

**COASTAL ALLIANCE FOR AQUACULTURE REFORM ("CAAR") AND
MARINE HARVEST CANADA ("MHC")
FRAMEWORK FOR DIALOGUE – SUMMARY
JANUARY 12, 2006
BACKGROUND**

The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) is a coalition of First Nations and conservation groups working to stop the negative impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon and the marine ecosystem in British Columbia. The member organizations of CAAR are the David Suzuki Foundation, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Georgia Strait Alliance, Living Oceans Society, Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council, Raincoast Conservation Society, Raincoast Research, T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation, and Watershed Watch Salmon Society. Marine Harvest is the world's leading producer and supplier of farmed salmon and is committed to continual improvement with respect to its products and environmental practices. In British Columbia, Marine Harvest Canada (MHC) operates ISO 14000 and 9000 certified salmon farms on Vancouver Island and the mid coast.

In the spring of 2004, CAAR and MHC each, independent of the other, recognizes the salmon farming debate in British Columbia is highly polarized and not likely to produce positive results in its current format. The chronology of the ensuing dialogue is as follows:

- a) June 2004 - CAAR and MHC initiate exploratory discussions to determine if there is potential value and mutual interest in engaging in some direct discussion around aquaculture issues.
- b) October 2004 - based on these exploratory discussions, CAAR and MHC agree there is value in engaging in such direct discussion and begin to meet periodically – discussion initially focuses on identifying the scope of issues that would benefit from direct discussion, relative priorities, principles to govern dialogue such that the likelihood of success within a polarized climate was maximized, identifying research priorities required to support effective discussion/resolution of the issues, and identifying precautionary measures that could be undertaken relative to each party's interests while research and discussion takes place.
- c) December 2005 – CAAR and MHC reach agreement on the substantive elements of a Framework for Dialogue – (see below for a summary of the Framework).
- d) The Province was advised early on that these discussions were taking place but not briefed as to specifics/details until November 2005. The Province supported the successful conclusion of the Framework by agreeing to fund certain interim measures identified in the Framework.

SUMMARY OF THE "FRAMEWORK"

The Framework is a comprehensive document. Following is a summary of those matters addressed within the Framework – this is intended for illustrative purposes only and, by its summary nature, does not address every detail.

Purpose

1. The Framework is intended to
 - a) Support constructive, efficient, interest-based results that address the needs of both MHC and CAAR;
 - b) Increase knowledge with respect to environmental, social and economic factors associated with salmon farming;

- c) Reduce conflict associated with MHC's salmon farming; and
 - d) Direct change to current practices where best available information demonstrates there are impacts to the environment and wild salmon as a result of current practices;
2. The Framework is not intended to fulfill and constitute duties of consultation or accommodation owed to First Nations.
 3. The Framework is not intended to create legal rights or obligations.

Background/Context

4. The Framework sets out a number of background/contextual matters acknowledged and/or agreed to by both MHC and CAAR including the ecological, cultural, and economic importance of wild salmon, salmon farming is part of the economy of coastal communities, there are environmental impacts associated with salmon farming that need to be reduced, mitigated or eliminated, both CAAR and MHC have invested in research however some further research is required.
5. The Framework states that MHC maintains the right to exercise their business operations as required on a day-to-day basis and to publicly respond to criticism or third party assessment of their business or effects of their business on the environment, especially wild salmon.
6. The Framework states that CAAR maintains the right to exercise its campaigns and public education initiatives related to aquaculture and marine conservation;

Guiding Principles for Dialogue

7. The Framework sets out a number of principles CAAR and MHC agree will govern their ongoing dialogue (e.g. interest based dialogue, respectful dialogue, both parties having access to information in a timely and transparent manner, willingness to change perspectives based on new information etc)

Salmon Farming Issues

8. The Framework describes the broad range of issues associated with salmon farming in BC (these are summarized in Appendix A), acknowledges that some are most appropriately addressed bilaterally while others are best addressed in multi-lateral public policy forums, commits the parties to:
 - a) periodically reviewing this list of issues; and
 - b) periodically identifying priorities for research and dialogue based on these issues
9. The Framework identifies the short term priorities for research being
 - a) the interaction between wild salmon, farmed salmon, and sea lice
 - b) the economic feasibility of commercial scale closed containment
 - c) wild salmon migratory routes
10. The Framework provides that discussion, dialogue and decisions need to be informed by best available information (i.e. information that is peer reviewed, research that is undertaken collaboratively, and documented local knowledge).

