National legislation in Great Britain for the control of fish diseases

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Summary: The Diseases of Fish Act 1937 of Great Britain is almost certainly the longest-standing example of national legislation specifically devised to control fish diseases. It was introduced in response to several outbreaks of furunculosis disease in wild salmon and other fish species in the rivers of England, Wales and Scotland, which were attributed to the importation of infected live rainbow trout from Germany. The Act totally prohibited the importation of live salmonids into Great Britain, and made it illegal to import salmonid ova and all live freshwater fish species without a licence. The Act also provided powers for authorised persons to enter onto any land to confiscate any fish, ova, foodstuff or articles suspected to have been illegally imported into Great Britain. Moreover, the Act enabled any disease to be designated as 'notifiable', meaning that even the suspicion of its presence in any waters must be reported to the official services.

This legislation was eventually amended and extended by the Diseases of Fish Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement for all fish-farming businesses to become registered with the official services, and to maintain records of the movement of fish and fish ova into and from their sites. In 1986, additional powers were introduced under the Animal Health Act 1981 to limit the importation of dead, ungutted salmonid fish.

In 1993, the legislation was amended to remove any legal conflict with European Economic Community Council Directive 91/67/EEC. In addition, the Diseases of Fish (Control) Regulations have since been passed so that new European Union rules for the control of infectious salmon anaemia, viral haemorrhagic septicaemia and infectious haematopoietic necrosis may be enforced nationally.

KEYWORDS: European Economic Community – Fish diseases – Great Britain – Legislation.

INTRODUCTION

Legislation that is specifically intended to control fish diseases has existed in Great Britain for almost sixty years, following the passing of the Diseases of Fish Act in 1937 (1). This initial legislation was in response to a series of outbreaks of a bacterial disease (furunculosis) in wild salmonids and other freshwater fish in the rivers...

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of England, Wales and Scotland from 1910 to the 1930s, and it is of some interest to look at the historical circumstances.

Until about 1909, furunculosis had been observed almost exclusively in Germany where it caused severe mortalities in farmed trout populations. In 1910 it was reported for the first time in France and Switzerland. In Great Britain, the first cases, which occurred in river populations of trout in southern England in 1909, attracted little attention. However, two years later, in 1911, severe outbreaks of furunculosis were confirmed among salmon in four rivers in south-west England, and the heavy mortalities caused considerable concern. Investigations into the origins and spread of the disease were started but, with the onset of war in Europe, efforts were soon suspended. It was not until the 1920s, after a further spread of the disease, that the problem once again began to receive attention. Following outbreaks in rivers in Wales in 1925, further serious epizootics occurred in 1926, among salmon and sea trout, in four rivers in north-east England and Scotland. Two years later there were further heavy outbreaks in southern England and by then a total of seventeen rivers had become affected in Scotland. Such was the deep concern caused by the spread and impact of furunculosis, that the Government appointed a committee, comprising eminent medical bacteriologists and salmon fisheries experts, to investigate the situation. Known as the 'Furunculosis Committee', it had the following terms of reference:

'To investigate the origin, predisposing causes and mode of dissemination of furunculosis and similar infectious diseases among salmon, trout and other freshwater fish in England and Scotland and conduct experiments with a view to ascertaining methods of combating the disease and to report the results of the proceedings.'

The Furunculosis Committee produced three reports between 1930 and 1935. In its first interim report, the Committee presented detailed accounts of the epidemiological situation and the results of the bacteriological investigations thus far (16). Its initial conclusions and recommendations included the following:

- 'There is need not only for continued investigation, but also for immediate preventative action;
- The damage caused by the disease to the economically important salmon fishing industry within the last three or four years has reached serious dimensions;
- We have also ascertained that imported live trout may be, and in many cases are, affected;
- As regards fish from abroad, we have no hesitation in recommending that the importation of live fish of whatever species belonging to the family Salmonidae should be prohibited;
- We are further of the opinion that the importation of other species alive, apart from live eels for human consumption, should be allowed only under licence and after due enquiry as to their origin, purpose and destination.'

