



**For Immediate Release (October 4, 2006)**

## **SEA LICE STUDY BASED ON OLD, QUESTIONABLE DATA**

OTTAWA, ON – The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance says the sea lice study\* released this week by Martin Krkosek has not been able to establish a cause-effect relationship between sea lice and salmon farms in the Broughton Archipelago of British Columbia. Not only does the study fail to consider other naturally occurring factors such as increased abundance of pink salmon but it also appears to be based on old data. The validity of this data has been the subject of debate since it was first released over a year ago.

“The fact of the matter is pink salmon returns in the Broughton are at near historical averages,” says David Rideout, Executive Director of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance. “The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance supports all research that contributes to a better understanding of sea lice issues. However, this study does not provide the scientific community, the industry or the public with any new information.”

Rideout recognizes the value of mathematical modeling but questions the results of this study given the concerns that exist over the data used. “It is a bit like having a marvelous design for a new house but using old wood of questionable quality to build it,” says Rideout.

Sea lice occur naturally in the ocean and do not pose a human health risk. There are several species of sea lice that are parasites to many species of wild fish. Two species affect wild salmon as they migrate from the open ocean to rivers for spawning. Salmon farms are also affected by this parasite. While all the contributing factors have not been identified, nor their interrelationships, it is known that water salinity, temperature and ocean currents impact the level of sea lice present in the marine environment.

The Canadian salmon farming industry has state of the art food safety systems in place on our farms and at the processing facilities. Food safety is not an issue related to this study. Further, farmers make every effort to prevent sea lice from affecting their fish. They use a range of sound management techniques to minimize the presence of sea lice within stocks, such as fallowing and sea lice monitoring, which are all recognized as effective tools by regulators and veterinarians. When there is a sea lice outbreak, fish health veterinarians make decisions about the best possible treatment options to quickly and effectively control the outbreak.

Research by The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) into the issue of sea lice interactions in the Broughton Archipelago of British Columbia, has shown



that the number of returning pinks was up in 2004-2005 and that sea lice levels are not affecting pink and chum salmon stocks in the area.

“Salmon, both wild and farmed, continues to be a safe and healthy food choice for consumers,” says Rideout. “Our farmers take pride in the responsible manner in which their animals are raised and the health benefits of this omega-3 rich food, which have led Health Canada to recommend salmon as a good choice for a family’s healthy diet.”

The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance (CAIA) is a national industry association, headquartered in Ottawa. It represents the interests of Canadian aquaculture operators, feed companies and suppliers as well as provincial finfish and shellfish aquaculture associations. CAIA is dedicated to promoting food safety and sound environmental practices.

For interviews and further information, please contact: Danica Pagnutti, Fantail Communications, 416-363-9650 or [danica@fantailinc.com](mailto:danica@fantailinc.com)

-30-

\* The study is called Epizootics of Wild Fish Induced by Farm Fish. The study was led by Martin Krkosek and co-authored by Mark Lewis, Alexandra Morton, L. Neil Frazer and John Volpe.