



Bigger barge feeds Eriboll's needs

Scottish Sea Farms' most northerly mainland farm at Sian Bay, Loch Eriboll, has taken delivery of a re-purposed feed barge which has been extensively upgraded to meet the demands of the site.

As well as a Scale AQ four-line feeding system, the barge has had a new bow fitted to increase capacity to 160 tonnes. And the wheelhouse and accommodation have been extensively modernised with room on board for all the staff, once social distancing measures have been fully relaxed.

The new addition to the farm, which replaces its existing 40-tonne barge, will transform operations, said Richard Darbyshire, Regional Manager for Orkney and Eriboll.

'The beach is quite steep, and loading feed wasn't ideal, so the fact that we now have a bigger barge and can get the feed delivered directly by boat and don't need to store it in a shed, is a major step forward.'

'It also makes the team more efficient because they're not wasting time moving feed all day. We didn't have the capacity before to do it any other way, it wasn't viable to send in a big boat to fill that little barge. Now it's no problem at all.'

The total cost of refurbishing the barge, which was previously stationed in Shetland, was £570,000, with the work completed at Macduff Shipyard.

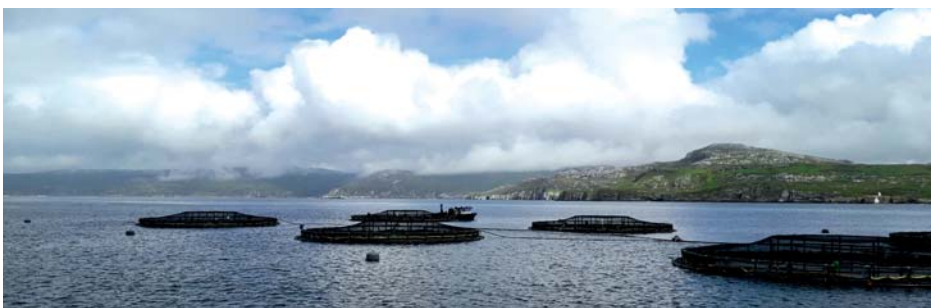
Darbyshire said recycling a barge rather than buying a brand new one made economic and environmental sense on this occasion.

Sian Bay's previous barge will now go to the neighbouring farm at Kempie Bay, where it will be more suited to the different set-up of square pens.

The centralised feeding system, which accounted for £130,000 of the investment, replaces the old 60mm feeding pipes with 90mm pipes.

Feeding at the Sian Bay and Kempie Bay farms, which are both managed by long-term Scottish Sea Farms' employee Johnny Morrison, will be controlled remotely by camera as a result of a new faster broadband network.

Darbyshire said: 'The area is really remote and as such the existing broadband could struggle at times. The cameras and videos for the new feeding system use a lot of bandwidth, meaning faster broadband was needed - and delivered, thanks to Scottish Sea Farms' IT experts Colin Kupris and Forbes Baylis, and Ricky Cooper from the Orkney engineering team.'



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COVID-19: returning to work safely

With Scotland now in Phase 3 of its route map through and out of the crisis, preparations are underway for the wider return of employees.

For four long months now, our key workers in freshwater, marine and processing have diligently maintained their critical roles in the workplace, protected by a suite of preventative measures, while those of us able to work remotely from home have done exactly that.

With the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions, we've been carefully assessing and adapting our office-

based spaces at Barcaldine, Kirkwall, Scalloway, South Shian and Stirling to include similar preventative measures ranging from hand sanitiser on entry and exit, one-way systems and protective screens where required, to social distancing, regular deep cleaning and staggered start, finish and break-times.

This will ensure that, as soon as the Scottish Government deems it

appropriate for us to do so, we can each return to work safely.

This includes welcoming back our furloughed colleagues, with the exception of those shielding.

We'll also be repaying all furlough support received in full - part of our commitment to helping aid Scotland's recovery and renewal over the coming months and years.

What the Scottish salmon farming sector can do for Scotland



Scotland's salmon farmers can help drive the country's economic recovery after the coronavirus outbreak, sector representatives told a recent government review.

Scottish Sea Farms managing director Jim Gallagher, along with Mowi's Ben Hadfield and the SSPO, held talks with Benny Higgins, chair of the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, ahead of his report aimed at getting Scotland back on its feet.

'Towards a robust, resilient wellbeing economy for Scotland', Higgins's post-Covid blueprint, made 25 recommendations, including one on planning and regulation.