The second interim report, published in 1933, presented further detailed data from epidemiological and experimental studies (17). From an extensive list of conclusions, the Committee made further recommendations, including the following:

- 'We regret that legislative action has not yet been taken on the lines suggested in our first interim report, and we would strongly urge that such action should be taken as soon as possible;
Energetic action at the commencement of an epizootic to restrict as far as possible its development, for example, the removal of fish which are likely to become infected while they are still healthy and suitable for food;

The necessity for reporting without delay the presence of the disease, despatching specimens to the laboratory for diagnosis, and searching for and removing immediately dying fish and carcasses;

We strongly urge the continuance of the investigation and research work.'

The final report of the Committee was published in 1935 (18). This report gave updated details on the occurrence and prevalence of furunculosis in Great Britain and other countries, and presented research results on transmission and pathogenicity. The final conclusions and recommendations of the Committee emphasised the disease risks associated with imports of live fish and the need for legislation to control such risks.

The disease was probably introduced in Great Britain in trout imported from the Continent, disseminated among fish farms by the transfer of infected trout and hence was spread into rivers and streams;

We urged the need for legislative action in our first report and have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that the need still exists. We regard the following as the essential provisions of such legislation:

a) the prohibition of the importation of live fish of the Salmonidae family

b) the importation of live eggs of the Salmonidae family and live freshwater fish only under licence

c) the compulsory notification of outbreaks of disease

d) powers to prohibit movement from an infected area of live fish and articles liable to carry infection

e) compulsory powers of inspection of rivers and farms.'

It was in response to these published reports that the Government soon afterwards introduced specific legislation to control fish diseases, as recommended by the Furunculosis Committee.

THE DISEASES OF FISH ACT 1937

Passed in 1937, the Diseases of Fish Act provided the enforcing authorities with a wide range of statutory powers, and established certain legal requirements for fisheries owners, fish farmers and fish importers (1). The main provisions of the Act include the following:

Restriction on importation of live fish and eggs

- Imports of live fish of the salmon family into Great Britain are prohibited.
- Imports of live freshwater fish, and the live eggs of fish of the salmon family, or of freshwater fish, are illegal without a licence.
- Import licences are subject to any (reasonable) conditions, as the Minister thinks fit.
Preliminary precautions on suspicion of a notifiable disease

- A requirement to notify the authorities of any reasonable suspicion of the presence of a notifiable disease in any waters.
- Temporary notice to regulate the movements of live fish, eggs or feedstuff from suspected waters.
- A requirement for an inspector to examine any suspected waters to determine if they are infected.

Powers of entry on land

- An inspector (a person authorised by the Minister under this Act) is permitted to enter any land to inspect waters therein in order to take samples for examination.
- The obstruction of an inspector is illegal.

Infected areas

Powers are given to:

a) designate any disease as notifiable
b) publicly designate any waters or area found to be infected by a notifiable disease
c) prohibit or regulate the transport of live fish, eggs or feed from that area
d) order the removal of dead and dying fish and their disposal.

Thus, from 1937 it became illegal to import live salmonids into Great Britain and this total prohibition remained in force for forty-six years. With the added advantage of being an island (and therefore having no cross-border rivers or other bodies of fresh water), this is undoubtedly why Great Britain has stayed free of certain other serious, infectious diseases of salmon and trout, such as viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) and infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN), which spread and became endemic in other countries of Europe.

As for other live importations, import licence requirements for farmed freshwater fish (other than salmonid species) and eggs of fish (essentially eyed ova of salmonids) were strengthened considerably in the mid-1970s. It was made a condition of import that a specified health certificate must be issued by an authorised inspector of the appropriate government authority in the country of origin, certifying that the supplying farm was free of certain diseases. (These diseases were VHS, IHN, infectious pancreatic necrosis [IPN], spring viraemia of carp [SVC] and erythrodermatitis.) It was stipulated that health certification must be based on representative samples of all stock at the farm having been inspected and tested for at least the previous two years, and found free of these diseases. The numbers of fish to be sampled, the laboratory tests to be carried out, and the intervals between sampling were specified in detail.

