

## Written evidence submitted by Waterdance (SME0040)

06<sup>th</sup> April 2021

As discussed by email. Please include the below information as part of the written evidence for the inquiry.

An important company involved in seafood export from South west England had tens of thousands of pounds of seafood arbitrarily rejected on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March. The lorry was destined for the Netherlands with fish sold at Brixham on Friday had 500kgs of dover sole and around 9 tonnes of whole scallop condemned. The scallops were been rejected EU entry due to smell and the sole due to flesh softness. The exporters are experts in fish handling and loaded the lorry personally the day before. They would not send inferior quality products to their customers. Scallop does have a smell when transported whole, but this is very different to the smell of deteriorated product. The dover sole have softer flesh naturally at this time of year as there are in poorer condition after the Winter. This does not make them inedible and the customers these products were destined for have been receiving similar over recent weeks and been happy to re-order. The UK exporters' vet inspected the catch on the 27<sup>th</sup> March and approved the quality.

The rejection happened at the Calais-Boulogne import route and it is the officials from the EU side that have condemned the products. The process of getting a second opinion on the product quality has been chaotic and no satisfactory resolution has been reached at the time of writing on the 06<sup>th</sup> April.

It seems UK products our being unfairly judged and a total loss of this consignment will be financially damaging to the exporter and reputationally damaging to all involved in catching and selling the fish from the UK as our EU customers are let down.

We are seeking an intervention by the UK government have UK officials at these border inspection posts that could inspect the shipment themselves and ensure accountability for decisions on the EU side. There were no real-time public officials available at weekends to help resolve this situation as it emerged, which is a gap in the public service provision that must be addressed as such issues are likely to be an ongoing challenge for the time being.