is a photograph of chef Shaun Rankin wearing a blue beanie, sunglasses, and a high-visibility jacket, with salmon feed particles visible in the air around him. The Wester Ross logo is overlaid in the top left corner of the photo.

Wester Ross Fisheries continue to [market themselves on LinkedIn](#) as “hand reared” with a “hand reared for generations” logo and [recent posts](#) still using the “hand reared” marketing:

https://www.linkedin.com/company/wester-ross-fisheries-ltd/?originalSubdomain=uk 67%



Wester Ross Fisheries Ltd
Artisan Scottish Salmon; traditionally hand reared for generations...
Fisheries · Ross-shire · 2K followers · 11-50 employees

+ Follow Message

Home About Posts Jobs People

About

Founded in 1977, Wester Ross Fisheries is the oldest independently managed salmon farm in Scotland.

Being independent means farming how we think best:

- In harmony with the natural environment
- Reducing pressure on wild fish through innovative fish feed
- Giving the fish room to grow up healthy without antibiotics
- Championing the welfare of the salmon above all else

Our salmon are hand reared, which means that people — not just machines or cameras — are on the water every day to feed and observe the fish.

Wester Ross Fisheries Ltd
2,110 followers
2w • Edited •

+ Follow ...

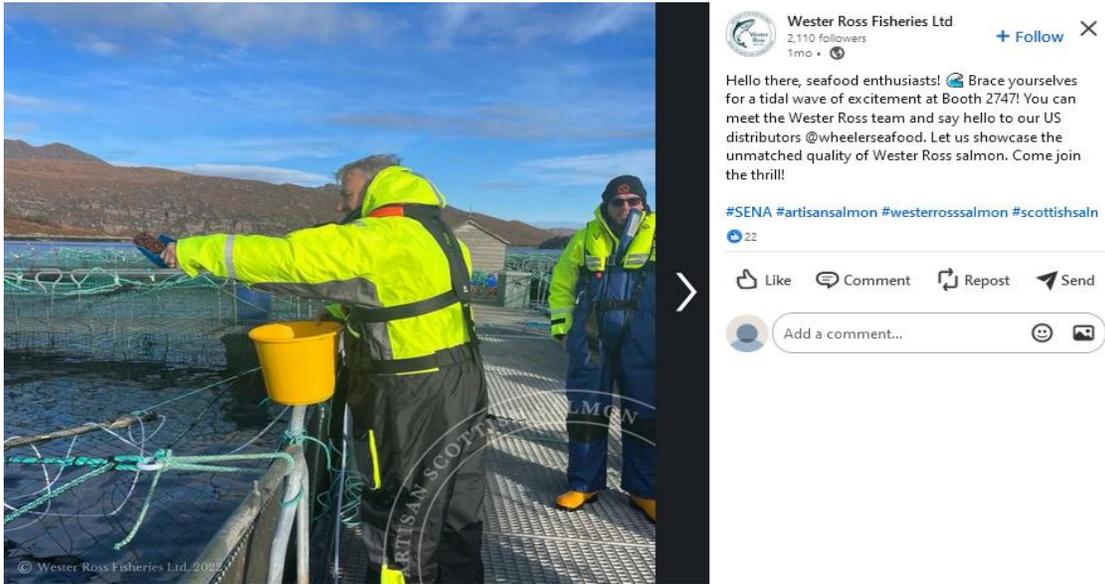
Catch us at the Barcelona Seafood Expo Global this April! Dive into the world of Scottish excellence at Booth 6 in the Scottish Pavilion from April 23rd to 25th. Experience the delicious taste of Wester Ross Salmon. Don't miss out!

