

Lesley Griffiths MS

Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

23 March 2021

Dear Minister

Thank you for attending the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee's final meeting of this Senedd term.

You will be aware that the Committee has been considering matters relating to the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). We have become increasingly concerned about problems with the export of fish from the UK to the EU and, in particular, the export of wild harvested live bivalve molluscs (LBMs).

Since 1 January 2021, LBMs that are caught in UK but are not ready for human consumption have been barred from entering the EU. LBMs that are not from 'Class A' waters must now undergo treatment, such as depuration or processing, before being exported to the EU. Classification of LBM production areas is undertaken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) applying retained EU law. We understand that certain Welsh waters have been reclassified from 'Class A' to 'Class B' by the FSA.

Given the potential importance of this issue to the viability of the sector, the Committee has agreed I should write to you to follow up the issues set out below:

1. What is your understanding of the effect the reclassification has had on the LBM sector in Wales?
2. You told us that officials are "in ongoing dialogue" with the FSA about the reclassification of Welsh waters. Can you outline the nature of discussions and clarify what outcome you are seeking to achieve?
3. What is your understanding of the status of the reclassification? Is this a provisional classification and what is the FSA's intention regarding this status?



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4. What steps are you taking to improve the quality of Welsh waters to ensure that, in future, they will be classified as Class A?
5. Can you update the Committee on the outcome of your discussions with the UK Government on the continued trade with the EU of Live Bivalve Molluscs from Class B waters?
6. In the event that trade of Live Bivalve Molluscs from Class B waters cannot be resumed, what options are you exploring to ensure the economic viability of the aquaculture and shellfish sector in the medium term?
7. You told us that, unless trade of Live Bivalve Molluscs can be resumed, aquaculture and shellfish producers would need "to look at their business models". You also referred to the need for a "complete reconstruction of the sector". What steps have you taken, or are you planning to take, to support the sector in this regard?

Once again, I would like to thank you for the constructive way you have engaged with the Committee during this Senedd term and particularly during the last year, when you have appeared before the Committee on a monthly basis.

I would be grateful if you could respond as soon as possible, so this vital information can be shared with the sector before dissolution.

Given that the Committee has held its final meeting of this Senedd term, I would be grateful if you would provide a copy of your response directly to James Wilson, Director of Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd, and Jon Parker, Chair of Seafish Wales and Development Lead for Aquaculture Industry Wales Ltd.

Kind regards,



Mike Hedges MS
Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