'The Scottish Government, regulatory bodies and local authorities should review their key policy, planning and consenting frameworks...to accelerate projects,' the report noted.

On aquaculture in particular, it said the ability of the sector to operate, innovate and grow is dependent on how the public sector engages with industry, which has regularly asked for more timely and transparent approaches to regulation and enforcement.

'The public sector's rapid adoption of new ways of working and regulating during lockdown has shown that change, pivoting direction and fleetness of foot are very possible,' said the report.

During an online meeting, Scottish producers told Higgins: 'We have an opportunity not to ask what Scotland can do for us, but what the Scottish salmon farming sector can do for Scotland.'

Throughout the Covid crisis, farms have provided an economic lifeline for dozens of small rural communities. But in order to deliver its full potential, the sector wants to see a more entrepreneurial and risk-taking approach in Scotland.

"Scottish salmon has the potential to be Scotland's new oil and gas sector, but with a lower environmental impact"

Gallagher said the meeting with Higgins was positive and focused on how much more the salmon industry could do for Scotland if there was a significant shift in mindset from regulators.

'Scottish salmon has the potential to be Scotland's new oil and gas sector, but with a lower environmental impact. We have the natural capital around our coasts to support this, the social capital in our skilled workforce and an ambitious salmon farming sector to deliver.'

Wild and farmed salmon bodies agree on conservation measures

The first of a series of working groups to help protect wild salmonids published its recommendations in May.

The Salmon Interactions Working Group – a collaboration between Scottish salmon farmers, the wild fish sector and governmental bodies – agreed 42 recommendations that aim to:

- Improve the regulation of wild-farmed interactions
- Improve the relationship between the farmed and wild salmonid sectors
- Support the conservation of wild salmonids that includes investment into vital habitat restoration.

Wild salmon stocks are at critically low levels and the Scottish Government has identified 12 potential hazards that may

contribute to the decline, fish farming being just one.

The other 11 causes to be explored include climate change, along with capture fisheries, habitat quality, predation by seals and seabirds, and barriers to migration (hydro schemes).

Julie Hesketh-Laird, chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, said: 'As farmers, our members have an acute appreciation of the need to maintain and protect the natural balance of the habitats in which we live and work, and as such have been keen to lend their insights and experience.

'With the results of those recommendations now released, our hope is that these newly forged ties between the different stakeholders can continue, with both wild and farmed interests learning from the other. In particular, Scotland's salmon farmers have shown their commitment to



best practice by going further with transparency and data reporting than almost all international counterparts.

'We would now like to see the wild fish sector match our level of transparency and frequency of reporting.

'Equally, we look forward to governmental bodies addressing the other 11 identified pressures to wild salmon and trout in an equally thorough manner in the near future.'

To read the full report follow this link: <https://www.gov.scot/publicationsreport-salmon-interactions-working-group>



Wrasse review that respects fish and fishermen

SCOTTISH Sea Farms has been taking part in a government consultation on the wild wrasse fishery, a key tool in the sector strategy to control sea lice.

Since 2018, voluntary measures have been put in place to safeguard stocks of these crucial cleaner fish.

Following the successful pilot of these measures, Scottish Sea Farms fully supports the fishing controls – such as closed seasons and specific landing sizes – becoming mandatory.

Ralph Bickerdike, Head of Fish Health, said: 'The biggest change would be a proposed permit system for the commercial wrasse fishers with conditions to follow the control measures. This would give public assurance that the fishery is being well

managed and provides a framework for Marine Scotland to ensure the continued sustainability of this important fishery for salmon farming in Scotland.

'The outcome of the public consultation is expected in the near future, when we can provide an update.'

Farming wrasse is the long-term goal for the whole sector but while research is ongoing, wild wrasse will continue to be needed.

Bickerdike said the numbers caught over the years have remained fairly constant: 'There are only so many farms and they are all looking to reduce the stocking ratio of wild wrasse to be more sustainable. We're learning we can use less of them, which is good all round.'

SSPO boss to stand down

Julie Hesketh-Laird, chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation since February 2018, is to stand down from the post this September.

Hesketh-Laird said: 'I have greatly enjoyed working with my team at the SSPO. As the sector emerges from the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis, it is a good time to move on and take on fresh challenges. Salmon farming is now strongly positioned to play a central role in Scotland's economic recovery.'



