

Scottish Salmon Watch, 21 May 2021

[Cleaning Tox-Sick Scottish Salmon with Banned Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid](#)

- FOI disclosure rings alarm bells over Benchmark's 'CleanTreat'
- Imidacloprid still hidden behind secret codename BMK08 (Ectosan)
  - 'Magic vanishing trick' will not wash say campaigners
  - "Biggest con trick since Harry Houdini"



Emails disclosed by the Scottish Government via Freedom of Information earlier this month (7 May 2021) have partially lifted the lid on [Benchmark's CleanTreat](#) – a water purification system which the Norwegian-owned company plans to use [Bayer's banned neonicotinoid chemical Imidacloprid](#) (marketed since late 2019 as [BMK08](#) but branded [Ectosan](#) when launched in 2017).



However, the Scottish Government has slammed the door shut on other information on [Imidacloprid \(BMK08\)](#) citing reasons of “confidentiality of commercial or industrial information”, the need to protect “a private space within which officials can provide free and frank advice and views to Ministers in briefing for lines to take” and “legal professional privilege”.

Read more via The Ferret: [“Bee-killing pesticide treatment for fish farms backed by Scottish Government”](#)

Here are the top-lines from the Scottish Government's FOI disclosure (7 May 2021):

- FOI disclosure from Scottish Government reveals that Benchmark's CleanTreat water purification system using Imidacloprid (BMK08) is being geared up for Scottish waters
- "Benchmark's website says it plans for the system to launch in the second half of 2021, subject to regulatory approval," wrote the Scottish Government in a Cabinet Briefing in March 2021. "To the best of our knowledge no application to SEPA has been made"
- "We can't circumnavigate SEPA's consideration as they have to follow legal process," stated Cabinet Briefing. "But there is a newly invigorated dedication within SG and across regulators to support innovation in the aquaculture sector – am confident this will be given welcomed consideration when an application is received"
  
- Banned neonicotinoid Imidacloprid "neutralised" by second chemical treatment reveals Scottish Government internal email in March 2021. "There are 2 different chemicals involved in the Benchmark proposal....neutralized residues can be discharged to the water environment with minimal impact"
- "Queries about SEPA involvement & the choice of medicine for trials had been resolved" reported Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre in February 2021
- "The ball was in Benchmark's court to bring forward an application" stated the Scottish Government in March 2021
- "From memory, this is the one that was rejected before, is that right?" asked the Director of Marine Scotland (Annabel Turpie) in March 2021
  
- "This final discharge of the residues must meet an appropriate Environmental Quality Standard which must be derived in accordance with EU procedures (which is now enshrined in Scots law), subject to an appropriate mixing zone (i.e. not simply at the point of the discharge from the hose/pipe)" wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021
- "It is a matter for the company to demonstrate to SEPA that the system is capable of consistently achieving that EQS (Just to be clear, even in a trial that discharge must aim to meet the EQS)," wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021
  
- Scottish Sea Farms (Norskott Havbruk) named in correspondence with Director of Marine Scotland in February 2021
- "SEPA is aware that there is an expectation that Benchmark will bring it onto an existing site for approval," wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021
- "We're interested in the results of the Norwegian trials and we'll endeavour to liaise with the authorities about their experience," stated the Scottish Government in March 2021
- "It was suggested a while ago that Benchmark should trial system on water treatment without the introduction of a new chemical," wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021. "Could also be that there are early results from Norway"
- "SAIC appears to have a role in facilitating its progression through regulators, although I'm not clear what this role could be," wrote a Scottish Government official [name redacted] in March 2021

- “Since the discharges from wellboats are now regulated by SEPA, and MS LOT come out of the equation as the pollutions regulator (sic), I suppose the question of trialling it now rests exclusively with SEPA,” wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021
- “The Benchmark proposal relates to the expectation that an application will soon be made by Benchmark for the use of CleanTreat (water treatment technology) and possibly a new sea lice treatment for use alongside it,” wrote the Scottish Government in March 2021
- The FOI reply letter dated 7 May 2021 from the Scottish Government (Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Team) argued that “disclosure of this particular information, would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the confidentiality of commercial information provided by Benchmark Holding plc and thus cause substantial harm to their commercial interests”. “We recognize that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of an open and transparent government, and to account for the expenditure of public money,” wrote the Scottish Government. “However, there is a greater public interest in protecting the commercial interests of companies when substantial harm can be made to their commercial interests.”

[Read FOI documents in full below via the Appendix and a Summary]

“If chemical wastes from a banned neonicotinoid can really be ‘neutralized’ and ‘purified’ then we challenge Scottish Ministers to do a John Gummer and prove its safety,” said [Don Staniford](#), [Director of Scottish Salmon Watch](#) (and author of ‘[Silent Spring of the Sea](#)’).



To prove the safety of the neonicotinoid insecticide Imidacloprid will Scottish Ministers drink 'purified' wastewater? @WeAreBenchmark @FerdOwner [tinyurl.com/ycc43zmp](https://tinyurl.com/ycc43zmp) @FergusEwingMSP @strathearnrose @KateForbesMSP @GreenerScotland @nicolasturgeon @scotgovfm @scotgp #BMK08



Mowi Scotland Limited and 7 others

1:44 PM · Jun 8, 2020 · Twitter Web App

"Reading between the redacted lines it seems that the Scottish Government is only too happy to smooth the passage for Imidacloprid use in salmon farming in Scotland even before the results of field trials in Norway and environmental risks assessments have been published. This is the antithesis of the precautionary principle and smacks of the Scottish Government putting commercial gain ahead of environmental protection. Surely the public has a right to know before the floodgates are opened to a banned neonicotinoid?"



