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**Environmentalists in Norwegian [fish] farming
Buy shares in order to have right to speak**

The two political foxes Sigbjørn Johnsen and Leif Frode Onarheim will both have to give space on the podium for American environmental activists at their respective general meetings.

The American environmental fund National Environmental Trust has bought shares in the three large seafood companies Cermaq, Fjord Seafood and Pan Fish. Johnsen and Onarheim are chairmen of the board in the first two. The fund has forwarded identical proposals to the general meetings of all three companies.

"I have never been afraid of debate," says Johnsen, who utilized the same tactic during his time with AUF (Labor Party Youth, the youth branch of Arbeiderpartiet).

"Some AUF members bought shares in Norwegian companies in connection with a project we had to investigate the ownership structure of the Norwegian economy," says Johnsen. He notes that it is possible for any owner to have questions answered.

Sustainable

Johnsen is preparing a response for the general meeting regarding the environmental actions of the company. He emphasizes that Cermaq is committed to sustainable use of the ocean.

The American fund has 20 shares in Cermaq, 200 in Pan Fish and 2000 in Fjord Seafood. The fund has sent in a proposal for actions that will protect the environment. These would require the companies to use methods for the production of salmon that prevent the spread of disease, pollution from waste, escape of fish, and assurance that food that is used in the production come from sustainable fish resources.

In practice this would mean that the companies would be required to use closed systems for the production of salmon, be they cement tanks, plastic sacks or fiberglass that physically separates the fish from the external environment, so that it becomes as tight as an aquarium. This is quite possible to implement, but the costs are high.

Unsuccessful

WWF (World Wildlife Fund) has previously tried to use a strategy of buying shares in companies with an important environmental role, for example energy, oil and gas companies.

"We have determined that general meeting democracy has its limits. In most cases, the leadership and large shareholders have an easy time manipulating away unpleasantness from the backbenches. We have therefore not obtained the results we should have had if democracy had functioned," says Rasmus Hannsson, General Secretary of WWF Norway to Aftenposten.

John Peter Tollefsen, the manager of AksjeNorge, is not aware if environmental organizations have purchased shares in other companies. Nor do many of the large companies, like Statoil, have an ongoing dialogue with environmentalists," he says.

Photo caption: Sigbjoern Johnsen (on the left) and Leif Frode Onarheim should be prepared for debate. The newly-formed American environmental activists in Norwegian [fish] farming have sent a proposal to their respective companies calling for closed systems for the production of salmon that are as tight as aquariums in order to protect the environment.