



Atlantic aquaculture grounded in science

Contributing more than \$400 million, and over 4,000 jobs, each year to the Atlantic Canadian economy, aquaculture is one of the most research-intensive, environmentally responsible and commercially sustainable industries in the region.

“This is very much a science-based business,” says Susan Farquharson, Executive Director, Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association (ACFFA). “The people here are global experts working directly in a field that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations says is one of the top five priority areas for saving the world’s oceans.”

Representing 80 members—farmers, feed producers, support organizations, and regulatory agencies—the ACFFA supports industry-driven scientific research and technological development specifically designed to strengthen and improve the sector.

In fact, says Farquharson, “Salmon farmers work with the best researchers from the federal and provincial governments, universities and the private sector on a wide variety of projects. They are committed to maintaining the environment in which they work and live, following the highest farm management standards and producing high-quality and nutritious food.”

For example, the industry uses a bay management area approach (BMA), which separates first, second and third-year fish, to maximize health management effectiveness and help prevent the spread of disease and parasites.

As well, salmon farmers use underwater cameras and sensors to avoid overfeeding as they tailor feed to suit dietary needs of at each life stage and improve digestibility—both of which significantly reduce waste. Today, the industry actually creates more fish protein (farmed fish) than it uses in making feed.

Cradling all of this is the Environmental Policy and Codes of Practice for marine net pen farming operations (a collaborative process with government agencies, academia and the fish-farming community) that guides the long-term sustainability of the marine finfish aquaculture industry in Atlantic Canada.

“I think a lot of people may not realize what pioneers Atlantic Canadians are when it comes to aquaculture,” Farquharson says. “This region’s fish farmers have built the industry over the past 40 years into a recognized, international leader.”

And they’ve done it with research, science and responsible collaboration.



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