

Note of meeting held at Friends House, London. Tuesday 19 November 2019.

For the Common Language Group minutes and meeting presentations see:

<https://www.seafish.org/article/the-common-language-group>

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Mike Mitchell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attendees

Adam Townley	New England Seafood
Alex Olsen	Espersen
Amber Madley	Lovering Foods
Andrew Brown	McDuff Shellfish
Andrew Kuyk	Seafood Industry Alliance
Andrew Nicholson	2 Sisters Food Group
Andy Smith	Iceland Seafood Barraclough Ltd
Aoife Martin	Seafish
Arthur Neiland	Iddra
Barry Harland	Whitby Seafoods Ltd
Belinda Howell	Decarbonize Ltd
Bill Lart	Seafish
Blake Lee-Harwood	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
Bryce Beukers-Stewart	University of York
Cameron Moffat	Young's Seafood
Cat McMullan	Defra
Charley Nightingale	Harrods
Clare MacDougall	Seafood Scotland
Dan Watson	SafetyNet Technologies Ltd
Daniel Owen	Fenners Chambers
Dave Robb	Cargill Animal Nutrition
David Parker	Marine Stewardship Council
David Feary	MRAG
David Warwick	Seafish
Elena Balestri	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Estelle Brennan	Lyons Seafoods
Francisco Aldon	IFFO
Gavin O'Donnell	Fishmongers' Company
Ian Gatt	Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
Indrani Lutchman	FisheryProgress
Jerry Percy	New Under Ten Fisherman's Association
Jess Sparks	Seafish
Jo Pollett	Project UKFI
Jonathan Shepherd	Seafish Board
Jim Portus	SWFPO
Julia Black	Lovering Foods Ltd
Julian Hawkins	Vericatch
Kara Brydson	Fisheries Innovation Scotland
*Katie Keay	Marine Stewardship Council

Kenny Coull	Scottish White Fish Producers Association
Kimberley Cullen	Seafood 2040
Kristine Beran	Pew Trusts
Laky Zervudachi	Direct Seafoods
Laura Eeles	Pew Trusts
Laura Shepherd	IFFO RS
Louise McCafferty	Joseph Robertson Ltd
Malcolm Morrison	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Martin Harvey	Seafish
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Maud van den Haspel	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
Max Goulden	MacAlister Elliott & Partners Ltd
Mercedes Rosello	NLA International Consulting
Michael Kendrick	Seachill
Mike Berthet	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Mike Brummitt	Regal Fish Supplies Ltd
Mike Mitchell	Fair Seas, Seafish Board (Chair)
Mike Platt	RS Standards
Natalie Bell	Seafood Scotland
Nathan de Rozarieux	Falfish, Seafish Board
Oliver Tanqueray	Sustainable Seafood Coalition
Pamela Ann Smith	Author
Paul Frobisher	Strategic Innovation Ltd
Paul Leonard	Plymouth University
Phil Taylor	Open Seas
Quentin Marchais	ClientEarth
Rachel Muckle	Defra
Sam Stone	Marine Conservation Society
Sara Mynott	Mindfully Wired Communications
Sarah Hussey	Sea Farms
Sarah Johnson	ASMI
Shannon Conlin	Sea Farms
Stuart McLanaghan	Seafish
Suzannah Walmsley	ABPmer
Tara Marshall	University of Aberdeen
Theresa Redding	Natural England
Trevor Jones	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Tristram Lewis	Funding Fish
Tom Evans	Key Traceability
Zacari Edwards	IPNLF

Apologies were received from:

Andy Matchett	Coombe Fisheries
Anne Freeman	Defra
Carol Scott	Identigen
Charlotte Coombes	MCS
Chris Brown	Asda
Erin Priddle	MSC
Gareth McKeown	World Wise Foods

Giles Bartlett
Hazel Curtis
Lara Funk
Libby Woodhatch
Nick Neeld
Richard Hoskin
Robyn Cloake
Steve Mackinson
Victoria Wood

Whitby Seafoods Ltd
Seafish
Seafish
IFFO RS
Big Prawn Company
Marine Management Organisation
Lyons Seafoods
Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association
Aldi

2. Welcome and introductions/Minutes of the previous meeting on 10 July 2019. Mike Mitchell, Fair Seas, Seafish Board, CLG Chair.

The final minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting and have been added to the CLG web page. Attendees were asked to take note of the meeting guidelines. In the following minutes Seafish will provide a link to the various presentations given at the meeting but not summarise the whole presentation. In the main we do not attribute the comments made at the meeting. Papers were tabled covering the activities of the other Seafish groups (Aquaculture, Discards, Ethics, pelagic and fishmeal).