At the same time, imports of live freshwater fish from wild stocks (other than tropical, ornamental species, which were given blanket exemption) were prohibited, on the grounds that reliable health certification could not be given for such fish. With most countries being unable or unwilling to meet the stringent health certification requirements, few licences for the importation of live, farmed freshwater fish were issued from that time onwards. (Licences that were issued mostly concerned common
carp and grass carp from a single site in what was then Yugoslavia.) Ornamental varieties of such fish, however, such as koi carp, goldfish, etc., were exempted from the health certification requirements, and were still imported.

In the case of eyed ova of farmed salmonids, some countries were able to meet the health certification requirements, and import licences were issued for tens of millions of rainbow trout eggs annually, over the following years. Most of these eggs came from farms in Denmark but later some also came from a limited number of farms in the United States of America, South Africa and Tasmania.

In 1937 furunculosis was immediately made notifiable under the Act, but it was almost thirty years before a second disease was added. In the mid-1960s it was thought that a skin disease spreading in river populations of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), and inducing large-scale mortalities, was a form of columnaris disease, and this condition was made notifiable in 1966. After intensive research it became clear that the primary cause of the condition was not columnaris, and the disease was renamed 'ulcerative dermal necrosis' (UDN) in the scientific literature. This was made notifiable in 1973 and the opportunity was taken to add five other diseases, which were seen to be of increasing significance and a potential threat to wild and/or farmed fish populations in Great Britain. With an increasing awareness and scientific knowledge of existing diseases, and the emergence of new diseases in Great Britain and elsewhere, the list has been amended and added to over the years, as shown in Table I.

**Table I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fish disease made notifiable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Furunculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Columnaris</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1973 | Infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN)  
Viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS)  
Infectious haematopoietic necrosis (IHN)  
Infectious dropsy of cyprinids (IDC)  
Ulcerative dermal necrosis (UDN)  
Whirling disease |
| 1978 | Bacterial kidney disease (BKC) |
| 1984 | Furunculosis of salmon  
Spring viraemia of carp (SVC)  
(Furunculosis, IDC, columnaris, UDN removed) |
| 1986 | Enteric redmouth disease (ERM) (Scotland only) |
| 1988 | Gyrodactyliasis (*Gyrodactylus salaris*) |
| 1990 | Infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) |

The powers provided by the 1937 Act have been used to designate, by an ‘infected area order’, any farms or areas of Great Britain found to be affected by a notifiable disease, and to restrict transfers of live fish from such places to elsewhere in the country, in an effort to prevent the further spread of the disease concerned.
Farmers and owners of ‘infected waters’ are required to apply to the authorities for permission to transfer any live fish, eggs or feedstuff off the site and, as a general rule, approval has only been granted for transfers to other fish farms or waters known to be already affected by the same disease. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this provision was used in attempts to prevent the further spread of columnaris/UDN. The deep concern caused by this disease led to the establishment of specialist fish disease laboratories in England (Weymouth) and Scotland (Aberdeen), to research the causes of the condition and to provide ‘inspectors’, who would investigate suspected new cases and apply movement restrictions as necessary.

From the early 1970s onwards, the same powers have been used to try to prevent the spread of IPN, whirling disease, bacterial kidney disease (BKD), furunculosis in salmon, SVC and enteric redmouth disease (ERM), as each disease has emerged to become a problem. These powers have proved particularly successful in controlling BKD and SVC, which continue to have a very limited distribution in Great Britain.

The fish disease legislation remained unchanged for almost forty-six years. Amendments to the provisions of the 1937 Act were eventually made in 1983, through another Act of Parliament (the Diseases of Fish Act 1983) (2).

