



BTA UPDATE No 1

19th March 2020

BTA DISCUSSIONS WITH GOVERNMENT – THE KEY POINTS

- **Markets - both Domestic and Overseas**
 - USA down - 90% Air freight issues and USA shutting down.
 - UK food service sector down by 3rd and reducing.
 - Retailers - Large Trout reduced and very variable.
 - Retailers - Portion Trout sales have collapsed. Fish counters closed. This is a critical business situation and could well threaten the future of some of the portion trout producers.
 - UK retailers need to give more support to UK produced Trout.
 - A request to speed up the process of opening up exporting trout to China. DEFRA has been dealing with and this there is another meeting next week where this will be discussed.
 - Restocking - a request **NOT** to close fisheries, lakes and reservoirs as March, April, May and June are critical months. If fisheries etc stay open this will allow stock levels on the farms to reduce. The point was made that outside is low risk and healthy.

- **Logistics**
 - Air Freight to the USA - alternative and financially competitive routes need to be found, Government support needed.
 - If a lock down situation happens, we still need to carry out live trout movements between farms and restocking and staff movements between sites. Key workers should have free testing.
 - Supplies of vaccines and medicines and fish food from Europe, importation of material for fish boxes and live egg movements.



- **Staff Resourcing Plans**
 - Staff are working in different shifts to reduce contact
 - If a reduction of staff availability, farms will have to reduce work load, this will affect feeding, treatments, fish health and welfare issues,
 - Staff for fish processing etc.

- **On Farm Consequentials**
 - LOW SALES = Every Slow fish flow, fish health concerns and slow cash flow.
 - Stock control and increased biomass and food used possible consent breeches on marine and fresh water farms in Scotland.
 - Following delayed Scotland,
 - Movement of juvenile onto pen sites Scotland
 - Culling juvenile fish if no movement is possible.
 - Issues with health and welfare on all farms if stock is held back.

- **Timing - issues over clarity.**
 - This is a key food producing sector, an indication of when and if lock down might happen and any other key decisions that might be made by Government. This will enable farmers to try and plan ahead with stock for the recovery.

- **Financial Support**
 - Clarification needed of Government funding and how this might be implemented, (perhaps a hardship fund),
 - The trout sector is made up of small companies which are therefore very vulnerable to a negative cashflow.