SIN New Zealand Helps Secure a £1.9m Opportunity Farming the Scottish Seas

SIN New Zealand worked with researchers in Scotland and New Zealand to facilitate a collaboration which made a significant contribution to the development of a new £1.9m commercial mussel hatchery in Shetland, Scotland.

New Zealand and the UK may be oceans apart but researchers have found they share a common interest in farming the sea. Under the initiative of SIN New Zealand, and with UK government funding, over 20 UK aquaculture specialists visited New Zealand in 2013 and 2015 to identify collaboration opportunities.

To date, ten collaborations have resulted, but most excitingly, one contributed some crucial NZ experience and ideas to the development of a new, £1.9m commercial mussel hatchery in Shetland, Scotland. This industry-academic collaboration comprises the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the University of Highlands and Islands, the University of Stirling's Institute of Aquaculture and the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC).This collaboration would not have been possible without the experience and expertise from New Zealand which was essential in informing the planning and establishment of the Scottish hatchery.

Estimates from New Zealand experts project that by 2050, the world will harvest more food from the sea than from land. Aquaculture is a small but fast-growing industry in both New Zealand and Scotland and the two countries are keen to learn from one another by working together. Speaking in Edinburgh at the time of the hatchery announcement, Scotland's Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, commented that shellfish production is a growing industry in Scotland, supporting over 500 jobs across the supply chain, with Shetland accounting for almost 80% of mussels produced in Scotland.

Following SIN New Zealand initiation of this contact, links between the two countries are strengthening year by year.

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