“Pardon the scientific skepticism but Benchmark’s ‘CleanTreat’ system has the nasty odour of a highly hazardous and toxic chemical from Muppet Labs,” continued Staniford. “The secrecy surrounding BMK08 – marketed as Ectosan in 2017 and then revealed as Imidacloprid in March 2020 - speaks volumes. If salmon farming companies can persuade the British public to swallow farmed salmon bathed in a banned toxic chemical then it will be the biggest con trick pulled off since Harry Houdini. Even if the chemically embalmed salmon farming industry succeed in obtaining an MRL and an EQS will the public really have the appetite for such toxic Scottish salmon? I don’t think the Swedish chef would dare cook with Imidacloprid-marinaded salmon even if it is approved as ‘environmentally friendly’ by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council, stamped as ‘welfare-friendly’ by RSPCA Assured and marketed as ‘responsibly sourced’ by supermarkets. Scottish salmon is pharmed and dangerous!”

Tweets on this issue [online here](#)

**Contact:**

Don Staniford: [salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com](mailto:salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com) (07763 541876)

Graphics – download high resolution [online here](#)



*Honest guv:*  
**ZERO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT!**



## **Backgrounder: Beware of [BMK08 \(Imidacloprid\)](#)!**

Despite the [FOI blackout and redacted documents](#), the alarm bells are ringing about the use of Imidacloprid in salmon farming in Scotland.

By 7 June 2021, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency has been [forced by the Scottish Information Commissioner to disclose “commercially confidential” documents](#) on CleanTreat and BMK08/Ectosan/Imidacloprid.

Earlier this month (6 May 2021), [Reuters reported](#) that the EU had dismissed an appeal by chemical giant [Bayer \(who took over Monsanto in 2018\)](#) to overturn the EU’s ban on Imidacloprid in 2018 (although a [loophole has permitted ‘emergency authorisations’](#)).

Last month (16 April 2021), [Benchmark reported](#) that the “MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) for its novel sea lice treatment BMK08 has been ratified under European Union law” [following an opinion by the European Medicines Agency in September 2020](#). Benchmark also [announced](#) (16 April 2021) that they had “appointed four new staff to support the operation of its CleanTreat water purification system, which is designed for use with its novel BMK08 lice treatment”.

Fish Farming Expert [reported](#) (26 March 2021) that Benchmark had “signed its first customer agreements for the delivery of its CleanTreat water purification system”. Fish Farmer [reported](#) (21 February 2021) that “BMK08/CleanTreat is on track for commercial launch in Q2 of calendar year 2021, ‘with progress towards regulatory approval and firm customer interest’.”

In August 2020, an Editorial in British Wildlife magazine – [“Neonics in salmon-farming – alarm bells are ringing”](#) – by Professor Dave Goulson of the University of Sussex expressed serious scientific concerns.

In June 2020, [The Sunday Times quoted](#) Jean-Marc Bonmatin, from the French National Centre for Scientific Research warning that “the use of Imidacloprid as it is presented for salmon farming will be catastrophic for aquatic invertebrates, and even for fishes”.

In June 2020, [Scottish Salmon Watch revealed](#) that Benchmark’s patent for use of the toxic neonicotinoid insecticide Imidacloprid in salmon farming conceded that it was a “potentially hazardous agent in the field” and that “leakage” could occur with “loss of agent in the environment”.

In May 2020, the [Scottish Greens expressed ‘deep concerns’](#) about a proposed field trial by Mowi in Loch Ailort in a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment.

In March 2020, [The Ferret](#) and [Scottish Salmon Watch](#) publicly revealed for the first time that BMK08/Ectosan was Imidacloprid [prompting Benchmark to come clean in a statement a few days later](#).

In December 2019, [The Sunday Times cited](#) a Scottish Government official warning of “unacceptable impacts” via [FOI documents disclosed to Scottish Salmon Watch](#).

**Read more via:**

[Who are the toxic team lurking behind Benchmark's BMK08 \(Imidacloprid\) in Scottish salmon pharming?](#)

[The Ferret: Bee-killing pesticide treatment for fish farms backed by Scottish Government Rumsfeldian Fish Philosophy - Things We Know We Know, Things We Now Know We Don't Know & Things We Don't Know We Don't Know About 'Scottish' Salmon!](#)

[SEPA ordered by Commissioner to Disclose 'Commercially Confidential' Information on CleanTreat & BMK08 \(Imidacloprid\) by 7 June](#)

[Warning: Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid Use in Salmon Farming "Clears Another Hurdle" With European MRL](#)

[Warning: Imidacloprid Moves A Step Closer to Commercial Use in Salmon Farming Nasty Neonicotinoid Plagues Salmon Farming in 2021](#)

[Toxic Neonicotinoid "Close to Commercial Launch" in Salmon Farming!](#)

[New Science Dogs Approval of Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid for Scottish Salmon!](#)

[Imidacloprid Use in Scottish Salmon Farming?](#)

[Secret Salmon - On the Trail of Imidacloprid Use in Scotland!](#)

[British Wildlife: "Neonics in Salmon Farming - Alarm Bells Are Ringing"](#)

[Caveat Chile - toxic neonicotinoid Imidacloprid \(BMK08\) coming soon!](#)

[Toxic Politics - Meet the Scottish Government's Minister for Sinister Chemicals](#)

[Imidacloprid Licensed for Use by Mowi in Loch Ailort?](#)

[Further Scientific Opposition to Imidacloprid Use in Salmon Farming](#)

[Patent lifts lid on neonicotinoid use in salmon farming](#)

[Horrible History: Imidacloprid Use in Salmon Farming](#)

[Scientific Opposition to Neonicotinoid Use in Salmon Farming](#)

[Backgrounder: "Imidacloprid - A Neonicotinoid Insecticide Toxic to Aquatic Life"](#)

[BBC Farming Today on "Neonicotinoids in Salmon Farming"](#)

