

**Note of Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting held at the MIC Hotel,  
London. Thursday 3 November 2011**

For minutes and further information see:

<http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/aquaculture-common-issues-group->  
<http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/guides-and-information->

**Attendees**

Paul Williams (PW)	Seafish (Chairman)
Karen Green (KGr)	Seafish (Secretary)
Karen Galloway (KGa)	Seafish
Craig Burton (CB)	Seafood Scotland
David Bassett (DB)	British Trout Association
Martin Jaffa (MJ)	Callander McDowell
Blake Lee Harwood (BLH)	SFP
Piers Hart (PH)	WWF Scotland
Daniel Lee (DL)	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Dawn Purchase (DP)	Marine Conservation Society
Andrew Nicholson (AN)	Co-op
Richard Slaski (RS)	SARF
Keith Jeffery (KJ)	Cefas
Jamie Smith (JS)	SSPO
Marcus Windsor (MW)	Seachill
Ian Pike (IP)	Consultant
Paul Morris (PM)	Skretting
Hugh Gordon (HG)	Tesco
Nick Bradbury (NB)	BioMar
Toby Parker (TP)	Welcon Group
Elaine Connolly (EC)	Defra
Andrzej Nowosielski(AN)	Environment Agency
Ian Dunhill	Environment Agency
Kevin Haddrick (KH)	Astec Aquaculture
Huw Tyson (HT)	BBSRC
Ann Moffat (AM)	Marine Scotland
Matt Whittles (MW)	Defra
Rachel Bower (RB)	ClientEarth
John Whitehead (JW)	Seafish Board

## 1. Welcome and apologies

PW welcomed everyone to the Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting.

Apologies were received from:

Andrew Mallison	IFFO
Mandy Pyke	Seafish
John Russell	Glenarm Organic Salmon
Simon Kershaw	Cefas
Neil Auchterlonie	Cefas
Ian Laing	Cefas
Jeremy Langley	Waitrose
Walter Speirs	ASSG
Martin Syvret	Aquafish Solutions
Baujke de Roos	University of Aberdeen
Mark Seager	Youngs Seafood
Mike Berthet	M&J Seafoods
Stephen Cameron	Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group
Melissa Pritchard	ClientEarth
Chris Brown	Asda
Steve Bracken	Marine Harvest
Chris Ninnies	ASC
Kate Hedges	Defra
Tracey Heyworth	Birds Eye
Emily Howgate	Seafood Choices Alliance
Pete Southgate	FishVet
James Wilson	Deepdock
Niall McDonald	EWOS
Ian Carr	EWOS
Alex Adrian	Crown Estate
Sylvia Ankrah	FSA
Richard Prickett	Consultant

## 2. Minutes/outstanding actions from previous meeting held on 6 July 2011/recent issues

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

*Pangasius and Tilapia RSGs and Who's Who in UK aquaculture*

All are now on the Seafish web site and can be found at:

<http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/guides-and-information->

*Warm water prawn/Farmed Atlantic salmon RSGs*

These are now under way.

*Recent media – Scottish salmon*

There was discussion on recent media coverage of Scottish Government proposals to introduce laws banning fish farms from operating in some coastal areas, predominantly due to problems with lice. In addition the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership issued a discussion paper on 2

November challenging the salmon aquaculture sector to be more proactive in publicly disclosing information about environmental impacts and to create a model for industry-wide best practice. BLH commented that this was one way forward, that the industry needed to be better organised, and that the discussion paper had met with wariness from all parties. JS replied that the paper did raise a few valid points, but that whilst there were some real questions to be answered there was also the danger of mis-information, information overload, and the need to determine what level of information is both appropriate and necessary. MJ commented that the salmon industry has always been a sitting target for criticism despite the need to feed an ever-growing population.

#### Recent media - *Bonamia* in the Menai Straits

There was an update from James Wilson on this situation. Cefas has found evidence of the parasite *Bonamia ostreae* in *Ostrea edulis* flat oysters. There is also a population of the New Zealand flat oysters *Teostrea chilensis* in the Straits, but to date Cefas has not found any evidence within this stock. The site has been denuded of *Ostrea edulis*, however Cefas has commented that eradication has never been successful in the past. If the parasite had turned out to be the invasive variant *Bonamia exitiosa*, the Menai Straits would have been effectively closed down to molluscan shellfish. Further testing is needed.

