



OIL WASHUP EVENT EXPLAINED

- In late February our industry was advised of a fish like substance washing up on the shores of Verona Sands
- The companies involved responded immediately to clear the material found, and has been monitoring the beach and surrounding shorelines since.
- Testing confirmed the oily substance at Verona Sands was fish oil and is not harmful to humans or pets.
- The oil occurred due to the increased mortality event where some deceased fish released oil from their bodies, this oil then congealed on the surface forming the small balls of oil that were found.
- To the residents and visitors affected we apologise and assure you that this matter has been taken extremely seriously. All efforts have been made to learn from this mistake and to ensure any mortality event is managed better in the future.

IS HARVESTED FISH OKAY TO EAT?

- Yes! RLO does not impact humans or other animals, and isn't known to impact wild fish, but can be harmful to salmon.

FACTS

Tasmania's salmon has been hit by an unprecedented, first of its size, seasonal mortality event in the state's South-East.

One tiny microbe, endemic to Tasmanian waters, that's just one millionth of a metre in size, has singlehandedly devastated several farms in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in recent weeks.

The independent Environmental Protection Authority has confirmed that the microbe, P. Salmonis, is no risk to Tasmanians, to wild fish, or the health of our waterways and beaches.

It's been a confronting time for our surrounding communities and we assure you that we are doing everything possible to fix this quickly and make changes for the future.

To say it's been devastating and exhausting for our farmers and scientists is an understatement.

They have been working around the clock to both clean up the affected areas and keep fish healthy.

While industry always does its utmost to raise healthy fish, just like all animals and primary producers, salmon and our farms are not immune to the vagaries of our natural environment.

For example, we've all recently watched as eggs have become hard to buy because of bird flu, the Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome still rears its head from time to time, just last year our beef and dairy industry was on edge with Foot and Mouth disease discovered in Bali and recently more than a hundred thousand livestock drowned in floods in outback Queensland.

The reality is two factors beyond anyone's control combined to create this unprecedented event; summer conditions, and a new strain of the Tasmanian microbe.

Just like the flu-season that we experience over winter, when the cooler temperatures force us indoors and closer together, our salmon face a similar scenario in summer.

Over summer, salmon face greater risks. It's why we vaccinate the fish before they hit the sea, have strict biosecurity protocols and employ vets to keep our fish healthy.

However, seasonal conditions have been trying and these salmon went to sea before it was known a vaccine for this strain was needed.

Workers first noticed deaths occurring early this year and immediately reported those to the EPA. The industry also took immediate action to manage or remove the affected fish from waters and beaches, and to follow strict biosecurity protocols and environmental best practice.

Many of the affected fish have been processed into value-added products including fish feed, oil and fertiliser, and a very small proportion were disposed of in landfill.

Industry also rallied the best minds in the world working in labs right here in Tasmania to get cracking on helping to work on new vaccines - much like our annual flu-jab.

Of course, like any unprecedented situation, unfortunately it's impossible to get everything right when you're faced with a situation that's never been experienced before.

No doubt, there will be lessons to learn and, with the benefit of hindsight, aspects of this unprecedented event could have been handled better.

We will of course be reviewing every element of this event and will make changes to protect our fish, our environment, our workers and our communities into the future.

Our industry takes very seriously its responsibility and regulated requirement to farm in Tasmania's waters sustainably.

Proudly, we do this to the highest standards of environmental best practice in the world.

Finally, we want to thank the community and everyone for their understanding and support in this very difficult time for our industry, and commend our workers, from our scientists to our farmers, for their work during this unprecedented event.