[Sunday Times: "Outlawed insecticide may be used on Scottish salmon"](#)

[FOI letter on Scientific Concerns re. Imidacloprid Use in Scottish Salmon Farming](#)

[Scottish Greens "Deeply Concerned" at Mowi's Field Trial of Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid in Loch Ailort](#)

[Letter to the Prince of Wales re. bee-killing Imidacloprid use at royal warrant holder Mowi](#)

[Secret Trials: 'Royal' Salmon Doused with Bee-Killing Insecticide Imidacloprid?](#)

[Follow the Salmoney - the Norwegian tobacco billionaire behind the Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid](#)

[ENDS Report: "Calls for greater transparency over 'toxic' new fish farm product"](#)

[Letter to SEPA: Please Come Clean on Imidacloprid!](#)

[Letter to Scottish Ministers, SEPA & the VMD re. Imidacloprid](#)

[FOI requests on Imidacloprid to SEPA, VMD & the Scottish Government](#)

[Revealed: Toxic Neonicotinoid Insecticide Used to 'CleanTreat' Lousy Salmon](#)

[Please Come Clean on BMK08!](#)

[Sunday Times: "Official fears revealed over toxic threat of salmon trade"](#)

[Cleaning Tox-Sick Scottish Salmon](#)

[CleanTreat FOI Disclosures by the Scottish Government to Scottish Salmon Watch](#)

[Media Backgrounder: Chemically Embalmed Scottish Salmon](#)

[All is Not Well With Sick Scottish Salmon](#)

**Summary of FOI disclosure by the Scottish Government on 7 May 2021 (see Appendix for more details):**

Norwegian-owned Norskott Havbruk (Scottish Sea Farms) wrote to the Director of Marine Scotland on 23 February 2021:

Just following up on our last conversation re [Redacted] and benchmark with Norway, let me know what dates and time suit you to go through this, more than happy to take a meeting in our Stirling office or teams with you, whatever you prefer, [Redacted]

Minutes of a board meeting of the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre on 24 February 2021 detailed how Annabel Turpie (Director of Marine Scotland) “was keen for Marine Scotland/Marine Scotland Science to be involved in future discussions with SEPA” on the CleanTreat project and that “queries about SEPA involvement and the choice of medicine for trials had been resolved”:

4.7 [Redacted] moved onto the three amber-green applications: projects 5, [Redacted]

4.7.1 On project 5 (*Use of a water treatment technology (CleanTreat) to support integrated pest management and unlock additional site capacity*), queries about SEPA involvement and the choice of medicine for trials had been resolved. The board agreed it had strong commercial relevance and potential to support regulatory innovation, and was therefore fundable. ATu said she was keen for Marine Scotland / Marine Scotland Science to be involved in future discussions with SEPA on this project. **Action: Follow up with Marine Scotland**

[Redacted]

The Scottish Government wrote on 1 March 2021:

We will also need an update on Benchmark- I think MS Lott and [Redacted] might be able to assist- although from memory the ball was in Benchmark’s court to bring forward an application. It was suggested a while ago that Benchmark should trial system on water treatment without the introduction of a new chemical. Could also be that there are early results from Norway. [Redacted] got this in hand).

Controls on fish farm discharges were passed to SEPA last November. So MS-LOT no longer licenses them. So we haven’t had any contact with benchmark for a good while.

An email from the Director of Marine Scotland (Annabel Turpie) to Scottish Government civil servant Donald Carmichael and others (understood to be Scottish Government staff but the email addresses are redacted) dated 1 March 2021 asked: “From memory, this is the one that was rejected before, is that right?”

4.7.1 – I’ve said we’ll help with engagement with SEPA and MSS on the cleantreat technology. From memory, this is the one that was rejected before, is that right?

An email from what appears to be a Scottish Government official (the name is redacted as is any affiliation) dated 2 March 2021 to Scottish Government civil servant Donald Carmichael states that “there are 2 different chemicals involved in the Benchmark proposal” and that “neutralized residues can be discharged to the water environment with minimal impact”.

[Redacted], but please bear with me as there are 2 different chemicals involved in the Benchmark proposal.

A chemical is used to treat sea lice, usually in a wellboat in which the fish are held for treatment. Then the fish are removed, leaving waste chemicals; and Benchmark proposes that a second chemical is added to those residues to neutralise the first chemical. The aim is that ultimately the neutralised residues can be discharged to the water environment with minimal impact. (This would be a breakthrough for both the industry and SEPA as it would remove many of the environmental concerns about such chemicals).

This final discharge of the residues must meet an appropriate Environmental Quality Standard (EQS) which must be derived in accordance with EU procedures (which is now enshrined in Scots law), subject to an appropriate mixing zone (ie not simply at the point of the discharge from the hose/pipe). It is a matter for the company to demonstrate to SEPA that the system is capable of consistently achieving that EQS. (Just to be clear, even in a trial the discharge must aim to meet the EQS).

[Redacted]

Another email from a Scottish Government official to Donald Carmichael dated 2 March 2021 stated that “since the discharges from wellboats are now regulated by SEPA, and MS [Marine Scotland] LOT come out of the equation as the pollutions regulator (sic), I suppose the question of trialling it now rests exclusively with SEPA”.

[Redacted]

However since the discharges from wellboats are now regulated by SEPA, and MS LOT come out of the equation as the pollutions regulator, I suppose the question of trialling it now rests exclusively with SEPA.

