

**BEFORE THE MARLBOROUGH SALMON FARM RELOCATION ADVISORY PANEL
AT BLENHEIM**

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991
IN THE MATTER of Regulations under ss 360A and 360B of the Act
BETWEEN **THE MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**
Applicant
AND **THE MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GRAEME KEREAMA KERRY ALDRIDGE IN SUPPORT OF
THE NEW ZEALAND KING SALMON CO. LIMITED'S SUBMISSION
Dated this 11th day of April 2017**

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Whaikorero

Whakarongo ake au (I am listening)

Ki te tangi a te manu a te ma tui (I'm listening to a bird, it is a tui)

Tui tui tuia tuia (he is flying everywhere)

Tuia runga tuia raro, tuia roto tuia waho (flying up, down, in and out)

Ka rongo a te po, Ka rongo a tea o (heard it in the night heard it in the world)

Tuia te muka tangata (the plight of man)

Tihei mauri ora (the breath of life)

Tuatahi he mihi kit e runga rawa (firstly greeting to god)

Te whare e tu nei, te marae e takoto nei tena korua (To the house we stand in and the marae (agenda) in front of us, acknowledgement to you both)

Ko nga tangata o te Advisory Panel tena koutou

Nga manuhiri (visitors) *nga tangata o the rohe* (people of this region) *me te motu o Aotearoa* (everyone else from NZ), *aha nga tangata kaimahi o NZKS* (especially to my work mates from NZKS) *tena koutou katoa.*

Mihi

Ko Piripiri taku maunga (mountain)

Ko Waitohi taku awa (river)

Ko Waikawa taku marae

Ko nga iwi o te tau ihu o te waka (The Top of the South iwi)

Ko Te Atiawa, Rangitane, Ngati Kuia, Ngati Apa, Ngati Koata, Ngai Tahu me Ngati Porou oku iwi (my iwi)

- 1 Kia ora my name is Graeme Aldridge. I am speaking in support of the NZKS Company's submission. I am an Aquaculture Technician in the Fish Health Department. I have worked for NZKS for 17 years in total.

- 2 I was born in Blenheim. I live in Ngakuta Bay with my partner. Five generations of my whanau have lived in Picton. They were all fishermen. My grandfather was a whaler at the Perano Whaling Station in Tory Channel.
- 3 Originally I spent approximately 18 months working in NZKS's processing factory when it was based out of Picton. This was followed by a period working for the Department of Conservation (DoC). My job involved track maintenance and pest control in Ship Cove, Queen Charlotte Sound. I helped to cut the section of the Queen Charlotte Track between Ship Cove and Anakakata Bay.
- 4 Following my time with DoC I returned to work for NZKS on their harvesting team. An opportunity to work with the Fish Health team came up, and I have been there ever since.

A Day in the Life of a Fish Health Expert

- 5 No two days are the same for me. Some of my responsibilities are:
 - (a) Determining the average weight of a pen – We analyse the fish using a 3D camera, and apply an algorithm to the length and height of fish to determine an average weight for a pen. This allows us to report on performance metrics (growth and feed conversion), and determine where it is at in the growth cycle, and decide which pens to harvest.
 - (b) Taking health samples in the field – Histology is studying the microscopic structure of the tissues. This helps us to understand the general health of our King salmon. We take a random sample from the pen, then take tissue samples from the muscle, spleen, kidney, heart, hindgut, pyloric caecae, gills and liver. These samples are fixed in formalin and we send to Brightwater Consulting Ltd (our veterinarian and histopathologist). They trim the samples and get them embedded in paraffin wax, cut the slides and return them for reading. The results of these reports are reported back to NZKS so appropriate action may be taken. I also collect samples for bacteriology. This involves swabbing the fish's kidney or taking a biopsy and sending it to New Zealand Veterinary Ltd who determines whether there are bacteria present and, if so, the species of bacteria.
 - (c) X-raying fish at the Cawthorn Aquaculture Park, sea farms and hatchery – I visit the scientists in Nelson at least once a week. The team is investigating the development and causes of spinal curvature in farmed

King salmon. We are aiming to improve animal welfare and reduce yield losses to the company from this problem.