**THE DISEASES OF FISH ACT 1983**

This Act was brought into force in response to changing disease risks as fish farming expanded and knowledge of fish diseases in Great Britain and other countries increased. Great Britain had also developed a need to allow the importation of live trout from Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom (UK) but outside the territory of Great Britain. This change to the blanket prohibition on importing live salmonids into Great Britain laid down by the 1937 Act required primary legislation by another Act of Parliament. The new legislation provided an opportunity to introduce other fish disease control measures to cover situations not foreseen by the 1937 Act. The main changes provided by the 1983 Act were as follows:

- to allow the importation of live salmonids (but only under specific authorisation by Parliament on a case-by-case basis)
- to be able to designate marine waters (as well as fresh waters) as being ‘infected’ by a notifiable disease
- to prohibit or regulate the movement of live fish, eggs or feedstuff into (as well as out of) a designated area
- to require fish farms to be registered, and to provide stock information, maintain records on the movement of fish into and out of the farm, and to make these records available for inspection by the authorities.

The blanket prohibition on the importation of live salmonids was, in effect, lifted by this Act. Nevertheless, the only such imports subsequently permitted by Order in Parliament were from a few individual, specified, trout farms in Northern Ireland, which had a satisfactory history of disease testing by government authorities, and which could meet strict health certification requirements (such as those for eyed ova), and site specifications. (These site specifications included such requirements as a protected water supply coming exclusively from a spring, borehole or well; a
substantial barrier to prevent fish entering the farm from downstream; no introduction of fish from anywhere other than a farm of equal health status, etc.). No other country was given such an authorisation and so the importation of live trout and salmon from outside the UK remained prohibited. The vast majority of imports continued to be of eyed rainbow trout ova, from farm sources which could meet the usual long-standing health certification requirements.

The Acts of 1937 and 1983 gave no powers to control the importation of dead salmonids. However, in the mid-1980s there was increasing concern about the possibility of introducing such diseases as VHS and IHN into Great Britain through imports of dead, uneviscerated trout and/or salmon. It was known that the viruses of both diseases could remain infectious in the tissues of dead fish, particularly in the visceral organs, for several days after death. It was thought that the main threat to Great Britain came from the uncontrolled disposal of viscera and washings from imported, uneviscerated salmonids that had been processed at plants on or near rivers.

Concern heightened when some fish in a consignment of rainbow trout, which had been imported from Denmark and was on sale at one of the fish markets in England, were observed to have clinical signs similar to VHS. Part of the consignment had been purchased by a trout farmer for evisceration at his on-farm processing plant. Laboratory tests on visceral organs confirmed the presence of infectious VHS virus, emphasising that there was a very real risk of introducing the disease into Great Britain via unrestricted imports of such fish. It was therefore decided that additional legislation should be introduced to control the importation of dead salmonids. This was achieved by an order made under the Animal Health Act 1981 (which gives powers, *inter alia*, to require licensing of imports of any animal carcasses and/or their offal) in the form of the Importation of Salmonid Viscera Order 1986 (3).

**THE IMPORTATION OF SALMONID VISCERA ORDER 1986**

This Order, in effect, prohibited the importation of salmonid viscera, whether or not these viscera were detached from the dead fish (i.e. were offal or were part of a whole fish). However, provision was given for:

- exemptions to the prohibition to be allowed by general or specific licence
- import licences to be subject to any conditions appropriate for preventing the spread of fish disease into or within Great Britain
- legal notices to order the detention, disposal, destruction or re-export of unlicensed imports
- the owner or possessor of viscera that had been illegally imported to be required to take the viscera out of Great Britain, destroy or otherwise dispose of the viscera as directed, or detain the viscera at a specified place and for a specified time
- legal notices to require the cleansing and disinfection of premises, vehicles, etc. which had contained unlicensed imports.

Under these licensing arrangements, general licences were issued only for imports from countries which could satisfactorily demonstrate the absence of VHS and IHN from their waters. Moreover, these countries must operate their own import controls on ungutted salmonids, to prevent fish from an unacceptable source entering Great
Britain through the ‘back door’. General licences were also granted for the importation of salmonid viscera for incorporation into other foods, e.g. fish paste, and for use as or in pet or animal food. Otherwise, the importation of uneviscerated dead salmonids into Great Britain was prohibited.