[Redacted]

The Scottish Government wrote on 8 March 2021:

## **Cleantreat and BMK08 - sea lice treatment technology**

- Cleantreat is Benchmark's new water purification system which removes medicines from fish treatment water prior to discharge to the sea. Benchmark proposes to use the purification system alongside a new sea lice treatment (BMK08) it is developing. If successful it could be a breakthrough for both the industry since it could effectively reduce chemical discharge and environmental impact.
- The system, which has undergone initial development work in Scotland, has been undergoing field trials in Norway.
- There is only a limited variety of medicines available to treat sea lice - some which are developed are limited in their effectiveness by the dosage permitted due to environmental concerns. CleanTreat together with 'BMK08' is promoted as a new approach without environmental concerns arising from discharge.
- Previous dialogue between SEPA, MS and Benchmark sought to address regulatory issues - final discharge must meet an appropriate Environmental Quality Standard in accordance with EU procedures (which are now enshrined in domestic law) even in a trial. [Redacted]
- Benchmark's website says it plans for the system to launch in the second half of 2021, subject to regulatory approval. To the best of our knowledge no application to SEPA has been made, [Redacted]

The Scottish Government internal briefing detailed 'Lines' on CleanTreat and BMK08 (8 March 2021):

### **Lines**

- Recognise the breakthrough benefits that Cleantreat could bring to treating sea lice.
- Understand that there had been dialogue between MS, Benchmark and SEPA in the past to help it navigate the regulatory approach here, and advice had been given. Benchmark agreed to provide information which will allow a full application to be submitted to Marine Scotland.
- However to the best of our knowledge (noting difficulties with SEPA) we are unaware that an application has actually come forward.
- We can't circumnavigate SEPA's consideration as they have to follow legal process, but there is a newly invigorated dedication within SG and across regulators to support innovation in the aquaculture sector - am confident this will be given welcomed consideration when an application is received.
- We're interested in the results of the Norwegian trials and we'll endeavour to liaise with the authorities about their experience. We support a good evidence base in decision making.
- [Redacted]

A Scottish Government official (name redacted) wrote to the Director of Marine Scotland (10 March 2021):

We're aware that the intention is for cleantreat to come forward the second half of the year assuming regulatory approval, but as far as we have been able to ascertain (with SEPA comms down) is that an application has not yet been submitted. [Redacted] (enfor) has advised that SEPA is aware and that there is an expectation that benchmark will bring it onto an existing site for approval, [Redacted]

And in another email to the Director of Marine Scotland ([Annabel Turpie](#)) on 10 March 2021, a Scottish Government official wrote:

I read an interesting article in the Fish Farmer March edition about Benchmark's "Clean Treat" noting that the company is looking to launch the product in Q2 of this year as field trials in Norway proved successful.

I understand that Benchmark was one of the topics that was up for discussion with [Redacted] at your meeting yesterday, and we would be interested to learn whether the outcome of these discussions led to any insight on whether the sector would be looking to adopt the product in Scotland. We might need to prepare SEPA for this.

The Director of Marine Scotland emailed back on 10 March 2021:

Thx – this is interesting. We didn't talk about CleanTreat yesterday – I'll do a quick note later today while still fresh in my mind.

But, this does remind me of the actions from the SAIC board around support to navigate CleanTreat through the system as well as some other actions. So, it does come back to the same point.

A redacted email dated 16 March 2021 to Donald Carmichael ([understood to be working in the Scottish Government's Aquaculture Development Unit](#)) referred to "the expectation that an application will soon be made by Benchmark for the use of CleanTreat (water treatment technology) and possibly a new sea lice treatment for use alongside it" and that "SAIC appears to have a role in facilitating its progression through regulators" (SAIC is described as "acting as applicant/agent for Benchmark" and could "conduct the trials which SEPA may want undertaken").

**4.7.1** The Benchmark proposal relates to the expectation that an application will soon be made by Benchmark for the use of CleanTreat (water treatment technology) and possibly a new sea lice treatment for use alongside it. SAIC appears to have a role in facilitating its progression through regulators, although I'm not clear what this role could be. It's on my list to ask SAIC tomorrow. (Funding - possibly, depending on SAICs role – doubt they would qualify if they were acting as applicant/agent for benchmark but probably if they were to conduct the trials which SEPA may want undertaken)

[Redacted]

**Appendix: FOI disclosure by the Scottish Government on 7 May 2021**

From: <casehandling.service@gov.scot>

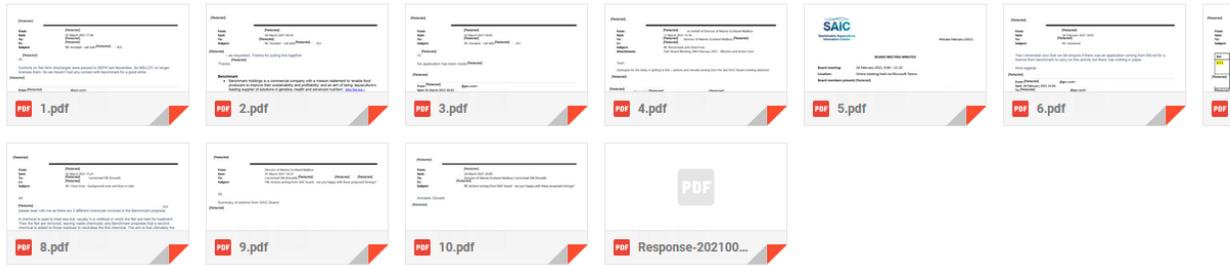
Date: Fri, May 7, 2021 at 1:32 PM

Subject: Your recent correspondence with Scottish Government and partner agencies - 202100195003

To: [salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com](mailto:salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com)

Please find attached a response to your correspondence.

11 Attachments



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

T : We are working from home due to Covid-19 so please contact us by email  
E : [ms.bod@gov.scot](mailto:ms.bod@gov.scot)

Don Staniford  
Scottish Salmon Watch  
[salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com](mailto:salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com)

Your ref: 202100195003

Our ref: Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark since 26 October 2020  
7 May 2021

Dear Don Staniford,

**REQUEST UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS  
2004 (EIRs)**

Thank you for your request made by email dated 17 April 2021.