People on the move



Adam Shargool



Andrew Park



David Bisset



Liam Tulloch

A series of internal promotions sees Scottish Sea Farms' rising stars reaching managerial positions in Orkney and Shetland.

Adam Shargool has been appointed Farm Manager at Wyre, replacing Matt Jackson who is leaving Scottish Sea Farms to go travelling. Adam joined Scottish Sea Farms almost three years ago and has a degree in Fisheries Management from the Institute of Fisheries Management in Hull.

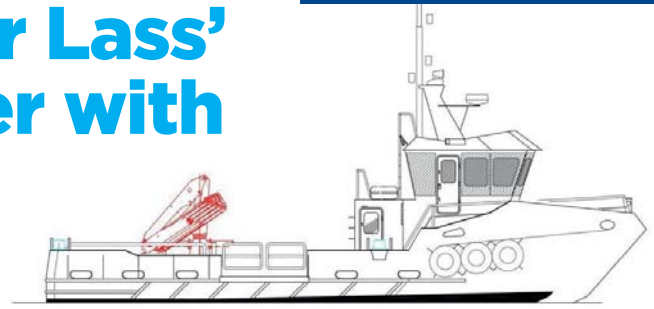
Also in Orkney, Andrew Park has been made a Trainee Manager at Shapinsay, working with Manager James Lennie. Andrew will continue to work under James's excellent mentorship, which has delivered outstanding performance at Shapinsay.

Meanwhile, in Shetland, Nathan Johnson has been promoted to the role of Trainee Farm Manager at Bellister. Having thrived at fish husbandry during his four years with the company, Nathan has consistently shown the desire to develop, most recently undertaking the L3 Aquaculture SVQ.

At Vidlin, David Bisset has been appointed Trainee Farm Manager, under the direction of James MacDonald. Bisset returned to Scottish Sea Farms in 2018 and his vast experience in different marine environments, along with his desire to develop, made him an outstanding candidate for his new role.

During the recruitment process, another future manager was identified in Liam Tulloch at Geo Holms. Liam will now work with Robbie Coutts in his transition from Senior Husbandry to Trainee Farm Manager, ahead of a formal appointment in January 2021.

'Laxigar Lass' a winner with locals



When the farm team at Hunda, Scottish Sea Farms' latest farm, couldn't decide on a name for their new workboat they asked the local community in Orkney for help.

Orcadians were tasked with suggesting a name inspired by the local geography, in keeping with team tradition.

The response from the public was overwhelming - with 79 suggestions via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and email - and choosing between them was a tough task.

After much deliberation, Farm Manager Martin Mladenov, along with Orkney Regional Manager Richard Darbyshire and Orkney Engineering Manager Myles Heward, awarded prizes for the three best names.

Third place went to 'Hunda Rose', suggested by seven-year-old Robbie from Burray. Robbie won a £25 voucher for Kirkwall Bid & Beyond.

Second place was 'Hunda Heather', put forward by Lorna Coupar who wins a £50 voucher.

And the winning name was 'Laxigar Lass', suggested separately by Helen Davidson and Ingrid Mackenzie. They will each receive a £100 voucher and will be invited to be our guests at the official naming ceremony where they'll be given the honour of smashing a bottle over the bow of the new workboat.

All four winners will be invited to visit the new farm once stocked.

Darbyshire said: 'We'd like to thank everyone who took part in our competition, which resulted in a really strong name that we likely wouldn't have come up with ourselves.'

'It's deeply rooted in the local geography of Hunda, but with 'lax' being Old Norse for salmon, it's also a nod to our Norwegian ties past and present.'

The £705,000, 17m workboat, currently under construction at Northwind Engineering in Kishorn, is due to be delivered by the end of July.

The paws are out in pet competition



Scottish Sea Farms' staff and pets rose to the challenge when we launched our lockdown competition.

Scottish Sea Farms' staff are highly skilled so it was no surprise to discover our pets are just as talented when we launched our lockdown competition.

The judges - head vet Ronnie Soutar, head of HR Tracy Bryant-Shaw, and MD Jim Gallagher - had intended to award just one £100 prize to the pet (and owner) who had learned the best new skill in lockdown.

But the video entries flooded in and once all the performances had been viewed, it was decided to announce several category winners.

There could only be one outright winner however and that winning pet-and-owner pairing was Jessica Campbell and Beena for some truly impressive lockdown learning.

You can view the nominations and winning entry at our YouTube channel.