#foodexpo24 #seafoodexpoglobal #scottishsalmon #westerrosssalmon #artisansalmon



23-25th April
Barcelona SEG
Scottish Pavilion Booth 6

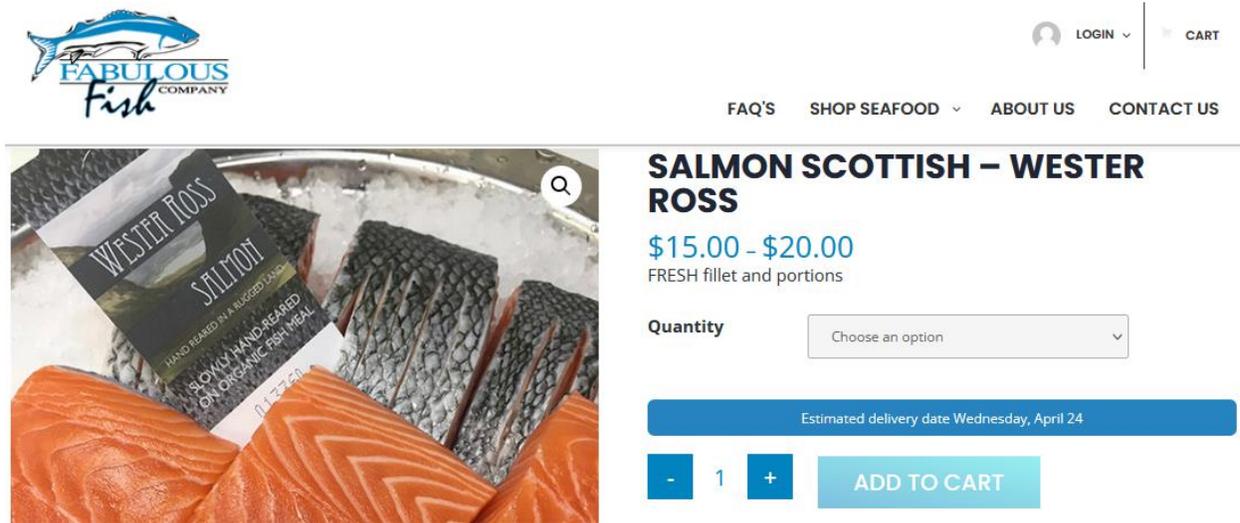
A [LinkedIn post last month by Wester Ross Fisheries](#) featured a photo of a worker at Ardmair salmon farm hand-feeding the fish:



Hand-rearing is flagged up by Wester Ross Fisheries as central to their ‘[core values](#)’ and ethics:



The Fabulous Fish Company in Missouri in the USA [still markets Wester Ross salmon online](#) as “slowly hand reared” with reference to “hand rearing”:



The screenshot shows the Fabulous Fish Company website. The logo is in the top left. Navigation links include 'FAQ'S', 'SHOP SEAFOOD', 'ABOUT US', and 'CONTACT US'. The product listing for 'SALMON SCOTTISH - WESTER ROSS' is displayed, with a price of '\$15.00 - \$20.00' and the description 'FRESH fillet and portions'. A quantity selector is set to '1'. An 'ADD TO CART' button is visible. The product image shows salmon fillets and a box with the text 'WESTER ROSS SALTMON HAND REARED IN A RIGGED TANK SLOWLY HAND-REARED ON ORGANIC FISH MEAL'.

DESCRIPTION

Wester Ross is a premium Scottish Farm Raised Salmon. Hand rearing in the icy waters of Scotland enhances the flavor profile and buttery texture to another level of satisfaction.

In addition to the feed barge already in operation at Ardmair, Mowi (Wester Ross Fisheries) is currently applying to Highland Council to install a new feed barge at their [disease-ridden salmon farm at Corry in Loch Broom](#). The Ross-shire Journal [reported in October 2023](#): “The new proposals would see a specialist barge added to the fish farm. It will be connected to a series of pipes and used to distribute feed to the fish pens automatically, replacing the need for workers to do all the feeding work by hand.”

A spokesperson for Wester Ross Fisheries [told The Ross-shire Journal](#): “The company is not seeking to replace hand feeding at Corry, but to provide mechanical assistance in order to reduce the physical strain on staff.”

Local resident Ailsa McLellan [Tweeted in March 2024](#): “Is it legal for Mowi to keep saying this - 'With its hand-fed fish reared slowly without medicine' - whilst concurrently fighting to put a feed barge in Loch Broom, and using thousands of gallons of H2O2 in one week?”

Contact:

Don Staniford: 07771 541826 (salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com)

Notes to Editors:

[1] Download dossier via [Complaint Vs. Wester Ross \(Mowi\) for Deceptive Advertising & *Misleading Marketing of “Hand Reared” Scottish Salmon](#) (23 April 2024)