

Draw a line in the sea!

6/7/95 Gometra Farm
Ulva Ferry
Isle of Mull

I would like to bring you up to date on the Gometra Salmon Farm controversy.

The Crown Estates has re-advertised in your pages, but sadly no less misleadingly. 'An application has been received for modifications at this existing fish-farm.'

There is no existing fish farm. And what they politely call 'modifications' are one-and-a-half acres of salmon cages, where not one now floats, together with ton after ton of uneaten food, pesticides, faecal matter, etc.

This isn't good enough. Even from a government department. Why don't they come out with it and say what they mean? What are they afraid of?

Meanwhile, even according to the Crown Estates, no extra employment will be generated, and the harm the 'farm' will do is deplored by the local residents of the shores of Loch Tuath on Mull, Ulva and, of course, Gometra itself.

Of those I have managed to contact, two are for the scheme, one isn't bothered, four work in the industry or share facilities with it and are therefore reluctant to express an opinion, and 39 have so far put their names to a petition against it. If you consider the sparse population of this area, you will realise this must be almost everyone there is.

Is it not time to draw a line in the sea and say: Thus far and no further?

I am etc,

Roc Sandford

OBAN
TIMES

3/8/95



OBAN TIMES

6/7/95



OBAN
TIMES

17/8/95



3/8/95 Craig Munro
Convener Oban
and Lorn SNA

Further jobs are for locals

Mull Salmon Limited
Port A
Chlaidh Ulva Ferry
Isle of Mull

In reply to 'Draw a Line' by Mr Roc Sandford of Gometra Farm, may I make the following comments:

i) Would the above not be more accurate giving his main London address as he spends most of his time there.

ii) The full Crown Commission plans were available by the public for inspection for eight weeks at Ulva Ferry Post Office.

iii) A further two jobs are anticipated on this farm for local people, as well as increased service-related business going to the local community. Mr Sandford has been told this by various sources.

iv) Finally, I personally take exception to the fact that the above insinuates that the fish farm had 'placed pressure' on employees or associates of the company not to sign the petition, unlike Mr Sandford who has badgered a minority of local people into signing.

I am etc,

D Smart
Production Manager
Mull Salmon Ltd
and Local Resident

Glad scheme is turned down

17/6/95 Gometra Farm
Ulva Farm
Isle of Mull

Some of your readers will be relieved to hear that the Gometra salmon farm scheme has been turned down.

I would like to thank the many people who helped achieve this wonderful outcome.

The line drawn in the sea held. Just.

I must correct the outrageous allegations contained in Mull Salmon Ltd's letter to you of August 3, 1995.

Does everyone who stands up to this industry get their name dragged through mud?

A further two jobs are anticipated on this farm for local people... Mr Sandford knew this from various sources.

My clear understanding from a telephone conversation with the Crown Estate on May 23, 1995, was that no new jobs would be created by the Gometra scheme.

Mr Sandford has badgered a minority of local people into signing' the petition.

This is an insult both to me, and to the many people of Loch Tuath who oppose salmon farms off Gometra. In what scorn must Mull Salmon Ltd hold them to imagine they could be 'badgered' into anything, especially by a relative newcomer from the south?

'Would the above not be more accurate giving his main London address as he spends most of his time there?' Wrong again, Mull Salmon. It isn't an issue, but since Mull Salmon Ltd seem rather foolishly to be trying to make it one, may I ask where Messrs Saunders-Davies, Haldane, and Gammell of Mull Salmon Ltd live?

My deepest, heartfelt thanks again to everyone who helped save this island - for the time being at least. I have no illusions: we have won a battle but not yet the war. My guess is that after some hurried goalpost-shifting the salmon industry will be back, with a new story and perhaps new hats. I hope I'm wrong.

I am etc,

Roc Sandford

(2)

Tourists don't want to look at fish farms

Madam 9/5/96
In recent issues of *The Oban Times* we learn of the fears of Lismore islanders of becoming 'ring-fenced' by proliferating salmon farms, and also of the latest attempt to provide Gometra and Ulva with a new one on a 25-acre site.

This is presented as a 'modification of fish farm' which is the oldest trick in the Crown Estates' book. There is no fish farm here. And, as the developer admits, the scheme will create no new jobs.

The salmon industry's notorious 'consultation process' apes terrestrial planning law except that the ultimate decision is taken not in public by elected councillors but in private by government placemen and bureaucrats whose statutory duty is to maximise their revenues from salmon farm rents.

The salmon industry has its place. Whether that place is Loch Tuath is not a matter for a secretive London quango or its Edinburgh office - it is a matter for us. My own view is that Loch Tuath is inappropriate.