- (d) Assisting with feed trials – NZKS is looking to improve and develop salmon diets. We run a myriad of trials in commercial pens, Ruakaka R&D pens and the nine tanks at the Cawthron Aquaculture Park. I am responsible for collecting growth and quality data from these trials.
- (e) Feed retention testing – I trial batches of fish feed as orders come in to ensure that the pellets hold their shape and don't break down too quickly. This is important, as it means that the fish get maximum benefit from the feed and the environmental footprint is minimised. We make sure the feed is up to the standard we have contractually specified from our suppliers, to ensure optimal fish performance.
- (f) Quarterly health checks of our seafarms and freshwater hatcheries – I regularly visit our seafarms and freshwater hatcheries. We take random samples of salmon from the raceways and pens, analyse their biomass, do a general health check and conduct faeces analysis to make sure they are eating. This helps NZKS to understand the big picture and ensure our salmon are healthy throughout their lifecycle in both fresh and seawater.

Healthy Fish – Quality Product

- 6 My role is important. I see myself as an experienced salmon handler, with special skills and knowledge of the species. Every day when I show up to work I need to be precise, observant and careful. If something is wrong at any stage of the lifecycle, it is my team's responsibility to spot that. We need to know what has gone wrong and provide information so the company act quickly.
- 7 It is difficult to produce a premium product if we do not look after our fish. King salmon are sensitive. It takes skill to rear them. You must be gentle. They need to be nurtured. You can tell straight away if something is wrong with your pet. My relationship with our salmon is similar. They are not just a product.
- 8 As well as monitoring salmon health, I play a part in helping other staff to understand how important it is to care for our fish. Striving for perfection is part of the company's culture. I rub shoulders with people from all different stages of the process, including our hatcheries, our farms, processing, our suppliers and independent research organisations.

- 9 Staff who have worked for us for several years understand that they contribute to making a great product. Part of my job is making sure young staff and new comers develop passion and pride in their work and in our vision.

Why I Love my Work

- 10 I enjoy working for NZKS. I have some great mates at work. It's a good team environment. There are a number of guys who have mentored me and taught me everything I know. I'm really loyal to the company. They have looked out for me. Because of my job I've been able to buy my house and have a good quality of life. Lots of the staff are like family to me, and I would go out of my way to do what I can for them.
- 11 It also means a lot that I can work in my home region. The Sounds are my backyard. I love going to work in that beautiful environment. My favourite days are in rough weather and sea with Tangaroa (God of the sea). I love being out there when it is wild. I feel a strong connection to the place.
- 12 Some people are anti-salmon farming or say that NZKS is a foreign company. Our staff are not cowboys. I'm not a cowboy and I'm not a foreigner. We are kiwis and we care for the environment. It's where we live, work and play. NZKS has strong measures in place to make sure it cares for the sea. I think most of our staff feel a strong connection to the environment where they work. They are like most kiwis - it is part of our culture to feel a strong affiliation with the moana/sea, and we have a duty to be good guardians.

Community Involvement

- 13 In May 2016 I sat with Te Atiawa at the blessing ceremony for the release of young rowi kiwi onto the Kaipupu Wildlife Sanctuary in Picton. About once a month I help with most iwi programmes to mentor and educate our young people about how our ancestors used to do things and how we do things now. Activities include Kapa haka, Mau taiaha, weaving and hunting and fishing. We took the kids to Lake Rotoiti in St Arnaud to show them the protected longfin eels.
- 14 I play rugby for the Waitohi Rugby Club. I support Project Jonah along with my partner, who is actively involved with the charity. In the past I was a volunteer for the Picton Fire Brigade.
- 15 My partner and I have a sense of duty to our home in Ngakuta Bay. We are unofficial kaitiaki. We want to look after this special place for the next

generation. One way we do this is collecting scallop shells dumped in the bay by recreational fishers, and disposing of them properly on land.

Conclusion

- 16 My job is to ensure that our salmon are as healthy as possible and to create a culture of pride, passion and perfection. Good salmon health is better for animal welfare and for the environment. I believe the proposal to relocate sites makes sense, and will result in better environmental outcomes. It means that NZKS can continue to produce some of the best salmon in the world, something that Kiwis can be proud of.

Graeme Kereama Kerry Aldridge