



SEP 08 2005

Votre référence - Your file

Notre référence - Our file

A-2005-00107 / Ic

Mr. John Cummins
Member of Parliament
Delta-Richmond East
Room 548, Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Cummins:

This letter is in response to your request under the *Access to Information Act* for:

"...Copy of all documents at the Pacific Region's HQ in Vancouver prepared May 1 to June 15 involving Malachite Green."

Attached please find the complete release package in response to this request. The exemption provisions s. 14, 19(1), 20(1)(b), 21(1)(a), 21(1)(b) of the Act have been applied to the package. A copy of the relevant sections is attached.

The *Access to Information Act* grants you the right to file a complaint with the Information Commissioner if you are not satisfied with our handling of your request. The address is:

Office of the Information Commissioner
112 Kent Street, 22nd Floor
Place de Ville, Tower B
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1H3

If you have any questions regarding this request, do not hesitate to contact Lina Canonico, at (613) 990-9015.

Yours sincerely,


Gary Lacey
Director/Coordinator
Access to Information and Privacy

Attach.: pages 1-9, 13-18, 21-26, 29-34, 37-41, 43-45, 50-66, 68-75, 78-84, 89-104, 111-119, 121-122, 124-125, 130-131

DRAFT PRESS LINES

DETECTION OF MALACHITE GREEN IN TWO FISH FARMS

ISSUE

Malachite green (MG) is an anti-fungal agent which was used in aquaculture for the treatment of external fungal and parasitic infections on fish eggs, fish, shellfish and as a general hatchery disinfectant. It is still authorized for use in aquarium fish (non-food fish).

A Health Canada (HC) risk assessment in 1992 determined that the carcinogenic properties of MG rendered it unsuitable for use on food fish. Through regular monitoring, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) detected traces of MG in 400,000 farmed chinook in British Columbia (BC) and in 400,000 farmed trout in Ontario. HC has confirmed that it will stand fast on its "zero tolerance" threshold for food contaminated with traces of MG.

The unharvested fish remain in the water and under provincial control. It is very likely that this stock will be destroyed since it can not be processed or marketed for human consumption or rendered into livestock feed.

KEY MESSAGES

- Ensuring food safety and consumer protection are the responsibility of the CFIA. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for aquaculture management.
- The CFIA tests for malachite green (MG) as part of its sampling and monitoring program. CFIA testing of farmed fish to date shows that use of MG is not widespread.
- The CFIA is working with the province(s) and HC to take the necessary measures to protect public health. DFO supports the decisions taken by HC and actions taken by the CFIA, the province (Ontario/BC) and Stolt Sea Farm to ensure the fish does not enter the food supply.
- DFO is responsible for ensuring good management practices in aquaculture. This includes the responsibility for informing our own hatcheries and the aquaculture industry of which chemicals are, and are not, approved for food fish production.
- DFO can confirm that none of its hatcheries have used MG since 1992 when Health Canada rendered it unsuitable for use on food fish. Notices were sent out to all hatchery operations at that time.
- Since the detection of MG earlier this year, DFO has re-distributed information packages to all fish health personnel and government hatcheries on chemicals that are approved for use for egg and broodstock disinfection.

s.21(1)(b)

DRAFT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DETECTION OF MALACHITE GREEN IN TWO FISH FARMS

Q: What is Malachite Green?

A: Malachite Green was originally used as a dye for leather, silk, acrylic and wool as well as a food colouring agent and medical disinfectant.

It was used to control fungus in hatchery operations. It has been prohibited for use for food in Canada since 1992 because members of this class of dyes have shown to contain animal carcinogens that have been linked to potential human health risks.

Q: Is it legal to use in Canada?

A: Yes, Malachite Green is still approved for use in aquarium fish. Clear product labeling indicates that it is not to be used on food fish.

Q: If MG has been unauthorized for use since 1992, then why did the CFIA detect levels of MG in fish from the BC/Ontario fish farm(s) in question?

