

Licence for 'world-leading' salmon farm in Loch Long

Loch Long could be the first site in Scotland to host a new type of fish farm that aims to have less impact on its surrounding waters.

The proposed development near Arrochar, which would be Scotland's first semi-closed fish farm, has been granted an environmental permit by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

The new technology keeps farmed fish separate from the natural habitat by keeping them in large containers that reduce pollution and problems with parasitic lice.

Stewart Hawthorn, director of Loch Long Salmon, the company behind the proposal, explained: 'Semi-closed farming systems look much like conventional pens from above, but under the water they have an opaque, impermeable outer barrier that surrounds the fish net. This farming system has been operating successfully in Norway since 2014 and is now being deployed in the Faroes and Canada, but this is



the first time it will be used in Scotland.'

SEPA's decision to grant the permit is the latest in a series of regulatory approvals required before the farm can be deployed, and comes after a two-year programme of surveys and modelling to study any potential impact the farm could have on the environmental quality of the loch.

SEPA acting chief executive Jo Green said: 'We want Scotland to be a world-leading innovator of ways to minimise the environmental footprint of food production and supply,

and for aquaculture operators to have a strong and positive relationship with neighbouring users of the environment and the communities in which they operate.

'We will continue to encourage and support businesses across the sector to introduce environmentally innovative approaches to fish production.'

Loch Long Salmon has submitted a planning application to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority which, if approved, would allow construction to begin by the end of 2022.