Reference was made to the purdah guidelines (during the pre-election period). As a Non-Departmental Public Body Seafish has to maintain political impartiality and avoid any party political controversy. As such we cannot comment on matters of policy or politics or do anything that may influence the views of the public or impact how they might vote. Seafish recognises the value of this group in initiating and facilitating discussion and providing factual information. Where necessary a factual explanation of current government policy, statements and decisions will be provided but during this meeting we will be particularly careful not to become involved in a partisan way in election issues. Speakers and attendees are asked to note that matters raised about future government policy or on matters of public controversy will be handled with discretion.

Fisheries policy

3. A Stakeholder Informed Vision for the Future of UK Fisheries after Brexit. Bryce Beukers-Stewart, University of York.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_StakeholderViewofBrexit.pdf

There were a number of key recommendations following this workshop:

- Better Deal for Inshore Fisheries. Give a greater voice to local and regional stakeholders (such as inshore fishing communities, which make up over 75% of the UK fleet) to ensure more locally appropriate and informed management decisions. A lot of the catch is caught by vessels 9.5 – 10m. There is a clear desire to change the system but not necessarily a consensus on what and how to change.
- Improving Trust in the Management of UK Fisheries. A trust index was shown of key management and scientific bodies – Cefas was the only one to pass – but equally trust works both ways. Further develop partnerships between the fishing industry and scientists to increase trust and improve knowledge of stocks and marine ecosystems. Management goals are clearly defined in Defra's environmental plan.
- Priorities of Different UK Fishing Sectors after Brexit. There was a mix of opinions but there is a need to improve marine ecosystem health by improving the management of Marine Protected Areas and continuing to develop more selective fishing gear and practices. At face value the Fisheries Bill does deliver the key high level priorities.

Discussion

- **Question.** What really stood out was the need for improved marketing of UK seafood. What is the current position on this? **Answer.** There are two angles to this – marketing UK seafood to UK consumers and marketing UK seafood for export. A 'Love Seafood' group is looking to build on this.
- **Q.** The results of this workshop are admirable but it was a very small sample size so can we trust the consensus? Does this scale up? **A.** It is more about how representative the group was. You only need a sample of 2,000 in a 65 million population to get a representative view. It was a good mix in the room and there was consistency in their responses, so I am confident that this was representative.
- If there had been more Scottish representation you would have seen significant differences in the priorities highlighted particularly with regards to quota uplift.

ACTION: Circulate link to project report.

4. Trade implications with regard to processing and raw material supply. Andrew Kuyk, Seafood Industry Alliance.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_SIATradePosition.pdf

Given the trade paradox that we import most of what we eat and export most of what we catch, and most of our imports come from outside the EU whilst most of what we export goes to the EU, regardless of who catches what in UK/EU waters, maintaining existing trade flows is essential to meeting consumer needs across the EU and maintaining market share against competing protein foods. The UK is a significant player within the EU and a UK Brexit will disturb the EU supply balance. Self-sufficiency remains fairly constant - even a doubling of cod and haddock catches for which there is demand would leave us well short of UK market needs. Much of what we import undergoes first stage processing elsewhere and the UK does not have spare capacity to deal with any increased landings here. The UK balance of trade and import dependency was described, as well as the top five source countries and the top five export destinations. The tariff/non-tariff barrier landscape was described, as well as the special status for fisheries within the Brexit Process. The draft Withdrawal Agreement provides for continuation of the status quo on everything during a transitional period, with some exceptions to allow for the UK's new status outside the CFP in future. The Political Declaration commits both sides to using best endeavours to conclude and ratify a new fisheries agreement by 1 July 2020, including access to waters and quota shares. But this is to be done "within the context of the overall economic partnership" which links it to wider trade talks. Seafood processors want trade and market conditions at least as good as we have now.

Discussion

- **Q.** That was a very clear description. The UK has said that the US is a very important market. Is there a danger that lower standards would apply such as chlorinated chicken? How can the UK manage different trading conditions? **A.** We cannot have multiple standards - all our standards are currently aligned with the EU. The aim is for free and frictionless trade but we have to have a system of checks and balances.

Funding opportunities

5. Research priorities and opportunities for Fisheries Innovation Scotland. Kara Brydson, FIS.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_FISPriorities.pdf

Kara explained the FIS vision, who they are, what they do and how they do it. Since 2014, FIS has commissioned and managed 24 published, peer reviewed research projects, three national fisheries conferences and three study bursaries worth around £2 million. The research has covered gear

technical issues, discard reduction, quota allocation, ecosystem impacts, mapping and modelling, data collection and industry-led science. An independent review into the effectiveness of FIS research has highlighted the need to improve the 'pathway to effectiveness on the water' - real world change, solutions & opportunities and also to improve how topics for research are selected and how output is used to make positive change. A number of innovative projects were described. FIS is looking for ideas and feedback particularly on improving trust and data quality in fisheries science; disruptive thinking on selectivity; innovation to support improved product quality and traceability; and building capacity and investing in people.

