



CERMAQ HALTS DODGY EXPERIMENT

Cermaq halted sea trials on their experimental Semi-Closed Containment system (SCCS) this fall. After operating the facility in Ahousaht Territory near Tofino for less than a year, Cermaq threw in the towel, citing “a technical fault and related fish welfare”.

Cermaq is clear that their experimental system is ‘semi-closed’ rather than closed containment. This is because the system is anything but closed. The SCCS pulls the equivalent volume of seven Olympic-sized swimming pools into and out of the system—every hour. With no filtration, the system pumps out just as much viral load, salmon sewage, and decomposing fish as a typical open-net pen.

WERE JELLYFISH TO BLAME?

Clayoquot Action has been observing Cermaq’s SCCS trial since it began in October 2020. We’ve been noticing die-offs at the facility since early April. Slicks of fat on the water surrounding the SCCS have been observed during die-offs—similar to those seen during die-offs at open-net pen facilities.

It’s not clear what was going wrong, but during one die-off the bay surrounding the system was absolutely packed with jellyfish. Is it possible jellyfish were pulled in and clogged the system? That would definitely affect fish health, as fish need freshly oxygenated water to breathe...

There may have been other causes—Hazardous Algal Blooms (HABS) come to mind. HABS are occurring more frequently around the world due to warming ocean temperatures. And then there’s the nutrient loading from salmon farms. Each salmon farm produces the equivalent sewage of a city of 150,000 people. And the semi-closed system is no exception—it too dumps raw sewage into the pristine waters of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region.

THE TECHNOLOGY IS NOT READY

In order to protect wild salmon, the federal government announced in 2019 that they would transition salmon farms to closed containment by 2025. After making this promise, they

commissioned a study of closed containment technologies, which concluded in early 2020 that “floating closed containment requires 2–5 years of further review”. This has now been corroborated by Cermaq, who recently stated: “Innovation takes time and successful innovation takes even longer”.

But wild salmon are on the brink of extinction—they don’t have time to wait.

Despite the federal government’s commitment to transition to closed containment by 2025, Cermaq seems unwilling to play ball. No doubt they hope to keep flushing salmon sewage into the world’s oceans for free, as their semi-closed system allows them to do.

GET ON THE RIGHT PATH!

According to Cermaq, “Moving salmon away from conventional cages into closed containment is not a simple pathway and involves trials, technology improvement and operational maturation, and sometimes errors happen on the way to success.” But one thing is certain: Cermaq will never get to closed containment on land while continuing on a path which leads to semi-closed containment in the ocean. The Norwegian salmon farming industry needs to move with the times, and stop spending Canadian taxpayers’ dollars (three-quarters of a million dollars this time) trying to remain in the ocean.



DON'T RENEW IN '22!

All federal salmon farm licenses in British Columbia will expire in 2022. The government could decide that in order to protect wild salmon, these licenses will not be renewed.

Polling indicates that British Columbians are well aware of what is happening to wild salmon, and why. Indeed, 75% of BC residents support the government mandate to transition away from open-net pen salmon aquaculture.

That transition is already well underway in the Broughton Archipelago, as a result of 2018 talks between the provincial government and First Nations. Eleven operations will be emptied by spring 2022, with the final seven farms subject to further review by First Nations.

In the Discovery Islands, 19 fish farm licenses which expired in December 2020 were not renewed.

Meanwhile in Clayoquot Sound, Cermaq Canada (a Norwegian-owned company belonging to Mitsubishi) is forging ahead as if there is no end in sight for open-net pen salmon farming. They are right now applying to DFO to expand their Clayoquot operations, and restocking farms, knowing full well that their licenses will expire before the fish can grow to maturity.

The evidence is mounting that open-net pen salmon farms pollute BC waters with pathogens and pests. Fortunately, salmon farming is completely within our ability to regulate. And once the farms come out, wild salmon begin to flourish again. Juvenile salmon in the Broughton and Discovery Islands are now free of sea lice!

Please add your voice to the growing chorus of First Nations, conservationists and fishers who are calling for salmon farms to come out of BC waters immediately, with a transition plan for workers so they are not the ones who pay the price for protecting the environment.



Get Wild! welcomes Naas Foods



Help protect the rainforest by not eating farmed salmon!

Get Wild! is the first-of-its-kind wild salmon recommendation program, started right here in Tofino by Clayoquot Action. Twenty-two vendors have pledged that if they serve salmon, it will be wild—not farmed. The mission of Get Wild! is not to encourage mindless consumption of precious wild salmon, but to open up a dialogue around open-net pen salmon farming.

This year we are pleased to welcome Tofino’s newest food truck, Al’oha Tofino, as well as Naas Foods.

Naas is Indigenous-led, and provides local residents and Tofino visitors with high quality salmon, halibut, crab, and kelp products. They have already begun supplying several Get Wild! vendors—closing the loop and helping local restaurants serve Indigenous-harvested wild seafood.

To learn more visit getwildsalmon.ca.



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#getwildtofino