Evaluating Closed Containment Technologies

As the lead federal agency responsible for aquaculture, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is committed to making knowledge-based and scientifically-informed decisions pertaining to the aquaculture industry. DFO encourages the research of innovative technologies that could contribute to its regulatory decisions and assist the salmon farming industry.

One of DFO's goals is to document the technical performance of existing closed containment technologies, and conduct a full economic analysis of their feasibility.

The department is currently conducting an initial technical evaluation of "closed containment" technologies through the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS), which coordinates the peer review of scientific issues for DFO.

The CSAS Evaluation Process

The CSAS evaluation process for closed containment technologies will:

- Develop terms of reference for scientific working papers that will be written on technical aspects of closed containment salmon aquaculture; and
- Review these scientific working papers at a CSAS workshop, attended by the province of British Columbia and stakeholders. The purpose of the workshop is to:
    a. evaluate existing closed containment technologies,
    b. examine their impacts on the biology of fish,
    c. determine risks to the environment, and
    d. identify the potential use of closed containment systems for commercial rearing of salmon.

Why a Formal Science Advisory Process Matters

In the development of new research, individual investigators will typically have different perspectives and observations related to a specific subject or issue. Differences in scientific perspectives may be confusing to the public but are certainly not unusual during the development of new knowledge.

The role of peer-review in developing this new knowledge is to verify outcomes and observations so that we can build confidence in new results and knowledge. Faced with a diverse and growing number of issues to address, we have developed a flexible but structured advisory process to make sure that DFO Science meets its advisory responsibilities to:

- ensure quality, objectivity, and inclusiveness, and;
- provide all interested parties a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

For further information, please visit the CSAS website: http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas/Csas/Home-Accueil_e.htm