Because such measures might be interpreted by other countries as a barrier to trade, British officials notified the European Commission (EC) and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of the intended restrictions. There was no reaction from the EC and after GATT had been notified, only one country, Norway, expressed strong concern because of its substantial export trade in uneviscerated salmon to Great Britain. Great Britain accepted that Norway was free of VHS and IHN. However, Norway had few, if any, controls over its own imports of uneviscerated salmonids at the time, and Great Britain was not, therefore, prepared to issue licences for Norwegian imports. After long discussions, the Norwegian authorities accepted the approach of Great Britain and Norway adopted its own import ban on uneviscerated salmon and trout. A general licence was eventually issued for imports of fresh salmon and trout viscera from Norway in early 1987.

However, in late 1989, this general licence was amended to exclude Norway once again as a source of uneviscerated salmonids for import into Great Britain. This exclusion was due to increasing concern over the risk of introducing a serious disease, infectious salmon anaemia (ISA), which was spreading among Norwegian salmon farms. Some years later, in 1993, the EC (now European Union [EU]) applied a similar prohibition on imports of uneviscerated salmon from Norway to all EU Member States, as a ‘safeguard action’ to prevent the introduction of ISA into the EU (14).

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY DIMENSION

The national legislation described above gave Great Britain considerable protection against the risk of introducing serious fish diseases from other countries, and also provided regulations to control any outbreaks of serious (notifiable) diseases within the country. However, this strong package of national legislation for the control of fish diseases had to be amended from 1993 to meet the requirements of the European Union. The Member States of the EU agreed that a ‘single market’ should exist within the EU, with free movement of goods, including live animals, between all Member States. However, it was recognised that, within a single open market, animal health measures would be required so that trade in live animals did not worsen the animal disease status of the EU. Europe does not have a uniform fish health status so, if existing frontier barriers and restrictions were removed, without imposing additional health safeguards, the risk of importing disease would obviously increase for some countries. The concern about the possible spread of serious fish diseases, together with the wish to liberate trade, led to the introduction of uniform fish disease control measures, in the form of EC Directive 91/67/EEC (described by W. Daelman in this publication) (9, 11). In essence, Directive 91/67/EEC of 28 January 1991, which came into force on 1 January 1993, establishes the animal health conditions governing the placing on the market of aquaculture animals and products. This legislation, along with two other Directives – 90/425/EEC, covering veterinary and zootechnical checks on intra-Community trade in live animals (10), and 91/496/EEC, covering veterinary checks on animals from third countries (i.e. outside the EU) (12) – provides the
common framework of conditions regulating trade in aquaculture animals and their products both within and between EU Member States and from exporting nations outside the EU.

Under EU legislation, each EU Member State must amend any national legislation (or introduce new legislation) to allow EU rules to have legal force within that Member State. Great Britain implemented these Directives in the form of the Fish Health Regulations 1992 (4), which were designed: 'to implement Council Directive 91/67/EEC to the extent that it is not implemented by the existing legislation'.

Thus, the 1992 Regulations, which came into effect on 1 January 1993:

- prohibit the placing on the market of aquaculture animals and products unless certain requirements relating to their health status are met
- prohibit the transport of aquaculture animals unless certain requirements relating to their welfare and prevention of the spread of disease are met
- prohibit the despatch of aquaculture animals and products unless requirements as to the identification of the aquaculture animals and products are met
- contain certain requirements concerning movement documents for aquaculture animals and products
- prohibit the introduction into Great Britain of live fish, eggs and gametes from elsewhere in the EU, unless they are accompanied by appropriate movement documents
- prohibit the introduction into Great Britain of certain dead fish which have not been eviscerated from elsewhere in the EU, unless they come from areas with appropriate fish health status
- prohibit the export of aquaculture animals and products from Great Britain to other parts of the EU, unless they are accompanied by appropriate movement documents
- require the notification of the suspicion of VHS or IHN by any person
- provide powers to impose movement restrictions and to require slaughter and disinfection in the case of VHS and IHN
- provide European Inspectors with certain powers to establish whether the Directive is applied uniformly.