You asked:

"Please provide any information on Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat and Benchmark since 26 October 2020 (i.e. since a FOI filed on that date: <https://donstaniford.typepad.com/files/foi-imidacloprid-26-oct-2020.pdf>).

Please include emails, reports, risk assessments, modelling results, surveys, photos, letters, Excel data and any other information in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

Please detail any meetings and online phone calls (e.g. Zoom) with Benchmark, SSPO, salmon farming companies, Scottish Government officials, SEPA, SNH or any other parties in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

Please consider this a formal FOI request under the relevant FOI and Environmental Information

Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road,  
Aberdeen AB11 9DB  
[www.gov.scot/marinescotland](http://www.gov.scot/marinescotland)



regulations.

Please provide the information electronically.”

#### Response to your request

As the information you have requested is ‘environmental information’ for the purposes of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), we are required to deal with your request under those Regulations. We are applying the exemption at section 39 (2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), so that we do not also have to deal with your request under FOISA.

This exemption is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption, because there is no public interest in dealing with the same request under two different regimes. This is essentially a technical point and has no material effect on the outcome of your request.

1. While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance the Scottish Government does not hold any information on: reports, risk assessments, modelling results, surveys, photos, letters, Excel data in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark. Therefore we are refusing part of your request under the exception at regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs. The reason why that exception applies is explained in the Annex to this letter.

2. I enclose a copy of some of the information you requested. While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance we are unable to provide some of the information you have requested because exceptions under regulation 10(4)(e) (internal communications), regulation 10(5) (e) (confidentiality of commercial or industrial information) and regulation 11(2) (personal information of a third party) of the EIRs applies to that information. The reasons why these exceptions apply are explained in the Annex to this letter.

## ANNEX

### REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

#### The Scottish Government does not have the information

Under the terms of the exception at regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs (information not held), the Scottish Government is not required to provide information which it does not have. The Scottish Government does not have the information you have requested because we do not hold any information on the following points: reports, risk assessments, modelling results, surveys, photos, letters, Excel data in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. While we recognise that there may be some public interest in information we hold relating to the points listed above, clearly we cannot provide information which we do not hold.

#### Exceptions apply

#### **An exception under regulation 10(4)(e) (internal communications) of the EIRs applies to some of the information you have requested**

An exception under regulation 10(4)(e) of the EIRs (internal communications) applies to some of the information you have requested because it is internal communication about lines to take.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in allowing a private space within which officials can provide free and frank advice and views to Ministers in briefing for lines to take.

It is clearly in the public interest that Ministers can properly answer Parliamentary questions, provide sound information to Parliament (to which they are accountable), and robustly defend the Government's policies and decisions. They need full and candid advice from officials to enable them to do so. Premature disclosure of this type of information could lead to a reduction in the comprehensiveness and frankness of such advice and views in the future, which would not be in the public interest.

#### **An exception under regulation 10(4)(e) (internal communications) of the EIRs applies to some of the information you have requested**

An exception under regulation 10(4)(e) of the EIRs (internal communications) applies to some of the information you have requested because it is internal legal advice and disclosure would breach legal professional privilege.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, this is outweighed by the strong public interest in maintaining the right to confidentiality of communications between legal advisers and clients, to ensure that Ministers and officials are able to receive legal advice in confidence, like any other public or private organisation.

**An exception under regulation 10(5)(e) (substantial prejudice to confidentiality of commercial or industrial information) of the EIRs applies to some of the information you have requested**

An exception under regulation 10(5)(e) of the EIRs (substantial prejudice to confidentiality of commercial information) applies to some of the information you have requested. This exception applies because disclosure of this particular information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the confidentiality of commercial information provided by Benchmark Holdings plc and thus cause substantial harm to their commercial interests.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosing information as part of open and transparent government, and to help account for the expenditure of public money. However, there is a greater public interest in protecting the commercial interests of companies when substantial harm can be made to their commercial interests.

**An exception under regulation 11(2) (personal information of a third party) of the EIRs applies to some of the information you have requested.**

Regulation 11(2) – To the extent that environmental information requested includes personal data of which the applicant is not the data subject and in relation to which either the first or second condition set out in paragraphs (3) and (4) is satisfied, a Scottish public authority shall not make the personal data available.

An exception under regulation 11(2) of the EIRs (personal information of a third party) applies to some of the information requested because it is personal data of a third party and disclosing it would contravene the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation and in section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

This exception is not subject to the 'public interest test', so we are not required to consider if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception.

The attachments included (in chronological order – oldest first):

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**From:** [Redacted] <[\[Redacted\]@scottishseafarms.com](mailto:[Redacted]@scottishseafarms.com)>  
**Sent:** 23 February 2021 10:51  
**To:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <[Directormarinescotland@gov.scot](mailto:Directormarinescotland@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** Few things  
[Redacted]

Hi

Just following up on our last conversation re [Redacted] and benchmark with Norway, let me know what dates and time suit you to go through this, more than happy to take a meeting in our Stirling office or teams with you, whatever you prefer, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]

**Scottish Sea Farms Limited**

Laurel House, Laurelhill Business Park, Stirling, Scotland, UK, FK7 9JQ

Tel [Redacted] | Mob [Redacted]

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Sustainable Aquaculture  
Innovation Centre

Minutes February (2021)

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Board meeting:** 24 February 2021, 9:00 – 12.15  
**Location:** Online meeting held via Microsoft Teams  
**Board members present:** [Redacted]

**Observers present:** [Redacted], Annabel Turpie (ATu; from item 3.3)

**SAIC team:** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

4.7 [Redacted] moved onto the three amber-green applications: projects 5, [Redacted]

