Aquaculture Governance Indicators (AGIs) assessment synthesis report

Country:
Canada

Species:
Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*)

Information presented based on assessment conducted March-April 2019.
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Country overview

Canada's Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry was established in the 1980s with current production volumes around 140,000 metric tons (MT) per year. The production is roughly split evenly between the east coast and the west coast with three companies on the east coast, two on the west coast, and one company (Mowi) operating on both coasts.

There are two Seafood Watch assessment reports for Canadian salmon, one for British Colombia salmon and another for North West Atlantic Ocean. The British Columbia salmon has a yellow ranking (good alternative) with areas of concern being: effluent (yellow); chemicals (red); feed (yellow); escapes (yellow); disease (yellow); and wildlife mortalities (yellow). Issue areas as defined by the most recent reports are: chemicals; effluents; sea lice; disease management; habitat; escapes; and mammal interactions. The Atlantic Ocean salmon has a red ranking (avoid) with key issue areas being: effluent (yellow); habitat (yellow); chemicals (red); feed (yellow); escapes (red); disease (red); and wildlife mortalities (yellow).

Legislation

The laws governing salmon aquaculture are a mix of federal, provincial, and local. Among the main pieces of legislation are the Fisheries Act (1985); Health of Animals Act (1990); Food and Drugs Act (1985); Species at Risk Act (2002); Aquaculture Activities Regulations (SOR/2015-177); Feeds Act (1985); Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012); and Navigable Waters Protection Act (1985).

Of note is that while there is no federal aquaculture Act, there are provincial Acts in some cases. Between the various jurisdictions, however, the legislation covers all of the Seafood Watch issue areas with two mentioning the precautionary principle. On the area of cumulative impacts, Canada scores high due to the rigorous environmental impact assessment requirements.

Voluntary codes and standards

Two third-party codes and standards are in place: Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP). There is no Global GAP or FoS in Canada and none of the salmon aquaculture operations are certified organic. Previously, there was the Healthy Salmon Program, but this has now been replaced by BAP as it covers food safety. Provincial codes such as the BC Salmon Farmers Code of Good Practice have all now been replaced by third party accredited certification.

Implementation of Codes and Standards in the Canadian Salmon Industry first began in

2007. The first salmon certified to the BAP standard was in Canada in 2011 and now over 90% of Canadian Salmon is BAP certified. Standards themselves are limited in that they don't assess the cumulative impacts, which some stakeholders would claim is an issue areas in some regions in Canada. The main gap is in assessing cumulative impacts, collaboration amongst actors, and development of more regional based metrics.

Some shortcomings include: the standards are not encouraged publicly by government, nor is there funding assistance to subsidise cost; there is no coordination between the standards (competing) nor have they given rise to any changes in legislation; and compliance comes after market access and best business practices.

Encouragingly, there is a high degree of transparency in standard setting process and it is composed of relevant actors and there is good coordination to include international treaties/codes.

Collaborative arrangements

All collaborative arrangements (CAs) are very clearly defined in scope, although most deal with single issues, i.e. not covering all of the Seafood Watch issue areas within each arrangement. At the same time, the CAs have not resulted in any changes to codes or standards. An area of improvement could be increased transparency on some of the operational aspects of some of the CAs (e.g. results of assessments against the BC Viral Management Plan are not publicly available). Overall, informational transparency is high except for industry-industry which scored the lowest level of transparency.

Capabilities

Several organizations operate at the state (e.g. Dept of Fisheries and Oceans), market (e.g. BC Salmon Farmer's Association), and civil society (e.g. Living Oceans). There is a high degree of interaction between State and Market, with Civil Society on the periphery. At times there are three very different agendas, with state and market actors more closely aligned due to an interdependency relationship. Across all, social media is used as part of their messaging and communication with reasonable transparency from all three groups. Stake and market actors show a high level of resources employed compared to civil society owing to the former being more resource rich.

Actionable insights

Legislation: while there is a strong regulatory structure between provincial and federal jurisdictions, it is not always the most agile or responsive; different challenges and differences in the growing environments have resulted in varying Seafood Watch issue areas when comparing east and west coast Canada.

Voluntary codes and standards: while scope of standards covers all issue areas, it is not to the same depth and interpretation across the board, e.g. precautionary principle is weak in both standards (ASC and BAP); standards are not publicly encouraged by government nor is there is funding to subsidize the cost; transparency with BAP could be improved to operate to the same level of transparency as ASC.

Collaborative arrangements: there is not the same degree of transparency as there is with legislation around some of the collaborative arrangements and codes and standards, it is

lacking in some areas e.g. not all operational details are available for Collaborative Arrangements, for example, transparency around the audit reports/results from the BC Viral Management Plan.

Capabilities: gaps and issues that have been identified through the various dimensions of this governance assessment (e.g. lice and disease) are actively being addressed by the industry; however, interaction with civil society could be improved to be on par with what exists between state and market.