

BTA SCOTTISH UPDATE

17 April 2020

Over the past few weeks, and at a time when the serious consequences of the coronavirus pandemic for trout businesses have become increasingly obvious, BTA has been additionally active with Scottish Government and the Scottish regulators to deal with key aspects of regulation at this difficult time; and to highlight the need for financial and other support for businesses. The focus of this activity has been to work, mainly through frequent teleconferencing, with Scottish Government, Marine Scotland's Aquaculture Policy & Marine Licensing teams, Fish Health Inspectorate and SEPA to ensure that:

- Scottish Ministers and policy officials fully understand the full impact that Covid-19 is having on the market and on businesses that are being adversely affected by reduced demand, staff absences and weakened cash flow. We have strongly emphasised the impact of reduction in demand, problems with exports to various overseas markets, and the plight of those producing trout for the table and for restocking. Following instructions from Fergus Ewing, Scottish Government has responded with a proposal for a 'Hardship Fund'. We are now discussing details of this with Marine Scotland policy officials and will be pressing to secure the maximum support possible for trout farmers within the fund that Fergus Ewing has made available.
- **The Hardship Fund announced this week** <https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-aquaculture/> would be in addition to the other support measures being offered by UK Government
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>
- Statutory regulation is applied in a sensible way that recognises that, in these exceptional circumstances, fish health and welfare need to be maintained at a time when biomass may increase, potentially beyond current site limits. SEPA have listened to the case we and our salmon colleagues have put to them. They have adopted a helpful stance and will permit temporary relaxation of certain environmental requirements, subject to a number of conditions, including a simplified risk assessment process. The documents setting out the agreed position can be seen at <https://coronavirus.sepa.org.uk/regulatory-position/finfish-aquaculture-regulatory-positions/>

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- Where variations to CAR licence conditions relating to medicine use may be required, SEPA will also entertain approaches from businesses. On the marine side, where relaxation of medicine consent conditions for sea lice treatments is required, we and colleagues from the salmon sector have negotiated a position on Salmosan and Slice treatment which can be viewed via the link above.
- Where water abstraction may become an issue at a time of increased biomass, that SEPA are willing to allow additional water to be drawn from watercourses. SEPA is willing to entertain approaches from individual businesses.
- On wellboat licensing (although this may only be appropriate in a small number of cases) MSLoT are willing to make a blanket variation to all current Wellboat Licences for three months to facilitate the release of medicine residues, making lice treatments more efficient. The variation to Wellboat Licences will be issued on 8th April.
- BTA and SSPO will be updated by SEPA and MS on correspondence and any updates to the agreed positions.