



Learning from errors — or not?

By Los Angeles Times



PORT McNEILL, B.C. — In Norway, parasites have so devastated wild fish that the government poisoned all aquatic life in dozens of rivers and streams in an effort to reboot the ecological system.

"The Norwegian companies are transferring the same operations here that have been used in Europe," said Daniel Pauly, professor of fisheries at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. "So we can infer that every mistake that has been done in Norway and Scotland will be replicated here."

Dale Blackburn, vice president of West Coast operations for Norwegian-based Stolt Sea Farm, said his staff works closely with its counterparts in Norway. But, he said, "It's ridiculous to think we don't learn from our mistakes and transfer technology blindly."

Still, more than 12 farms in British Columbia have been stricken by infectious hematopoietic necrosis, a virus that attacks the kidneys and spleen of fish.

Jeanine Siemens, manager of a Stolt farm, said, "It was really hard for me and the crew" to oversee the killing of 900,000 young salmon in August because of a hematopoietic necrosis outbreak.

"We had a boat pumping dead fish every day," she said. "It took a couple of weeks. But it was the best decision."

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