Title: Estimating the Economic Cost of Viral Salmonid Disease in UK Aquaculture

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Abstract: The aquaculture industry in the UK has experienced substantial growth in the past two decades. The productivity and competitiveness of the sector to a great extent depends on the favourable health status that the sector enjoys relative to other major salmon producing countries in Europe. Currently the UK is subject to both a strict domestic disease surveillance and EU disease protection programmes that serve to minimise the spread of viral fish diseases. However the intensive commercial aquaculture production and the consequent interactions of salmonid aquaculture with wildlife habitats are likely to result in higher disease risks. Aquatic viral diseases risks present a potential danger that could have adverse economic effect on the aquaculture industry.

In this paper, the economic benefits of viral disease control are estimated and the approaches for efficient resource use in disease control to maximise social welfare are discussed. The benefits of the virus prevention program were measured as changes in consumer and producer surpluses. Overall, the analysis indicates that viable economic criterion is an essential in fish disease control measures to ensure resources are best targeted to their efficient use.