Sea Lice Research

17. The Framework provides that research is best undertaken collaboratively and in a manner that seeks to reduce the polarity that has existed within the scientific community regarding aquaculture issues
18. The Framework describes an agreed upon list of priority questions that need to be addressed through research relative to the sea lice issue in the Broughton, a process to annually review these questions, the research priorities based on these questions, and certain specific research projects that need to be undertaken collaboratively in 2006 including:
 - a) Morbidity/mortality/behavioral effects on juvenile pink and chum salmon associated with sea lice infections;
 - b) The source of sea lice (i.e., from farms or other sources) infecting out migrating juvenile salmon;
 - c) The migration pathways of out-migrating juvenile wild salmon in the Broughton;
 - d) The relationship between the age of farmed fish (time in salt water) and sea lice i.e. after what period in salt water do farmed fish develop the capacity to contribute a significant amount of sea lice to the surrounding environment;
 - e) What date within the period January 18 and March 1 constitutes a reasonably precautionary commencement date for a migration corridor in each year.
19. The Framework provides that in some circumstances research will be undertaken by MHC and CAAR directly and in other circumstances they will jointly advocate that such research be undertaken by others on the basis of agreed upon Terms of Reference (e.g. the Pacific Salmon Forum)

Closed Containment Research

20. The Framework establishes as a priority collaborative research into the economic feasibility of commercial scale closed containment to be completed by August 31, 2006 and includes agreed upon Terms of Reference for such research
21. The Framework provides that MHC and CAAR will mutually agree upon a researcher to complete this analysis and to jointly advocate for funding from the BC Pacific Salmon Forum or other appropriate bodies.
22. The Framework provides that upon completion of the closed containment research, both parties will seek to identify ways to overcome the economic obstacles to adapting closed containment as identified in that research
23. The Framework provides that upon economic viability of commercial scale closed containment being demonstrated, MHC will work to incorporate closed containment into its operations

Communications

24. The Framework establishes a communications protocol that will govern how CAAR and MHC will communicate both internally and externally regarding those matters addressed in the document

25. The Framework provides that CAAR will not directly target MHC or its products in the local, national and international market campaigns and that MHC will communicate with CAAR on an ongoing basis regarding any new tenure applications, relocations, or siting requests

Process

26. The Framework provides that the parties will meet as required on an ongoing basis to implement the Framework

27. The Framework provides for parties other than CAAR and MHC becoming involved in discussions under the Framework subject to mutual agreement

28. The Framework provides for dispute resolution.

Appendix A: General Summary of Issues Related to Salmon Farming As Identified in the Framework

- farmed salmon /wild salmon interactions (e.g., sea lice, disease transfer)
- escapes of farmed fish and non-native species
- use and application of chemicals and medication
- overall wellbeing of seafood industry (e.g., competition, integration)
- jobs and economic development, wellbeing of coastal communities
- reputation (e.g., credibility of claims, public perception)
- application of technology (e.g., closed containment, management systems, fish husbandry)
- tenure allocation including siting impacts and First Nations interests
- fish husbandry (composition of fish feed, antibiotics etc.)
- the impacts of waste from salmon farms on the water column, benthic environment, and marine ecosystem in general
- sustainable fisheries at the global and local levels (e.g., fish meal/fish oil)
- human health and safety (e.g., nutrition, contamination)
- business viability (e.g., investments, cost control, markets)
- aboriginal rights, traditional use and land claims
- communications (e.g., information sharing, public claims, marketing)
- research and development
- regulatory environment