Discussion

- **Q.** Could FIS spark innovative ways to address modern slavery issues in fisheries and the supply chain? **A.** There are specialist organisations already looking at this but we are happy to act as a facilitator or conduit.
- IDDDRA focusses on economic assessments and has produced performance-related analysis of fisheries around the world. It would be very interesting to focus on the potential economic returns from a well-managed, healthy, abundant fishery.

ACTION: Flag up the FIS website and include a link to the Scottish Fishing Conference on 1- 2 July 2020.

6. Seafood Innovation Fund update. Belinda Howell, SIF Steering Group.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_SIFUpdate.pdf

The Fund was launched in July 2019 and is managed by CEFAS. It will provide £10m over three years focused on supporting innovation initiatives in the seafood sector (Year 1: £2m, Year 2: £4m, Year 3: £4m). There are two awards available: feasibility/proof of concept studies with funding of up to £50k for projects up to three months in length, and full R&D projects with funding up to £250k for projects up to 18 months in duration. Processing is included. The aim of the fund is to deliver longer-term, cutting-edge innovation across the seafood sector and help to take innovative ideas from early stage research to commercial viability. It does not replace EMFF and does not fund the commercialisation of existing technology. Year 1 applications closed on 12 September 2019 and 74 applications were received (33 feasibility, 41 R&D). The names of the recipients have not been released yet. There will be a call for business ideas for the next round. Seafish (through the Seafish Expert Panel) will be running a matchmaking service to align businesses with a research partner.

Discussion

- **Q.** How many of the applications were collaborative bids? **A.** The pattern of applications is currently not available due to purdah however each application had a lead partner and most involved a number of partners. The applications were also scrutinised to see if the collaborative element could be bolstered.
- **Q.** What is the review process for application? **A.** The Fund is administered by Cefas. There is a Steering Group who initially looked at the applications then a panel of independent evaluators scored each application and provided comments.

ACTION: More information to follow on the matchmaking service.

Fish stock status

7. Fish stock status in the North East Atlantic – threats and opportunities. Bill Lart, Seafish.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_FishStockStatus_SeafishUpdate.pdf

This covered European fisheries management. In particular the Cod recovery plan; full implementation of the Landing Obligation in 2019 with survivability and de minimus exemptions; Multi Annual Plans in Baltic (2016) North Sea (2018) and Western Waters (2019); main assessed

stocks MSY targets and other stocks Precautionary Approach management; measures taken to conserve *Nephrops* Functional Units if below MSY Btrigger; and new Technical Conservation measures (2019). Summary tables were presented for each of the ecoregions with a particular focus on cod. North Sea cod is assessed as outside Safe Biological Limits with decreasing trends in the survival of older fish and recruitment issues.

Discussion

- **Q.** There was industry excitement around MSC certified North Sea cod. Are there theories over what has happened to this iconic stock? **A.** It is a complex picture with environmental change and different migration patterns but recent year classes have just not performed.
- Maybe we should go back and analyse historical data over a much longer timeframe to get the true picture of flux over the decades. Maybe we have been too optimistic and expected improvement too soon.

ACTION: Include link to ICES advice.

8. Good Fish Guide update. Sam Stone, Marine Conservation Society.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_MCS_GFG.pdf

This covered the history of the guide, the new aquaculture methodology which has been in use for a year, and the revised wild capture methodology which has been in use for two years. In summer 2109 138 wild capture and 19 farmed ratings were reviewed and consulted upon resulting in 20 ratings being improved (five of them by two places) and 32 ratings declining (seven of them by two places). The winter consultation was due to start on 16 December and covers the ICES Autumn updates, tuna, and English and Welsh scallops.

Discussion

- **Q.** Within the Good Fish Guide rankings there was mention of a '5 improving' rating being introduced in 2017 and an arrow between a 4 and a 5 rated fishery. This is essentially for those fisheries engaged in a Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP). Why does this only work for a 5 rated fishery? The arrow here is for improvement. Could you also have a down arrow for example when management plans are not being adhered to? **A.** We could think about this.
- **Q.** The MCS has adopted a more pragmatic approach to the North East Atlantic mackerel which is good to see but MINSA mackerel is still rated 2 alongside Iceland, despite the fact that Iceland over the summer introduced unilateral TACs and a huge increase in quotas and is rated amber for management. Is there a way to differentiate between MINSA and Icelandic mackerel? **A.** This is not ideal but we have to apply the methodology as it is written. A lifting of the MSC suspension would have made it a 1. It is not usual that we have a good stock status coupled with poor management,

ACTION: Include link to Good Fish Guide.