4.7.1 On project 5 (*Use of a water treatment technology (CleanTreat) to support integrated pest management and unlock additional site capacity*), queries about SEPA involvement and the choice of medicine for trials had been resolved. The board agreed it had strong commercial relevance and potential to support regulatory innovation, and was therefore fundable. ATu said she was keen for Marine Scotland / Marine Scotland Science to be involved in future discussions with SEPA on this project. **Action: Follow up with Marine Scotland**

[Redacted]

4.9 The board agreed to fund projects [Redacted] 5 and [Redacted]

[Redacted]

SAIC (Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre),  
Scion House, University of Stirling Innovation Park,  
Stirling FK9 4NF

☎ 01786 278318  
✉ info@sustainableaquaculture.com  
🌐 sustainableaquaculture.com

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 26 February 2021 13:42  
**To:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** cleantreat

[Redacted] – do you recall anything recently about advancing ‘clean treat’. I have emails june last year but I thought there was something more recent than that ?

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 26 February 2021 14:03  
**To:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: cleantreat

Thanks [Redacted] that was my recollection but I've just spoken to [Redacted] and the update is ‘there is no update’.

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 26 February 2021 14:05  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: cleantreat

Yes I remember now that we did enquire if there was an application coming from MS-lot for a licence from benchmark to carry on this activity but there was nothing in paper.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@sustainableaquaculture.com>  
**Sent:** 26 February 2021 16:57  
**To:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <Directormarinescotland@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Actions arising from SAIC board - are you happy with these proposed timings?

[Redacted]

Dear

[Redacted]

DRAFT ACTION GRID

Matters arising from board meeting on 24 February 2021:

Ref.	Action	Who	By when	Done
[Redacted]				

4.7.1	Follow up with Marine Scotland about its involvement in future discussions with SEPA on project 5 (Benchmark)	■	End-March	
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[Redacted]

4.9 (2)	Communicate funding decisions to partners in projects ■ 5, ■ and initiate next steps	■	End-March	
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[Redacted]

**From:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox  
**Sent:** 01 March 2021 14:14  
**To:** Carmichael DB (Donald); [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: Actions arising from SAIC board - are you happy with these proposed timings?

All,

Summary of actions from SAIC Board.

[Redacted]

4.7.1 – I've said we'll help with engagement with SEPA and MSS on the cleantreat technology. From memory, this is the one that was rejected before, is that right?

[Redacted]

Thx  
 [Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 01 March 2021 16:46  
**To:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

[Redacted]

Can you start of this briefing request please.

You will see the agenda is to focus on

- [Redacted]
- Benchmark and Norway,
- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

We will also need an update on Benchmark- I think MS Lott and [Redacted] might be able to assist- although from memory the ball was in Benchmark's court to bring forward an application. It was suggested a while ago that Benchmark should trial system on water treatment without the introduction of a new chemical. Could also be that there are early results from Norway. [Redacted] got this in hand).

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 01 March 2021 16:59  
**To:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
[Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

Hi all,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] – any update on Benchmark?

With thanks  
[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 01 March 2021 17:45  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

[Redacted]  
Hi

Controls on fish farm discharges were passed to SEPA last November. So MS-LOT no longer licenses them. So we haven't had any contact with benchmark for a good while.

[Redacted]

---

**From:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 01 March 2021 18:02  
**To:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

[Redacted]

Unless you are able to contact SEPA for us by the end of the week (noting their communication difficulties), I'm happy just to give Annabel a line that as per the last time we asked the question no application has been made.

[Redacted]

---

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 02 March 2021 09:02  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

[Redacted]  
Hi

No application has been made [Redacted]

[Redacted]

---

**From:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 02 March 2021 14:38  
**To:** Carmichael DB (Donald) <Donald.Carmichael@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>; [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Clean treat - background note and lines to take

Donald

[Redacted]

However since the discharges from wellboats are now regulated by SEPA, and MS LOT come out of the equation as the pollutions regulator, I suppose the question of trialling it now rests exclusively with SEPA.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] So in answer to your question- "we" is now SEPA and "officials" was Alastair Mitchell, [Redacted]  
[Redacted] of SEPA and [Redacted] of MS-Lot.

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 02 March 2021 15:21  
**To:** [Redacted] Carmichael DB (Donald)  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Clean treat - background note and lines to take

All

[Redacted], but please bear with me as there are 2 different chemicals involved in the Benchmark proposal.

A chemical is used to treat sea lice, usually in a wellboat in which the fish are held for treatment. Then the fish are removed, leaving waste chemicals; and Benchmark proposes that a second chemical is added to those residues to neutralise the first chemical. The aim is that ultimately the neutralised residues can be discharged to the water environment with minimal impact. (This would be a breakthrough for both the industry and SEPA as it would remove many of the environmental concerns about such chemicals).

This final discharge of the residues must meet an appropriate Environmental Quality Standard (EQS) which must be derived in accordance with EU procedures (which is now enshrined in Scots law), subject to an appropriate mixing zone (ie not simply at the point of the discharge from the hose/pipe). It is a matter for the company to demonstrate to SEPA that the system is capable of consistently achieving that EQS. (Just to be clear, even in a trial the discharge must aim to meet the EQS).