Mull's beauty and the dwindling riches of her seas are her fortune. Tourists do not travel hundreds of miles to look at factory farms - even floating ones. Fishermen do not prosper in medicated lochs.

So I call on the Crown Estates to:

1. ABANDON its planning loophole and put the WHOLE 'consultation process' in the hands of the local council planning committee.
2. GRANT no more 'modifications' to imaginary fish farms.

I hope you will publish the Crown Estates' response.

Roc Sandford
Gometra Farm
Ulva Ferry
Isle of Mull

9/5/96

ALL OBAN TIMES

Fears that jobs go as salmon cages grow

Madam
Having told the Crown Estate and, through it, the local community, that they were creating no new jobs, the developers of the proposed new salmon farm site on Loch Tuath are now saying that, although they cannot guarantee it, they intend to create two entirely new, permanent, full-time jobs for local people.

We all recognise job creation as one of the central problems around here.

If the decision on salmon farms was in the hands of the local authority they could make planning consent, if granted, conditional on the continuing existence of these two jobs, and everyone would know where they were.

Unfortunately, the Crown Estate's system does not work like this and leaves people with the fear, based on experience, of the industry as a whole, that the jobs will go while the salmon cages grow.

Please let us have jobs and let them be permanent ones. The current mess benefits no-one, not even the industry itself.

23/5/96 Roc Sandford
Gometra Farm
Ulva Ferry
Isle of Mull
Argyll

23/5/96

Lochaline
O'NEILL
TIMES
? 6/6/96

More facts about that fish farm

Madam
I feel that I must reply to Mr Roc Sandford's latest letter regarding the proposed new salmon farm on Loch Tuath. At last the most important issue, surely that of job creation, has been mentioned.

Whilst no one wants all the sea lochs around Scotland's shores covered with 'unsightly steel cages,' surely a reasonable compromise is what is needed.

There are also a couple of facts about this application that vary totally to what Mr Sandford has previously stated.

(a) Leases for this and another site one mile to the North West of it, were issued by the Crown Commission several years ago to my brother and myself and were for shellfish cultivation.

(b) These have been used on a small scale, for shellfish cultivation over the last five years.

However, not having the

finances to develop these sites to their full potential, we, on being approached by Hydro Seafood GSP Ltd, agreed to them possibly taking over and developing the sites for salmon cultivation.

This would have created between two and four permanent jobs, plus all the associated installation and maintenance requirements.

With Hydro Seafood GSP Ltd employing 52 people permanently, this results in some £1 million a year income to the island purely as direct employers. Being a small diving company, we ourselves depend a lot on fish farms for work and so do many other companies and personnel.

It can only be hoped that if this application is refused, Hydro Seafood GSP Ltd will continue its commitment and investment on Mull and not move to a more attractive area, eg Shetland.

I hope that Mr Rocford's views have previously been expressed for the good of the island and not for his own personal scenic ones.

R B and S L Barlow
Glence Raeric Road
Tobermory Isle of Mull

? 6/6/96

4/7/96

Why I object to plans for fish farm

Madam 4/7/96
I understand Messrs Barlow, possessors of the bit of seabed in question, as stating that up to four permanent jobs could have been created by Hydro Seafood's Loch Tuath salmon farm proposals (Letters June 6, 1996).

However, Hydro Seafood themselves stated at a public meeting that only two permanent jobs would be created and were unable to guarantee even one.

And, according to the original Crown Estates Commissioners salmon farm application (prepared in conjunction with Hydro Seafood), no jobs whatsoever were to be created.

Whichever story we believe doesn't change my position, which is that whether to have a salmon farm is a matter for the local community to decide, not for the government (except in a pollution and fisheries monitoring role) or for the salmon industry.

Messrs Barlow say I deny they were granted shell-fish leases by the Crown Estates. I have never denied this. In fact I have twice asked the Crown Estates for copies, sadly with no success.

They also say that the sites 'have been used on a small scale, for shell-fish cultivation over the last five years.' I stand corrected and apologise. But it must be a very small scale indeed to have

escaped the notice of local fishermen and residents.

This only underlines my point that for the Crown Estates to present a change from a microscopic shell-fish farm to around one and a half acres of salmon cages as a 'modification' is dishonest.

Messrs Barlow hope that my views have been expressed 'for the good of the island and not for his own scenic ones.'

My first loyalty is to Gometra, but I think Mull is a unique and wonderful place and would never wish it ill. I hope they rest reassured.

Roc Sandford
Gometra Farm
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