



## News release

Date: 25/04/2016

### **European aquaculture leaders of the future to benefit from Scottish collaboration**

Scotland's largest salmon producer is teaming up with one of the country's leading marine science research institutions to help Scottish aquaculture thrive in a competitive global industry.

Marine Harvest Scotland (Ltd) has pledged two scholarships to the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in AquaCulture, Environment and Society (EMJMD ACES) run by the Oban-based Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS UHI) and in collaboration with the universities of Crete and Nantes. The course is part of the European Union's prestigious Erasmus Mundus programme and gives students the unique opportunity to travel throughout Europe as they learn about sustainable aquaculture.

The two-year sponsorship, open to graduates from EU member states, will fund one student per year and includes participation fees and an opportunity to work with Marine Harvest for a period of six months in order to complete a dissertation.

Dr Gareth Butterfield, Technical Services Manager at Marine Harvest Scotland (Ltd), today (April 25) announced the scholarships, saying: "Research and education is vital in an industry that is only 45 years old. For our business to thrive, and the industry to grow overall, we have to bring in young people who increasingly require specialist skills and training.

"In terms of research, it's critical we keep pushing on in this area if Scotland is to become the industry leader in research, innovation and technical development, providing science-based knowledge and better solutions in a growing sector.

"To date, the UK has lagged behind Norway in providing an availability of aquaculture-educated personnel, but that balance is changing."

The EMJMD ACES course, which began in 2015, awards a Joint Masters Degree through the universities of the Highlands and Islands, Crete and Nantes. It focuses on fin-fish and shellfish biology, interactions between farming activities and the environment and involves internationally renowned researchers in the field.

It provides students with an insight to the industry, whilst stressing the importance of socioeconomics; Atlantic salmon has grown to be Scotland's biggest food export and provides the country with a financial income of more than £500 million per year.

Dr Liz Cook, the EMJMD ACES programme leader at SAMS UHI, said: "One of the main themes behind this course is global food security, so we are delighted to receive the support of a world-leading food producer such as Marine Harvest Scotland.

"Thorough research into increasing the sustainability of aquaculture requires the expertise of commercial partners such as Marine Harvest Scotland. They are a crucial element of our work to produce the aquaculture industry leaders of the future."

Dr Butterfield added: "Courses like EMJMD ACES are an important vector to bridge the gap between education, research and development, and applied industry techniques and knowledge.



“Aquaculture-based academia within the UK is growing and beginning to receive the recognition it deserves. The research undertaken at SAMS, Crete and Nantes is industry-relevant, and students educated there are provided an opportunity to learn and understand theories and techniques that can easily be applied and incorporated into production strategies. These skills can bring a significant and sustainable growth to Europe’s salmon farming industry.

“We very much look forward to working more closely with the team at SAMS and all the EMJMD ACES students of 2016 and onwards.”

The Marine Harvest Scotland scholarship is open to EU citizens. Applications must be received by June 5, 2016. To obtain a scholarship application form and details of documents you will need to provide, contact Helen Bury, EMJMD ACES education administrator, at [ACES@sams.ac.uk](mailto:ACES@sams.ac.uk)

**ENDS**

#### **Picture captions**

- **EMJMD ACES course leader Dr Liz Cook of SAMS UHI and Gareth Butterfield, Technical Services Manager at Marine Harvest Scotland (Ltd), launch the new scholarship.**
- **A Marine Harvest Scotland salmon farm on Loch Duich**

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#### **Notes to editors:**

- The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS UHI), based at Dunstaffnage, near Oban, is Scotland’s largest and oldest independent marine science organisation, dedicated to delivering marine science for a healthy and sustainable marine environment through research, education and engagement with society. It is a charitable organisation (009206) and an academic partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands.
- Marine Harvest (Scotland) Limited is the largest producer of Atlantic salmon in Scotland, producing over 50,000 tonnes of salmon per year. Based in Fort William, the company prides itself on being a major employer of skilled people, who strive to produce high quality, healthy and nutritious seafood in the most sustainable way.
- With over 50 operational sites throughout Scotland, Marine Harvest offers employment in a number of rural communities, which are often reliant on fish farming to help sustain an economy in the more remote locations around the country. The balance between sustainable aquaculture and socioeconomic impacts of fish farming in Scotland is of the utmost priority to Marine Harvest, and it is in this area we share values and passion with the Scottish Association for Marine Science.