[Redacted]

Ultimately it is for the company to bring forward a proposal that it considers meets all the necessary tests. I understand that no application to SEPA has been made, but that the company [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 08 March 2021 00:18  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Annabel - call with [Redacted] - 9/3

[Redacted]  
– as requested. Thanks for pulling this together  
[Redacted]  
Thanks,

#### **Benchmark**

- Benchmark Holdings is a commercial company with a mission statement to 'enable food producers to improve their sustainability and profitability' and an aim of being 'aquaculture's leading supplier of solutions in genetics, health and advanced nutrition'. [Who We Are – Benchmark Holdings plc \(LON:BMK\) \(benchmarkplc.com\)](#)
- There are two possible issues which could be raised: Regulatory support for Cleantreat and [Redacted]

#### **Cleantreat and BMK08 - sea lice treatment technology**

- Cleantreat is Benchmark's new water purification system which removes medicines from fish treatment water prior to discharge to the sea. Benchmark proposes to use the purification system alongside a new sea lice treatment (BMK08) it is developing. If successful it could be a breakthrough for both the industry since it could effectively reduce chemical discharge and environmental impact.
- The system, which has undergone initial development work in Scotland, has been undergoing field trials in Norway.
- There is only a limited variety of medicines available to treat sea lice - some which are developed are limited in their effectiveness by the dosage permitted due to environmental concerns. CleanTreat together with 'BMK08' is promoted as a new approach without environmental concerns arising from discharge.
- Previous dialogue between SEPA, MS and Benchmark sought to address regulatory issues - final discharge must meet an appropriate Environmental Quality Standard in accordance with EU procedures (which are now enshrined in domestic law) even in a trial. [Redacted]
- Benchmark's website says it plans for the system to launch in the second half of 2021, subject to regulatory approval. To the best of our knowledge no application to SEPA has been made, [Redacted]

#### **Lines**

- Recognise the breakthrough benefits that Cleantreat could bring to treating sea lice.

- Understand that there had been dialogue between MS, Benchmark and SEPA in the past to help it navigate the regulatory approach here, and advice had been given. Benchmark agreed to provide information which will allow a full application to be submitted to Marine Scotland.
- However to the best of our knowledge (noting difficulties with SEPA) we are unaware that an application has actually come forward.
- We can't circumnavigate SEPA's consideration as they have to follow legal process, but there is a newly invigorated dedication within SG and across regulators to support innovation in the aquaculture sector - am confident this will be given welcomed consideration when an application is received.
- We're interested in the results of the Norwegian trials and we'll endeavour to liaise with the authorities about their experience. We support a good evidence base in decision making.
- [Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 10 March 2021 09:23  
**To:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <Directormarinescotland@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Benchmark and CleanTreat

Annabel

I read an interesting article in the Fish Farmer March edition about Benchmark's "Clean Treat" noting that the company is looking to launch the product in Q2 of this year as field trials in Norway proved successful.

I understand that Benchmark was one of the topics that was up for discussion with [Redacted] at your meeting yesterday, and we would be interested to learn whether the outcome of these discussions led to any insight on whether the sector would be looking to adopt the product in Scotland. We might need to prepare SEPA for this.

#### MARCH ISSUE

[https://issuu.com/fishfarmermagazine/docs/fish\\_farmer\\_march\\_2021](https://issuu.com/fishfarmermagazine/docs/fish_farmer_march_2021)

[Redacted]

**From:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <Directormarinescotland@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 10 March 2021 09:32  
**To:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@gov.scot>

Thx – this is interesting. We didn't talk about CleanTreat yesterday – I'll do a quick note later today while still fresh in my mind.

But, this does remind me of the actions from the SAIC board around support to navigate CleanTreat through the system as well as some other actions. So, it does come back to the same point.

[Redacted] – can you forward the email from [Redacted] re SAIC board actions if not already sent?

Kind regards  
Annabel

**From:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 10 March 2021 21:08  
**To:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <Directormarinescotland@gov.scot>; [Redacted]  
[Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] @gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Benchmark and CleanTreat

[Redacted]  
Annabel

We're aware that the intention is for cleantreat to come forward the second half of the year assuming regulatory approval, but as far as we have been able to ascertain (with SEPA comms down) is that an application has not yet been submitted. [Redacted] (enfor) has advised that SEPA is aware and that there is an expectation that benchmark will bring it onto an existing site for approval, [Redacted]

We're meeting with SAIC next week and we can discuss the action coming out of the board if that's appropriate.

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 16 March 2021 20:05  
**To:** Carmichael DB (Donald)  
**Subject:** [Redacted]

Ref.	Action	Who	By when	Done
4.7.1	Follow up with Marine Scotland about its involvement in future discussions with SEPA on project 5 (Benchmark)	[Redacted]	End-March	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	

[Redacted]

4.7.1 The Benchmark proposal relates to the expectation that an application will soon be made by Benchmark for the use of CleanTreat (water treatment technology) and possibly a new sea lice treatment for use alongside it. SAIC appears to have a role in facilitating its progression through regulators, although I'm not clear what this role could be. It's on my list to ask SAIC tomorrow. (Funding - possibly, depending on SAICs role – doubt they would qualify if they were acting as applicant/agent for benchmark but probably if they were to conduct the trials which SEPA may want undertaken)

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 March 2021 20:09  
**To:** Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox; Carmichael DB (Donald)  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Actions arising from SAIC board - are you happy with these proposed timings?

Annabel, Donald,

[Redacted]

**Specific projects as per the board minutes grid (below).**

**4.7.1.** I don't think this requires funding [for info - discussed the benchmark project with SAIC last week in terms of an update and we can follow up again with regards to what role they think we have with SEPA's consideration of it]

[Redacted]

## FOI reply from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (11 May 2021):

From: **Andrew Saunders** <a.saunders@vmd.gov.uk>  
Date: Tue, May 11, 2021 at 4:10 PM  
Subject: Official Sensitive: Response to Freedom of Information request ATI0704  
To: Don Staniford <salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com>

Dear Don

Thank you for your email dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

### Your Request

You asked for:

Please provide any information on Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat and Benchmark since 26 October 2020 (i.e. since a FOI filed on that date:

<https://donstaniford.typepad.com/files/foi-imidacloprid-26-oct-2020.pdf>).

