

David Lewsey  
Head of Strategic Support  
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**Veterinary Medicines Directorate**  
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February 22, 2007

Dear Mr Lewsey:

Further to the letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2007 from Maggie Green of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the Pure Salmon Campaign formally requests an internal review regarding the VMD's position of not naming any Chilean companies involved in crystal violet contamination of farmed salmon.

Maggie Green's letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> February stated that:

“However, we have withheld the Chilean import documentation and have redacted from the Sample Information Table the names of the farming companies, producers and producers' registration numbers. The import documentation from Chile to Thailand relating to this sample showed that the consignment consisted of lots from more than one company/farm. This documentation which lists the companies involved was provided voluntarily to the VMD by a third party. Having taken account of the third party's views (in accordance with the Code of Practice, as above) it is our judgment that its disclosure could adversely affect their legitimate economic interests and the likelihood of them and other companies volunteering similar information in the future. We are withholding this information under the exceptions in Regulation 12(5)(e) and 12(5)(f) of the EIR:

**Regulation 12(5)(e)** relates to the confidentiality of commercial or industrial information where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest. It is subject to the public interest test. We have very carefully considered the arguments for and against disclosure and have come to the view that the public interest favours maintaining the exception. We judge that a consequence of disclosure in this case could be significant damage to the interests in question, particularly when the VMD does not know the specific identity of the processor, supplier and farming company in relation to the positive sample and could be implicating ‘innocent’ parties.

**Regulation 12(5)(f)** applies where the information was provided voluntarily, that is the supplier was not under and could not be put under any legal obligation to supply it to the

VMD; there are no other circumstances that entitle the VMD to disclose it; and the supplier has not consented to its disclosure. Again it is subject to the public interest test. We have very carefully considered the arguments for and against disclosure and have come to the view that the public interest favours maintaining the exception as each of the conditions above applies in this case. The purpose of this exception is to ensure the free flow of volunteered information to government, for example for collecting certain types of statistical data and conducting sample surveys, which was the case in relation to this information. If the VMD were to disclose such information without consent third parties may stop volunteering this useful information to government”.

I refer you to the Pure Salmon Campaign’s letter to Salmon of the Americas and SalmonChile which requests specific information on the names of any companies involved. In view of claims by the salmon farming industry regarding the traceability and provenance of farmed salmon, the Pure Salmon Campaign believes it is imperative that consumers have full disclosure.

By protecting the identity of the salmon farming and processing companies concerned, the UK Government is protecting economic interests rather than protecting food safety and the interests of the public. The Pure Salmon Campaign believes that withholding this information sets a dangerous precedent and further erodes consumer confidence in farmed salmon.

Sincerely,

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