

Can farmed salmon be marketed as "organic"?

Written by Alex Binkley

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The Green Party of Canada has attacked proposed organic aquaculture standards released by the Canadian General Standards Board on June 30. The Party, which has no elected representatives but captures about 8% of the vote in national elections, said in a July 14 statement that raising salmon in large nets off the British Columbia coast doesn't qualify as organic. The standards "need serious revision because they do not propose the necessary changes and improvements needed for aquaculture practices to become environmentally friendly," Janice Harvey, Green Party fisheries critic, says in the statement. The standards are for comment until Aug. 30, the Board says. It will review all the comments before issuing final standards later this year.

"There are many problems with current net pen practices, including transfer of diseases and parasites to wild salmon, the use of wild fish as feed for farmed fish, the dispersal of tonnes of solid waste and nutrients into the surrounding waters, and the problematic use of antibiotics in farmed fish," she said. "The general public assumes that an organic label means the environment has been protected in the production of the food product. To label farmed salmon from open net pens 'organic' is misleading and unhelpful to the effort to move aquaculture onto a sustainable footing," added Harvey.

"There has already been significant public protest against open pen salmon aquaculture so it is surprising and disturbing that these farms could be labeled as organic," said Green Leader

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Elizabeth May. "New standards need to ensure that aquaculture does not harm wild fisheries or the marine environment."

The proposed standards can be viewed [here](#)