Please include emails, reports, risk assessments, modelling results, surveys, photos, letters, Excel data and any other information in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

Please detail any meetings and online phone calls (e.g. Zoom) with Benchmark, SSPO, salmon farming companies, Scottish Government officials, SEPA, SNH or any other parties in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

Please include any discussions or information relating to the European Medicines Agency and their opinion in September 2020 on an MRL: [https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/mrl-summary/imidacloprid-fin-fish-summary-opinion-cvmp-establishment-maximum-residue-limits\\_en.pdf](https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/mrl-summary/imidacloprid-fin-fish-summary-opinion-cvmp-establishment-maximum-residue-limits_en.pdf) As reported via: <https://www.fishfarmingexpert.com/article/medicines-experts-give-thumbs-up-to-benchmark-lice-treatment/>

Please include any discussions and information relating EU approval and an MRL.

Fish Farming Expert reported yesterday: "Aquaculture health, genetics and nutrition company Benchmark Holdings today said that the MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) for its novel sea lice treatment BMK08 has been ratified under European Union law. The ratification follows an opinion adopted by the European Medicine Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use in September last year recommending the inclusion of BMK08's active pharmaceutical ingredient in fin fish as an allowed substance regarding maximum residue limits in foodstuffs of animal origin": <https://www.fishfarmingexpert.com/article/sea-lice-medicine-approval-ratified-in-eu-law/>

Scottish Salmon Watch was alarmed to read in the trade press yesterday that Benchmark have appointed an environmental modeller (Meghan Rochford) - formerly employed by Grieg Seafood, The Scottish Salmon Company and Marine Harvest/Mowi - to gear up for the use of Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan) in salmon farming in Scotland. Details via: [Warning: Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid Use in Salmon Farming "Clears Another Hurdle" With European MRL](#)

## Our Reply

As a general point, you should note that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives you an entitlement to information rather than documents and it is in this context that we have answered your request.

‘Please provide any information on Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat and Benchmark since 26 October 2020 (i.e. since a FOI filed on that date:

<https://donstaniford.typepad.com/files/foi-imidacloprid-26-oct-2020.pdf>).

Please include emails, reports, risk assessments, modelling results, surveys, photos, letters, Excel data and any other information in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark.

Please detail any meetings and online phone calls (e.g. Zoom) with Benchmark, SSPO, salmon farming companies, Scottish Government officials, SEPA, SNH or any other parties in relation to Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan), CleanTreat & Benchmark’.

**Other than the pending ratification of the MRL for imidacloprid (see below), the VMD is not aware of any new developments concerning imidacloprid (Ectosan/BMK08), CleanTreat and Benchmark, since 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It is noted that similar questions, as the one proposed by yourself, have been posed to the VMD. These three questions occurred between October 2020 and March 2021, and all concerned: ‘Is the VMD aware of any applications to market neonicotinoid containing medicines in aquaculture?’ VMD’s response was in line with the following text:**

**‘All veterinary medicines used in aquaculture require a Marketing Authorisation (approval) and a prescription. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD; the body that oversees medicines approval in the UK) has not received any applications to market imidacloprid/neonicotinoid containing medicines in aquaculture.**

**Any medicine submitted to the VMD, to be considered for approval to be marketed, is evaluated for potential effects on the environment and human health following its proposed use, as well as its benefits as a medicine. The conclusions of the VMD’s human and environmental impact assessments are always an important factor in deciding whether to authorise a product, or not. Further, the VMD works closely with the Environment Agency (EA) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) who are responsible for the regulation of discharges of medicines used in fish farms into the water environment in UK waters.’**

Please include any discussions or information relating to the European Medicines Agency and their opinion in September 2020 on an MRL: [https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/mrl-summary/imidacloprid-fin-fish-summary-opinion-cvmp-establishment-maximum-residue-limits\\_en.pdf](https://www.ema.europa.eu/documents/mrl-summary/imidacloprid-fin-fish-summary-opinion-cvmp-establishment-maximum-residue-limits_en.pdf) As reported via: <https://www.fishfarmingexpert.com/article/medicines-experts-give-thumbs-up-to-benchmark-lice-treatment/>

Please include any discussions and information relating EU approval and an MRL.

Fish Farming Expert reported yesterday: "Aquaculture health, genetics and nutrition company Benchmark Holdings today said that the MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) for its novel sea lice treatment BMK08 has been ratified under European Union law. The ratification follows an

opinion adopted by the European Medicine Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use in September last year recommending the inclusion of BMK08's active pharmaceutical ingredient in fin fish as an allowed substance regarding maximum residue limits in foodstuffs of animal origin": <https://www.fishfarmingexpert.com/article/sea-lice-medicine-approval-ratified-in-eu-law/>

Scottish Salmon Watch was alarmed to read in the trade press yesterday that Benchmark have appointed an environmental modeller (Meghan Rochford) - formerly employed by Grieg Seafood, The Scottish Salmon Company and Marine Harvest/Mowi - to gear up for the use of Imidacloprid (BMK08/Ectosan) in salmon farming in Scotland. Details via: Warning: Neonicotinoid Imidacloprid Use in Salmon Farming "Clears Another Hurdle" With European MRL.

**In October 2020, the VMD received notification from the CVMP, that there is an MRL, for imidacloprid, pending ratification by the EU Commission. As noted by yourself, the summary opinion can be located via: [Imidacloprid 004481-FULL-0002 - Summary of opinion \(europa.eu\)](#)**

## **Information releasable to the public**

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government's Transparency Agenda, we may place this request on [GOV.UK](#), in due course. We will not place information identifying you on the [GOV.UK](#) website.

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[ati@vmd.gov.uk](mailto:ati@vmd.gov.uk). If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Many thanks

Andrew Saunders  
Freedom of Information Officer