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Measures implemented in Norway by 15 July 2019

Reference is made to the letter from the EFTA Surveillance Authority (“the Authority”) dated 22 July 2019.

The Authority has asked Norway to send any updated information available concerning the action plan, in particular regarding implementation of those measures to be enforced by 15 July 2019.

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority (“NFSA”) has implemented following measures:

I. The NFSA has stopped issuing certificates attesting ISA free status

The NFSA will temporarily not issue new certificates attesting ISA free status for live aquatic animals, eggs and gametes until further notice. The NFSA has not started issuing new certificates yet.

II. The NFSA has implemented routines to improve the response time to official confirm or rule out a suspicion of ISA.

To improve the response time, the NFSA has enforced additional routines such as:

- The NFSA’s inspectors shall take out samples to verify a suspicion the first weekday after a suspicion. Sampling can be delayed by the weekend and public holidays, but the sampling must take place no later than three days after suspicion.
- The Norwegian Veterinary Institute, which receive samples for confirmation of ISA, is informed about such an improved system and will contribute to more rapid confirmation of ISA.

A new version of the “OK-instruks” has been sent out to the NFSA inspectors. In the new version, these new routines are implemented. In addition, a letter to the NFSA inspectors has been sent out explaining the new routines that entered into force by 15 July 2019. Please find the new version of the “OK-instruks” and the letter to the inspectors enclosed with this letter in Annex I and II.

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III. The NFSA has imposed better routines to control areas surrounding the outbreak

To have better control of the areas surrounding the outbreak from the time of initial notification of suspicion of an ISA outbreak until measures are taken to delimit the containment area (protection and surveillance zones) surrounding a compartment or zone in which an ISA outbreak has been officially confirmed, the NFSA has revised the procedures, which establish a containment area. The NFSA shall set into force fast track procedures in order to establish a containment area. As soon as ISA is diagnosed, a containment area shall be set into force as a local regulation.

Please find a copy of the letter sent out to the industry explaining the new procedures following an outbreak of ISA in the Annex III enclosed with this letter.

IV. The NFSA will impose additional measures in ISA-free compartments dependent on the health status of surrounding waters

To prevent introduction of ISA virus from surrounding Category III seawaters, we have imposed additional measures in ISA-free compartments dependent on the health status of surrounding waters.

These measures include:

- For each ISA-free segment in a coastal area, we have considered establishment of a buffer zone around segments and part of segments in which monitoring will be carried out. Aquaculture animals that are susceptible for ISA will be sampled in the buffer zone to protect the disease-free zone. The NFSA has not yet put into practice this measure since we have not yet concluded the extension of the buffer zone.
- Increased sampling of aquaculture animals in Category III surrounding waters within the buffer zone. The NFSA has not yet put into practice this measure since we have not yet concluded the extension of the buffer zone.
- Better information to and better control of well boat traffic around ISA-free segment and zones. The NFSA has sent a letter addressed to well boats owners emphasizing the requirements in the transport regulations when it comes to transport of live fish between areas with the same or different health status. Please find in Annex IV a copy of the letter sent to the well boat owners.

V. The NFSA has implemented better routines in the procedure for granting ISA-free status

Establishments that apply for a free status shall inform the NFSA in advance, that is, before they start sampling for granting ISA-free status. The NFSA will, with this change, have a better control of establishments/areas and quality assurance of the samples that are the basis for the free status. It will not be allowed to post-analyze samples if the sets of samples are not complete. This measure is implemented in the newest version of the "OK-instruks" (Annex I).

The head office will perform inspections and controls regarding ISA-free status. This implies that the head office will participate together with the regions in inspections of sites that have applied free status or who already have free status. The head office will carry out such inspections to ensure and calibrate the implementation of control and regulatory compliance in the regions. The inspections will consist of document review and inspections of the establishments. This routine will be in place by 1 October 2019 at the latest.

VI. The NFSA has updated and made publicly available list of compartments and zones declared free for ISA

The Authority pointed out that there is an absence of a reliable, up to date and publicly available list of compartments and zones declared free from ISA in Norway. To solve this problem, the following measures have been taken into consideration:

- The head office, together with the NFSA's regions, has conducted a check of the establishments that are declared free from ISA in Norway are in line with the current regulations.
- The NFSA has updated the list of ISA-free zones and compartments annexed to the Norwegian legislation and on the NFSA's website, so the information available is reliable.
- The NFSA will implement routines on how to update ISA-free segments.
- The NFSA will implement routines to publish and update ISA-free segments in Barentswatch

The updated list of compartments and zones declared free from ISA is publicly available from 15 July 2019 (See <https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2008-06-17-819>). The other routines mentioned above will be in place by 1 October 2019 at the latest.

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Attachments:

- Annex I: OK-instruks
- Annex II: Letter to the NFSA inspectors
- Annex III: Letter to the industry
- Annex IV: Letter to the well boat industry