

Opening Remarks – Lagarlíf / Aqua-Ice 2026

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to **Lagarlíf – Aqua-Ice 2026**.

Before I say anything else, I thought I would start with this.



I asked AI to show me what Aqua-Ice is.

And apparently, according to artificial intelligence, this is us: a very diverse aquaculture community, lots of networking, lots of coffee... and a puffin.

To be fair, I think it got one thing quite right – the diversity.

Aquaculture is a broad and diverse sector, bringing together different forms of production, knowledge, technologies and perspectives. And that is also what Aqua-Ice is about – bringing different people, knowledge and ideas together.

My name is Eva Lind, and I have the privilege of serving as Chair of Aqua-Ice. I currently work as a Project Manager at Ölfus Cluster, and before that I was fortunate to have worked within the aquaculture sector, first with Arnarlax and later with Kaldvík.

So, although my role has changed, aquaculture has very much stayed with me, as Ölfus Cluster works closely with the aquaculture companies in municipality in Ölfus.

On behalf of the board, I would like to welcome all of you – our speakers, partners, exhibitors and guests, and especially those who have travelled to Iceland to join us.

And since I have already brought artificial intelligence into the room, it seems like a good place to start.

This year's conference comes at a particularly interesting time for aquaculture. The sector is becoming an increasingly important part of food production, while developing at remarkable speed.

New production methods, better monitoring, automation and advances in science are continuously changing what is possible. We are collecting more data and gaining a deeper understanding of the organisms we cultivate and the environments in which we operate.

Artificial intelligence is adding another dimension. AI can help us understand data, recognize patterns, detect changes earlier and make better decisions. We probably do not yet fully understand how much AI and other emerging technologies will change aquaculture over the next decade.

But technology itself is not the goal. The real value lies in how we use it – to improve production, use resources more efficiently, strengthen health and welfare where relevant, reduce environmental impact and create value in a more responsible way.

And that brings us sustainability.

For a sector that depends so directly on natural resources and healthy ecosystems, sustainability is fundamental to its future. We need to think about how efficiently we use energy, water and other resources, how we minimise environmental impact, make better use of side streams, and continue to improve our systems.

Growth and sustainability cannot be competing for ambitions. If aquaculture is supposed to continue to develop, they must move forward together.

But looking towards the future also means being realistic about the challenges we face today.

Aquaculture is not an easy sector to operate in. Biological challenges and disease remain a serious concern in parts of the industry, affecting animal welfare, production and economic sustainability. Even with better technology, more data and greater knowledge, biology will always remind us that we are working with living systems. That requires constant learning, prevention and improvement.

Companies are also operating in an increasingly demanding environment, with rising costs, increasing fees and financial obligations, political instability and the need for substantial long-term investment.

Aquaculture is receiving considerable attention from politicians, regulators and the public, with strong – and sometimes very different – views on how the sector should develop.

These pressures matter when we are also asking companies to invest in sustainability, innovation, technology, biosecurity and better production practices.

Discussions on these topics are necessary. A sector that uses natural resources and impacts its surroundings should be part of an open discussion about how it develops. But long-term development also requires stability and predictability. Companies need to be able to plan, invest and understand the conditions under which they operate.

At the same time, responsibility does not only sit with policymakers or regulators. The sector itself has an important role to play.

Aquaculture does not operate separately from the communities and environments around it. How companies communicate, respond to concerns, act when things go wrong and listen and improve all influence on the trust between the sector and society.

Trust cannot simply be expected. It must be earned and maintained.

That does not mean everyone must agree about aquaculture. There will be difficult questions, criticism and different opinions about how the sector should develop.

But we should expect ourselves to be part of that conversation.

We need to explain what we do and why, but we also need to listen and be willing to discuss what works, what does not and where we still need to improve.

And perhaps that is where all these issues begin to connect.

Technology and AI, sustainability and resource use, biological challenges, economic conditions, regulation and public trust may seem like very different subjects, but together they will shape the future of aquaculture.

No single company, researcher, authority or technology can address all of them. And that is exactly why we need forums like Aqua-Ice – where people can come together, learn about the challenges facing the industry, share knowledge and experiences and challenge each other's thinking.

This is reflected in the programme over the next two days. We will look at sustainability and responsible production, biological challenges, health and disease, as well as research, innovation, technology and practical experiences from across the sector.

A good conference should not simply confirm what we already know or agree on. It should make us think, introduce us to different perspectives and hopefully send us home with new questions as well as new answers.

Being a relatively small aquaculture community in Iceland gives us a real opportunity. The distance between people working in different parts of the sector can be surprisingly short, and we should use that to share knowledge and learn from each other.

So be sure to practice your networking skills over the next two days.

Ultimately, I believe we share an interest in building a strong, responsible and sustainable future for aquaculture in Iceland. Getting there will require innovation and investment, but also responsibility, openness and dialogue.

And whatever part of aquaculture we work in, we all have something to contribute to what comes next.

Before we get started, I have just a few practical things for you.

Lunch will be served downstairs, where you will also find our exhibition area. I encourage you to spend some time there, meet our exhibitors and see the companies, technologies and solutions represented here at Aqua-Ice.

We will have breaks throughout the programme, and I hope you make good use of them – not only for coffee, but for networking. Meet someone new, ask questions, share experiences and keep those conversations going.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has helped make Aqua-Ice possible – our partners and sponsors, our exhibitors, our speakers for sharing their time and knowledge with us, and of course all of you for being here.

I hope we have two interesting, inspiring and enjoyable days together.

Welcome to Aqua-Ice 2026 – and let's get started.