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## European Community

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# Farmers blamed for algae 'invasion'

by Poul Rasmussen

Coinciding with the admission by the European Commission that the so-called "surplus stocks" of the European Community's milk, butter, and grain no longer exist and that by the end of the year the EC might even have to import milk, a new assault on the hard-pressed European farmer has been launched throughout the European press.

Farmers are now being blamed for a "mysterious" invasion of yellow algae hitting the North Sea and the waters between Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, the Skagerak and the Kattegat. The story goes, that this invasion of algae is the direct result of the voluminous application of fertilizers by the farmers, causing massive nitrogen pollution of the Baltic and the North Sea.

Compounding the scare, an unusual number of dead seals has been found along the Danish and German Baltic and North Sea coastlines. The media has broadcast heart-rending pictures of dead baby seals, to fuel hysteria against the farmers.

The entire story is a hoax! The truth is, that a normal and natural phenomenon is being used by the international "green" lobby to once again attack modern European farming. This time, their propaganda is also hurting the fishing industry badly, thereby putting the entire European food industry in danger.

A few weeks prior to the scare story about the algae invasion, Danish television reported that a handful of seals had been found dead on the shores of the Danish Kattegat Islands, Laesoe and Anholt. Immediately, the media started the line about nitrogen pollution, oxygen deficiency, etc. One week later, Danish biologists firmly established that the seals had died from pneumonia caused by a herpes virus. The relatively high number of dead seals was entirely due to the dense population of seals in these areas. When the number of dead seals continued to increase, the biologists declared that this was a normal epidemic, and that nothing could be done about it.

Despite these scientific conclusions, the "high priests of environmentalism" from the Danish National Agency of Environmental Protection (NAEP) insisted that "maybe" this

viral pneumonia could have been precipitated by pollution of the waters. Then, the media restarted the scare story about the seals.

### Nothing to do with pollution

The story about the seals was soon followed by a propaganda blitz about a dangerous invasion of algae. It has been known to generations of Danish fishermen that warm weather in the spring will produce voluminous flowering of algae. What kind of algae it will be, differs from year to year.

The yellow algae (*Chrysochromalina polyypis*) that have flowered this year are *not poisonous*. The only problem that can be caused by this algae is when large concentrations of it hit a coastal fish farm. Trapped in the farm basins, the fish cannot escape, and if the concentration of algae is high enough, the fish will suffocate. This is what happened on the west coast of Sweden and later in Norway. That's all.

The yellow algae does not kill fish in the seas. It doesn't do any harm at all. Neither do the kind of algae that produce the soapy foam that has been shown on TV. And none of it has anything to do with pollution. The areas hit by the yellow algae are the least polluted waters in the Scandinavian area. Danish fishermen have told *EIR* that if pollution had anything to do with it, the flowering of the algae would have started in the Oeresund, the Baltic Sea, and the southern part of the North Sea, close to the mouth of the Elbe river.

Instead, the yellow algae started in the cleanest parts of the Kattegat, the Skagerak and the Norwegian North Sea coastline.

### EC quotas kill fish

Swedish television has repeatedly illustrated their daily reports on the algae invasion with dramatic pictures of hundreds of dead fish lying on the Swedish Kattagat coastline. Contrary to the propaganda, these dead fish have nothing to do with the yellow algae. Rather, they are the victims of the biggest fish killer in the Kattegat and Baltic region: the EC's own fishing quotas.

Every day, Danish fishermen are forced to throw tons of dead fish overboard because of the EC quotas on fish. Obviously, fishermen cannot control what kind of fish enter their nets, and if the monthly quota has been met, the fishermen have to dump all they catch of that particular fish. If, for example, the monthly quota of cod has been met, Danish fishermen cannot land cod, and if they do, they will be fined. Therefore, whatever cod they catch that month, they have to throw back into the sea. Sometimes tons of fish are dumped, many of which are already dead after being hauled through the water for hours in the net.

Here lies the irony. First, the environmentalists cause the implementation of the fishing quotas, because of their ravings about the alleged depletion of fish stocks. Then, these quotas force the fishermen to throw the fish back into the sea, and when the dead fish hit the shores, the same environmentalists claim that it was the farmers who killed them.