Since the implementation of Directive 91/67/EEC, various changes have been made to the EU rules by passing amended Directives. All such amendments have required equivalent changes to national legislation in Great Britain, and this has been achieved through the Fish Health (Amendment) Regulations of 1993, 1994 and 1995 (5, 7, 8).

In addition, another major EU Directive, 93/53/EEC (13), has established uniform rules for the control of List I diseases (ISA) and List II diseases (VHS and IHN) of Annex A of Directive 91/67/EEC. These requirements were legally implemented in Great Britain, where they were not already covered by existing legislation, through the Diseases of Fish (Control) Regulations 1994 (6). These Regulations:

- require that an official census be kept of the fish populations on farms which are suspected of being infected with a List I or List II disease
- set out the control measures to be taken when the presence of a List I disease is suspected or confirmed
set out the control measures to be taken when the presence of a List II disease is suspected or confirmed in an approved zone or on an approved farm in a non-approved zone

- set out the control measures to be taken when a List II disease is suspected in a non-approved farm in a non-approved zone

- set out the control measures to be taken when a List I or List II disease is discovered among fish in the wild

- prohibit the vaccination of fish against List I or List II diseases

- provide powers for the enforcement of these Regulations, including powers of entry.

New EU Council Directives and amendments to existing Directives can be expected in the future, and many, if not all, will require further adjustments to the national legislation of Great Britain. For example, EU legislation will itself have to change to comply with world-wide rules on health conditions which affect international trade in animals and plants. These world-wide rules were established under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which states that constraints on international trade must be no greater than those laid down by agreed international standards (20). The only currently acceptable international standards for animal health are those developed by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). For fish health, the OIE International Aquatic Animal Health Code (described by T. Hästein in this publication) is now the bench mark for health guarantees applied to international trade in fish and fish products (15, 19). European Union rules must now follow the guidelines of the OIE Code, and, where EU rules are stricter than the Code, this strictness must be able to be justified. Thus, as the OIE Code changes, EU legislation may need to change as well. The likelihood of frequent change to the national legislation of Great Britain in the future contrasts sharply with the longevity and stability of the controls provided by the Diseases of Fish Act 1937, which remained unchanged for almost half a century.

CONCLUSIONS

Great Britain has operated national legislation specifically designed for the control of fish diseases for almost sixty years. For much of that time most of the powers needed were provided by the Diseases of Fish Act 1937, demonstrating the effective design of this piece of legislation and the skills and far-sightedness of the Furunculosis Committee. However, the rapid expansion of aquaculture in Great Britain and other countries during the 1970s and 1980s has brought a changing pattern of fish disease and a corresponding increase in the risk of disease importation and spread. The authorities in Great Britain responded quickly to these changing risks by bringing in further primary legislation, principally the Diseases of Fish Act 1983 and the Importation of Salmonid Viscera Order 1986. Together, these pieces of legislation provided Great Britain with a comprehensive set of rules to protect its fish-farming industry and wild fish stocks from the introduction and spread of disease from other countries. However, the changing nature of European politics, and the general trend towards liberalisation of trade throughout the world, have meant that many of these long-standing national powers had to be amended. New international rules, established
by such organisations as the EU, OIE and WTO, are intended not only to encourage international trade in live fish and their products, but also to provide a reasonable level of protection against the introduction of diseases into individual countries (or defined zones) from elsewhere via such trade. It remains to be seen whether Great Britain will continue to enjoy its relatively high fish health status, which undoubtedly owes much to the operation of national legislation designed to meet the needs of the country since 1937.

