

Official Statistics: Rural economic bulletin

The quarterly rural economic bulletin is a 'dashboard' of indicators designed to provide evidence on the rural economy.

National Statistics: Historical national statistics notices on milk utilisation by dairies, 2019

Previously published copies of the monthly National Statistics publication on the volume of milk used by dairies.

Detailed guide: Protecting plant health: topical issues

Current issues related to protecting plant health and trade of plants, fruit, vegetables or plant material including *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Open consultation: Highly Protected Marine Areas review: call for evidence

Seeking views on whether and how to introduce Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) in English inshore and offshore waters and Northern Irish offshore waters.

Next steps consultation on regulation of finfish aquaculture sector

03 October 2019

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (3 October, 2019) launched an eight week public consultation to inform the next steps in regulation of the finfish aquaculture sector.

The technical consultation follows one of the agency's largest consultation programmes in late 2018, the publication of its Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan and the introduction of its new, firm, evidence-based regulatory framework on 1 June, 2019.

The consultation explores methods for how we regulate the organic load from a fish farm.

David Harley, Head of Water & Planning at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

"As one of a number of organisations regulating finfish aquaculture, SEPA is working with the finfish aquaculture sector to ensure protection of the environment is recognised as fundamental to the sector's success. Our vision is that the sector becomes a world-leading innovator in ways to minimise the environmental footprint of food production and supply; where it has a strong and positive relationship with neighbouring users of the environment and communities; and where it is valued nationally for its contribution to achieving global food security.

"Having done more science, more analysis and more listening than ever before over the last two years, including in our largest ever public consultation across Scotland, we launched our Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan and a new, firm, evidence-based regulatory framework in June this year.

"This further consultation is focused on how we ensure that the organic load does not negatively impact local environments. We want to provide certainty and transparency to site operators, regulators and communities. We're committed to listening and to getting this right which is why we're asking for responses to options for approaches from the broadest possible group of stakeholders with interests in our regulation of the sector."

The consultation is open until Wednesday 27th November, 2019.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

CONSULTATION INFORMATION:

SEPA'S AQUACULTURE HUB:

FINFISH AQUACULTURE CONSULTATION EVENTS:

- Approximately 275 people attended across the nine community drop-in events.
- A total of 28 one to one meetings were facilitated between SEPA specialists and stakeholder groups including, community groups, local fisheries, NGOs and industry representatives.
- Specific round table discussions were also arranged for NGOs, fish farming environmental managers and partner public agencies in addition to the nine community events.
- Approximately 120 responses to the consultation received.
- A short summary of the consultation feedback has been published alongside [the sector plan](#).