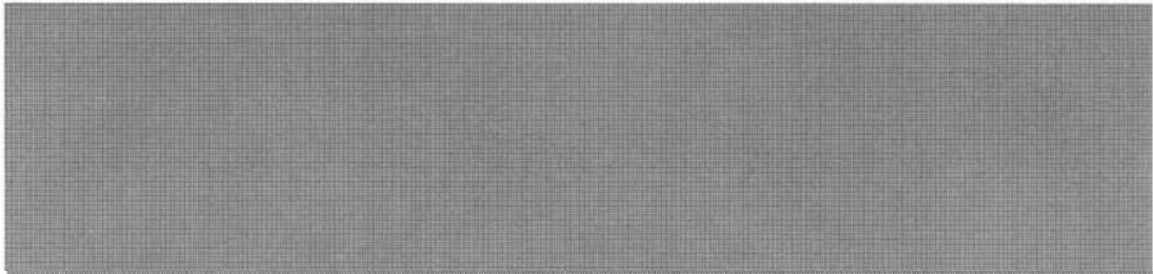
A: This question should be directed to the CFIA.

Q: Is the use of MG wide spread in British Columbia/Ontario?

A: No, the CFIA has detected one domestic case in BC/Ontario to date leading it to conclude that MG is not widespread in the aquatic environment or in BC/Ontario farmed fish.

Q: Can MG spread and infect wild fish?

A:



s.21(1)(b)

Q: Did any of the contaminated fish enter the food supply?

A: This question should be directed to the CFIA.

Q: What is being done to contain this fish from entering the food supply?

A: This question should be directed to the CFIA.

Q: How, when and where will the fish be destroyed?

A: These questions should be directed to either CFIA or BC MAFF.

Q: What is DFO doing to ensure that MG is not used in federally run hatcheries?

A: DFO is responsible for informing our own hatcheries and the aquaculture industry of which chemicals are, and are not, approved for food fish production. DFO can confirm that none of its hatcheries on either coast have used MG since 1992 when Health Canada rendered it unsuitable for use on food fish. Notices were sent out to all hatchery operations at that time (if asked: we will provide the memo).

Since the detection of MG earlier this year, DFO has re-distributed information packages to all fish health personnel and government hatcheries on chemicals that are approved for use for egg and broodstock disinfection. This information is also available on our website.

Q: What do you think about the public perception of farmed fish? This is surely going to deal a strong blow to an already controversial subject here in BC.

A: We would hope that Canadians, particularly British Columbians, feel assured that their food safety system works and that through rigorous monitoring, this product was prevented from entering the food chain.

The sustainable development of our aquatic resources, wild or farmed, depends on governments, industry and stakeholders working together. This situation is an ideal example to show how our collaboration worked to benefit Canadians.

We recognize that the aquaculture industry is not without its challenges and I respect that some Canadians have divergent views around salmon farming. We hope they base their opinions on the facts.

Q: Doesn't this prove that farmed fish are pumped full of dyes, pesticides and antibiotics to make them healthy?

A: Farmed salmon is not injected with dye or artificial colours. Both wild and farmed salmon get their characteristic reddish colour from natural pigments. Wild salmon hunt and eat small crustaceans like shrimp with high levels of natural pigments. Farmed fish rely on feed supplements which include two naturally-occurring pigments (astaxanthin and canthaxanthin) – to provide them with the proper nutrition and colour. Their use has been approved in Canada by the CFIA for the last 15 years.

Antibiotics, if they are required, are provided by veterinarians. Health Canada has clear rules to ensure salmon farmers wait for a standard period of time following treatment before harvesting their fish. These rules are enforced by the CFIA.

When compared to land-based farmed animal production, salmon farming uses the least amount of antibiotics. In recent years, advances in vaccine development, similar to the practice used for raising livestock, have resulted in a significant reduction of antibiotic use.