A future for European aquaculture

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Which future for aquaculture?

What is the hinge factor?

How we use our natural capital will define our competitive position in the global economy

"Aquaculture, not the internet, represents the most promising investment opportunity of the 21st century"

Peter Drucker, Economist & Nobel Laureate

To-day we discuss a European industry with a vast potential

and a depressing performance.

What does EU and Member States want from aquaculture, that is not clear to me

These actions may help and accelerate development, but,

Science and innovation is not the solution

Subsidies are not the solution

We can all agree to a number of initiatives that may help aquaculture to develop. But do they address the fundamental barrier for production?

Europe already has a leading position in science and technology. Science is not the solution. It may skyrocket performance – but it needs a basis to perform on

Subsidies is a two edged tool. It may boost development and competitiveness or it may sustain inefficient production if the basic condition for production are not in place.

How much money have we spent on aquaculture so far – and what is the result

Everybody wants to develop aquaculture – except those giving the permissions

- 4 DGs involved - MARE, ENVI, TRADE and SANCO
- MS have no policy, no plan and a fragmentet administration
- Local communities have no wish to challenge environmental interests without a clear mandate

I will point to just one critical factor:

He who wants to invest and produce must have immediate access to a permission on clear terms.

I noted that the commissioner highlighted this point.

Aquaculture has very little attention from those who administer rules concerning aquaculture

Their task is to guard the environment

And

There is no strategy for aligning diverging interests in order to exchange the potential with plans and production.

In Denmark we have aligned the interests from the ministry of Food, the ministry of environment and the NGO's. We now plan for a 200-300% increase in production.

Are we the right people here to-day . I do not see representatives for environmental regulation

The solution starts with the permission to produce

Set limits for environmental impacts
and be sure to document the effect of production

Freedom for the producer to choose technology and methods

One-shop administration

We need a change of conception

We need to be more precise about the way we use the services that natural capitals offers us, whether we fish, we pollute by producing, or we use space to produce.

We need a new paradigm for governance and management

Command and control having been the core public management paradigm since mid 18 hundred does not meet the increasingly complicated requirements for sustainable production – nor the needs for swift adaptation.

Governance should be about setting the environmental limits that society can accept and allow private companies to manage to optimise value within these limits

Result based management allowing the industry to target investments, innovate and choose best practises is an answer to post-bureaucratic top down micro management.

And it offers the two basic conditions for green growth: Respecting the limits and getting the most out of it – moving from restriction to optimising.

How can we move forward?

1. The Commission must help MS to set production targets and environmental boundaries

The Commission has taken a guideline initiative

The Commission may consider a task force assisting MS directly in their planning and development of a proper administration

Identify and remedy contradictory effects of Community legislation

How to ensure consistency between MS policy, EU directives and local administration.

How is the legal and administrative set up in MS. An how could it be done.

I expect the Commissions fact finding to give us an answer: Are MS in line for a targeted and substantial increase in production? Or is red tape an insurmountable barrier?

And I expect the Commission to take the lead, guiding us the proper way.

We talk of shared competence

- but not shared responsibility; rather defined responsibility

It is crucial that the relevant parties assume the relevant responsibility.

No sense of responsibility = No action.

Set the targets and ensure access to produce, prioritise production ahead of high technology

And establish

Efficient one-stop-shop for licensing: the key to success = a permission at the time when investment is attractive.

How to engage the right decision makers in the process?

2. Consider if MS commitment to a real growth in production are strong enough to release EMFF funds for investment

No doubt the EMFF result will be to allocate huge amounts of money for aquaculture. What do we get for the money: a socioeconomic programme or more fish.

I define growth as increased production

Growth is also a stable production with less waste

(less use of natural capital)

With Result Based management you get both

3. Member States must establish the legal and administrative framework

- They must institute the green growth principle as a basis for public regulation
- They must align local interest with government priorities

Prepare a comprehensive plan for the partnership contracts on the EMFF:

- MS could now start formulating production plans for how much can be produced under given limits
- Aligning policies regarding the plan
- Establish the administrative basis to incentivise investments that optimise output in relation to impact

The former commissioner, Joe Borg, talked of the paradox of EU being world leaders in aquaculture research and technology and importing most of our seafood while our own aquaculture is on stand still.

I don't see it as a paradox. Merely as a consequence of the choices we have made in governing the sector.

In addition the lack of link between permission to produce and environmental effect may have led to a poorer environmental situation.

The art of governing a competitive society is to leave the decisions to the most qualified.

All in all this is about efficient public governance as the hinge factor for a globally competive economy based on private enterprises management of our natural capital.

Thank you