

Whiteshore Cockles Ltd
Whiteshore
Kyles, Paible
North Uist
HS6 5DY

Mr <redacted>
Animal Health - Disease Prevention Team
Agriculture and Rural Delivery Directorate
Animal Health and Welfare Division
Scottish Government
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh, EH11 3XD

6th July 2021

Dear Mr <redacted>,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 July 2021 regarding the disposal of animal by products and derived products by way of burial in an authorised landfill.

We have replied to your queries regarding our Method Statement procedures below:-

1. We were unaware that a geographical limit had been imposed on the derogation authority. On the very rare occasions that we have accepted morts from out with the Western Isles it has been in an emergency situation. The last time this occurred was over ten months ago and from today's date we will no longer accept fish from outside the Western Isles until our new plant is operational.
2. Our record keeping is nothing short of meticulous. Every collection is recorded on a waste transfer document which has the date, fish farm site name, time of collection, time of delivery to our site and amount of waste completed accurately. This document is countersigned by the site manager, driver and our site manager. It is then recorded digitally and copies are also given to the fish site and the transport company. This information is freely available at a moments notice to any of our monitoring agencies. Our biosecurity arrangements are also very rigid. Every vehicle arriving at our site is deeply cleaned and disinfected. All tubs and skips are also allocated to an individual holding area for each fish farm site before being cleaned and disinfected. A deodoriser is also put on all vehicles before leaving our site and going on to the public road.
3. The burial process is exactly as per our Method Statement.
4. Our maintenance procedures are followed exactly as per our Method Statement.
5. Our Health & Safety Policy is up to date as per legal requirements.
6. The Corn Bunting only arrived on our site after our current burial process and regeneration policy took place, as the site was an unproductive field previously. It is now one of the best populated areas in the Western Isles due to our environmental practices. This can be confirmed by our local RSPB office if required.

To address our other concerns that have been identified incorrectly:-

1. We have never accepted ensiled fish at our site.
2. We do not use sand from out with our site.
3. Hard core rock has never been used to shore up pits. The only rock / concrete on our site has been used in the extensive building programme for our drier project.
4. The maximum time any pit is uncovered is a few hours whilst burial operations are taking place. Seaweed cover is provided on a daily basis as and when required. Tens of thousands of tons of seaweed have been used on the site since we started.

5. The last known complaint we received was in October 2020 from a mainland family who have a holiday home on the island. On the rare occurrence of seepage from a pit it is dealt with immediately as per our maintenance procedures.
6. In October 2020 we provided CNES with an up to date plan which identified the areas of our site that were still available for burial; this shows that there is still ample capacity.

We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from our local community since the illegal break in of our site by Mr <redacted> and the negative press reports which ensued. Since we started building works we have welcomed many visitors to the site who have shown an interest in our project which will be vital to the circular economy of the Highlands and Islands. Our local councillors have recently visited our site and were hugely impressed by the works that have already taken place and are fully supportive of our project, which will bring employment opportunities to the island as well as having significant environmental benefits. They also mentioned that they have never received any complaints from their constituents concerning our operation.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the proposed Task and Finish Group as their expertise and advice will hopefully assist us in completing our project as soon as possible. We will make ourselves available to the group members at the earliest opportunity to meet with and discuss the best way forward for all interested parties.

Yours sincerely

<redacted>
Whiteshore Cockles Ltd