*LÉGISLATION BRITANNIQUE SUR LA PRÉVENTION DES MALADIES DES POISSONS. - B.J. Hill.*

**Résumé** : Le Diseases of Fish Act (Loi sur les maladies des poissons) mis en œuvre en Grande-Bretagne en 1937, est certainement l'exemple le plus ancien de réglementation nationale spécialement conçue pour la lutte contre les maladies des poissons. Cette loi a été adoptée à la suite de l'apparition de plusieurs foyers de furonculose chez les salmognidés sauvages et autres espèces de poissons dans les rivières d'Angleterre, du Pays de Galles et d'Écosse, imputés à l'importation, d'Allemagne, de truites arc-en-ciel vivantes infectées. La loi interdit formellement l'importation de salmognidés vivants en Grande-Bretagne et déclare illégale toute importation sans autorisation d'œufs de salmognidés et autres poissons d'eau douce vivants. Ce texte donne également pouvoir aux personnes autorisées de pénétrer dans toute propriété pour confisquer poissons, œufs, aliments ou articles soupçonnés d'avoir été importés illégalement en Grande-Bretagne. Par ailleurs, la loi considère toute maladie comme devant être déclarée, autrement dit la moindre suspicion de sa présence dans les eaux britanniques, quelles qu'elles soient, doit faire l'objet d'une déclaration aux services officiels.

Ce texte a ensuite été amendé et étendu par le Diseases of Fish Act 1983, qui stipule l'immatriculation obligatoire de tous les élevages piscicoles auprès des services officiels et la tenue de registres consignant toutes les entrées et les sorties de poissons et d'œufs de poissons dans les sites de production. En 1986, des dispositions supplémentaires ont été introduites, aux termes de l'Animal Health Act 1981 (Loi sur la santé animale) en vue de limiter les importations de salmognidés morts et non vidés.

En 1993, la législation en la matière a été de nouveau amendée et mise en conformité avec la Directive du Conseil de la Communauté économique européenne 91/67/CEE. La réglementation sur la prévention des maladies des poissons a, depuis, été adoptée de sorte que les nouvelles règles de l'Union européenne pour la lutte contre l'anémie infectieuse des salmognidés, la septicémie hémorragique virale et la nécrose hématopoïétique infectieuse peuvent être appliquées au niveau national.

LEGISLACIÓN NACIONAL EN GRAN BRETAÑA SOBRE CONTROL DE LAS ENFERMEDADES DE LOS PECES. – B.J. Hill.

Resumen: La Ley sobre enfermedades de los peces de 1937, promulgada en Gran Bretaña, es casi con toda seguridad el ejemplo más antiguo de texto legislativo nacional concebido específicamente para el control de las enfermedades de los peces. Este texto fue elaborado en respuesta a una sucesión de brotes de furunculosis entre los salmones salvajes y otras especies de peces de los ríos ingleses, galeses y escoceses, brotes que fueron atribuidos a la importación desde Alemania de truchas arco iris vivas infectadas. La Ley prohibió totalmente la importación de salmonidos vivos a Gran Bretaña, así como también la importación sin licencia de huevos de salmonido y de toda otra especie piscícola de agua dulce. La Ley concedía asimismo, al personal autorizado, la potestad de penetrar en cualquier terreno y confiscar todo tipo de peces, huevos, alimentos o artículos de los que pudiera sospecharse su introducción ilegal en Gran Bretaña. Por otra parte, la Ley establecía que cualquier enfermedad podía ser considerada «de declaración obligatoria», entendiendo por ello que incluso la mera sospecha de su presencia en aguas de cualquier tipo debía ser puesta en conocimiento de las autoridades públicas competentes.

Esta legislación fue objeto de enmienda y ampliación con la entrada en vigor de la Ley sobre enfermedades de los peces de 1983. Dicho texto estableció la obligación, para toda actividad comercial de piscicultura, de registrarse en los servicios públicos competentes y de mantener un registro actualizado de todas las entradas y salidas de peces y huevos. En 1986, y en el marco definido por la Ley de sanidad animal de 1981, entró en vigor un conjunto de nuevas disposiciones que restringían la importación de salmonidos muertos no destripados.

En 1993, esta legislación fue objeto de nuevas enmiendas, con el fin de evitar cualquier tipo de contradicción legal con la Directiva 91/67/CEE del Consejo de la Comunidad Económica Europea. Más adelante fue aprobado el Reglamento de (control de) las enfermedades de los peces, que prevé que las nuevas disposiciones de la Unión Europea para el control de la anemia infecciosa del salmón y de la necrosis hematopoyética infecciosa puedan ser implementadas a nivel nacional.


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REFERENCES


