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09/01/2011

Cohen Inquiry Aquaculture Hearings August 31



Today on the stand we had three vets in addition to Trevor Swedfager who was back from yesterday.

Dr. Gary Marty (Fish Pathologist, Animal Health Centre, Ministry of Agriculture) does all the actual farm salmon examinations for the BC government audits

Dr. Peter McKenzie (Veterinarian and Fish Health Manager, Mainstream Canada)

Dr. Mark Sheppard (Lead Veterinarian, Aquaculture Environmental Operations, DFO)

Trevor Swedfager (formerly Director General, Aquaculture Management Directorate, DFO)

Today we hit a low. Honour and truth abandoned. It is a struggle to remain hopeful.

Dr. Gary Marty is the vet who looks at the dead fish collected in each audit. He hands his report to Dr. Mark Sheppard who makes the farm diagnosis.

From 2006 - 2010 (spring) Dr. Marty recorded 587 occurrences of a specific kidney lesion he calls "ISH." In his database he writes "In Chinook salmon, this lesion is often associated with the clinical diagnosis of Marine Anemia." This sounds straight forward. Marine Anemia has been called many things through this Inquiry - a virus, a syndrome, a leading candidate cause of the death of millions of Fraser sockeye.

McDade - Dr. Marty you are the sole vet doing fish pathology?

Marty – yes, since Aug 2004

McDade - Since that time you have not given any diagnosis of Marine Anemia because you don't believe in it? [*we saw this in an email from Dr. Miller last week*]

Marty – Marine Anemia is a clinical diagnosis, but I do observational diagnosis so I might diagnose the lesions and comment that this is a common finding with Marine Anemia in Chinook salmon, but then Dr. MacKenzie [Mainstream vet] or Dr. Sheppard can say what they thought is in the fish and give the clinical diagnosis.

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"The expansion of aquaculture in British Columbia is unacceptable period."

OK this is confusing. The vet who looks at the fish says it looks like marine anemia, but his report goes to a fish farm vet or government vet and they decide if it is marine anemia, even though they are not looking at the fish?

It gets worse:

McDade - you had major outbreak of Marine Anemia in the 1990s?

Sheppard – I would not agree with that statement

McDade - what do you think those fish died of?

Sheppard - It was a clinical syndrome that is quite natural in the Pacific salmon of BC

McDade - Have you read Dr. Kent's papers?

Sheppard - Yes

McDade - Do you disagree with them?

Sheppard - Yes

McDade - Have you seen any peer-reviewed literature that contradicts him?

Sheppard - Yes, Dr Stephens Thesis

Well, lets look at what Dr. Stephen's Thesis actually says:

"In the fall of 1988 an apparently new disease began to contribute to these losses."

"... sites identified losses from marine anemia as the primary reason for the financial failure of the farms."

"marine anemia became the subject of mass media attention. Concerns over public health and food safety, coupled with a perceived threat to wild salmon stocks emphasized the need to understand the nature of marine anemia"

"Evidence supporting the hypothesis that marine anemia is a spreading, infectious neoplastic [tumor-causing] disease could have profound regulatory effects on the salmon farming industry"

"Over the course of the next three years four of the five major salmon farming regions in B.C. had been classified as positive [for marine anemia]"

"The lack of regulations that provide for the financial compensation of farmers whose fish have been destroyed in disease control programs suggest that attempts to depopulate salmon farms to control marine anemia would result in strong opposition from the aquaculture industry, and a corresponding under-reporting of the disease."

"...attempts should be made to ...develop... intervention strategies ... in preparation for the possibility of marine anemia becoming a problem for other farmed and wild species."

Today, we also saw a "confidential briefing" by Sheppard to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands in 2007 saying "there is no importation of live ...eggs to BC." However, by that time 26,082,000 Atlantic salmon eggs had been imported to BC. In this document Sheppard also said

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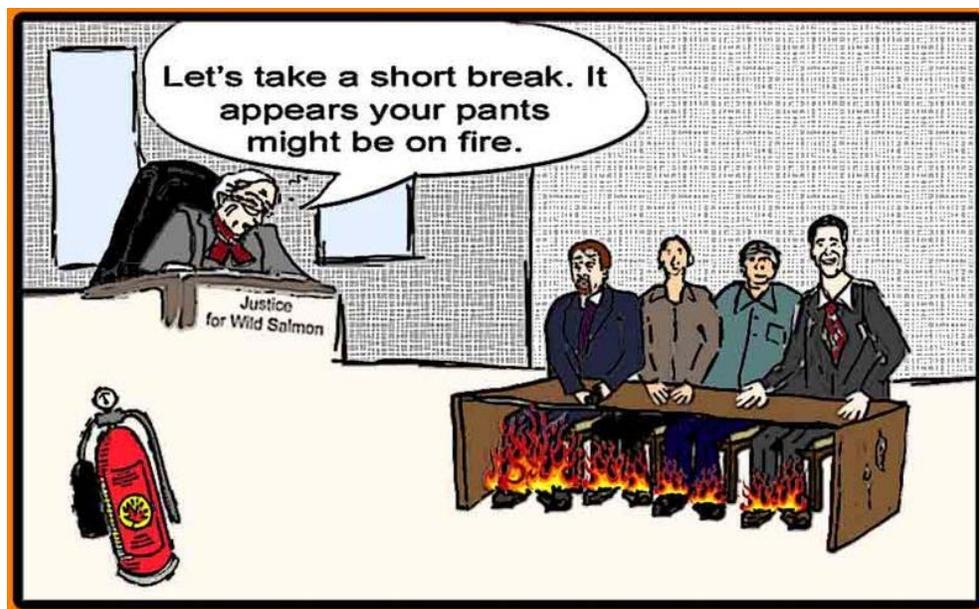
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"The most likely source of ISA virus in BC is from wild migrating wild fishes..." When Sheppard saw the document he said:

"Sometimes these briefings go places they shouldn't" *Yes, like on a screen in a court room*

Brenda Gaertner - can you say there will be no fin fish aquaculture licences granted on the Fraser sockeye migration route without substantive consultation with FN?

Swerdfager – No we can't make that commitment



Posted at 03:51 AM | [Permalink](#)

COMMENTS

[RossK](#) said...

In my business, which is not the fish business, but which is the science business, the day I start quoting incorrectly from a single graduate student's thesis in place of peer-reviewed literature, including that found in the actual journal Science, is the day I hope someone helps guide me gently, so I don't hurt myself, out of the building.

[09/02/2011 at 05:19 PM](#)

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