9. How fluctuations impact on the ability for fisheries to stay in the MSC programme – looking for solutions. Katie Keay, Marine Stewardship Council.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_MSC.pdf

This focussed on fisheries that have come in and out of MSC certification. Fisheries are assessed by independent auditors against the MSC standard. In these highly-dynamic 'yo-yo' fisheries, fluctuations (e.g. in the stock or management) impact the assessment process during the audit (annual or expedited). The fluctuation can result in a suspension to the certificate by the independent auditors. When a fishery is suspended from the MSC programme it has 90 days to produce a corrective action plan to rectify the situation, and then will remain suspended until the problem is rectified. If it does not produce a corrective action plan, the fishery will be withdrawn from

the MSC programme. The focus was on the story of the recent NEA mackerel and North Sea cod and whiting suspensions. There was also mention of the MSC Fishery Standard Review (FSR) which happens every five years to help ensure credibility and compliance. This is an opportunity to clarify, reduce duplication and ensure the standard reflects new science and evolving best practice. The FSR is a tool to help address concerns and is an opportunity for stakeholders to engage throughout 2020.

Discussion

- **Q.** Would the FSR be the right process to review the expedited audit methodology especially when (as in the mackerel case) the fisheries could not demonstrate they are on track to meet the Harvest Control Rules and Harvest Strategy and when the CABs do not agree with one another the MSC standard process means that the most precautionary outcome prevails. The harmonisation process was not very well managed and the whole issue of expedited audits also need to be addressed. **A.** Yes this is the right channel and this issue has already been raised but it is not clear whether this issue was raised formally.
- **Q.** The mackerel situation is confusing – it is not MSC-certified but does have an MCS green-rating so what is the advice for the foodservice sector? We need consistent messaging. **A.** The MSC has issues with mackerel management not its stock status, but also recognises this needs to be looked at further. Others did not necessarily think there need to be 100% alignment between MSC and MCS – these were two different tools doing a different job.

Emerging issues

10. Issues impacting on the Inshore Fisheries in the UK. Jerry Percy, New Under Ten Fisherman's Association.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_InshoreFisheries_NUTFA.pdf

This covered recent Inshore Conference and its objectives to look at where the inshore fleet is now, where it wants to go and how to get there? The envisaged conference outcomes and wider project are seen as: the creation of a road map for action; to develop a shared understanding and consensus around key issues; to create an evidence-base and describe the current state of play and heterogeneity among science done in different areas of the UK; to provide a framework for evidence provision by the industry and others; to provide outputs that will inform policy making. There was a detailed look at what each individual speaker covered and some closing thoughts. This was seen as the beginning of a process and it was time for a new regime, Brexit or no Brexit. It is no longer possible to try to manage a modern fishery with outdated descriptors. Around 60 inshore fishermen attended and the conference was structured around introductory presentations and roundtable discussions.

ACTION: Circulate link to conference presentations.

11. How prepared is the fishing industry for the implications of climate change? Tara Marshall, University of Aberdeen.

https://seafish.org/media/CLG_Nov2019_ClimateChange.pdf

The North Sea is effectively a laboratory on our doorstep. It is a global hotspot of warming temperatures and climate impacts have already occurred. Distribution and migration patterns of North Sea fish have changed and this impacts where vessels fish and how closely national quotas match fishing opportunities. Fish are growing faster as juveniles but not as large when adults, yields are lower because more, smaller fish are required to make up 1 tonne and fish are spawning earlier in the year. There are a number of possible future impacts on UK fisheries. Skippers have considerable experience with resource variability and climate change occurs relatively slowly over

long-time scales, whereas the fishing industry focusses on short-term issues. But if climate change is contributing to stock declines then it is very salient to industry now and in future. Looking at North Sea cod spawning times have changed and they are spawning earlier – one week earlier per decade in the northern North Sea, two – three weeks earlier per decade in the central North Sea and 0.7 weeks earlier per decade in the Irish Sea and this coincides with declining recruitment rates.

Discussion

- **Q.** This seems to measure the impact or symptoms of climate change not the drivers of climate change. Would there be value in connecting the two – fisheries biology and oceanography – and predictive modelling? Is there a role for the fishing industry in this? **A.** We need empirical data to understand the past before we can predict the future and we do need to better link biology to oceanography.

ACTION: Circulate links to workshop reports.

12. Date of next meeting.

Mike thanked all the speakers for their insight, and the attendees for their participation. The next meeting is on **Thursday 26 March 2020** at Friends House.