### **3. Standing items**

#### 3.1 UK Aquaculture Forum meeting in Brussels on 4/5 October – Ann Moffat

AM updated the group on the Brussels meeting. Paul Williams, Craig Burton and Neil Auchterlonie had joined the Forum for the first time. Struan Stevenson (recently named rapporteur for the CMO)) opened the Forum with the assertion that reform of the CFP will boost opportunities for UK fish farmers, and that it was important that the proposed Aquaculture Advisory Council should be based in Scotland. He also alluded to the growing population and the need to grow aquaculture. AM then detailed other Day 1 speakers including UKREP Nigel Barker, Craig Burton, Phil Thomas and Chris Todd. The evening reception was attended by 50 people (double the number that attended in 2010). On Day 2 DG MARE, DG TRADE and DG ENVI officials delivered presentations on the main issues under CFP reform (labelling, simplification, financing, funding streams), import tariffs and aquatic animal health issues.

Questions were raised about what information there had been on the Aquaculture Producer Organisations. AM responded that that an overview was given, but little detail. PW commented that overall the emphasis had been that CFP reform was under-development and still very much up for discussion. MJ questioned the role of the PO's and whether they were really relevant for the aquaculture industry. AN raised concerns that the issues

surrounding alien species needs to be ironed out, otherwise this would lead to problems for the Environment Agency.

**Action** – UK Aquaculture Forum presentations will be added to the marine Scotland website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/Fish-Shellfish/international/ukaf> and the Seafish site: <http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/guides-and-information->

### 3.2 CFP reform proposals on Aquaculture – Matt Whittles

MW commented on the two key aquaculture principles under the CFP reform proposals namely aquaculture national strategic plans and setting up a new Advisory Council for Aquaculture. Defra is not keen on either proposal taking the view they are not appropriate and that aquaculture should be managed at Member State level. MW was questioned whether the devolved Administrations and other Member States thought the same. MW responded that this was a UK position but it was still early days (some Member States may share these views). RS asked whether this would be a duplication of effort particularly regarding finance through the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the new European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and MW confirmed that EFF will provide financial support to aquaculture. Defra was keen to work with industry on the English Aquaculture Strategy. MW understood that if the case is made and accepted for an Aquaculture Advisory Council then Scotland would be very interested in taking the lead.

**Action** – MW to keep the group up-to-date with the latest developments.

### 3.3 Consultation on English Aquaculture Strategy – Matt Whittles

Progress on the consultation with industry on the English Aquaculture Strategy has suffered due to Defra staff changes. There is a new team in place now (Matt Whittles and Juliette Hatchman) and they want to make some changes to the draft document and run through the plan again. Correspondence is currently going out to the Steering Group. The aim is for a further meeting w/c 7 November and to issue this as soon as possible.

**Action** – MW to keep the group up-to-date with the latest developments.

## **4. Aquaculture certification**

### 4.1 ASC presentation

Chris Ninnes was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies.

**Action** – To invite Chris to give a presentation on ASC at the next meeting.

### 4.2 Update to aquaculture certification table

KGr tabled an updated table showing the latest position re the main aquaculture certification schemes.

**Action** – This table will be kept updated and is available on the Seafish website <http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/guides-and-information->

#### 4.3 Seafish Seafood Certification Network

KGr updated the group on the progress of a new Seafish initiative to develop a Seafood Certification Network consisting of certification organisations and people engaged with voluntary certification schemes to seek a synergy across this Network. As part of this Seafish has developed a table (tabled) to compare the numerous certification schemes that are currently available for the seafood industry to be audited against. This lists the various seafood certification programmes, the issues addressed, what they complied with and what they covered. A meeting was held in September where it was agreed that Seafish would apply for funding through the Industry Project Fund for a study which would compare and contrast each of the schemes against an FAO framework. As a start a Seafish Industry Project Fund Concept Form has now been submitted.

**Action** – Keep the group updated on the progress of this initiative.

#### *4.4 Sustainable Seafood Coalition – Rachel Bower*

RB gave the group an update on the progress of the Sustainable Seafood Coalition and its vision that all fish and seafood sold in the UK should be from sustainable sources. The coalition aims to develop voluntary industry codes of conduct to fill in the gaps and create harmonisation where legislation does not exist. There are 10 aims. Two working groups have been set up: clear and consistent labelling and promoting species diversification beyond the big five species – starting on underutilised species. The presentation can be found at:

<http://www.seafish.org/media/522921/sustainableseafoodcoalition.pdf>

DL questioned the draft labelling code and the fact that it appeared a number of products can and do say 'sustainably fished' but not much farmed fish can be called 'sustainably farmed', in fact only organic or bivalves. RB responded that they were aware of this and discussion was continuing to enable more farmed fish to comply.

MJ questioned whether consumers really care and whether labelling terminology was really an issue – it is perhaps more of an issue for the retailers. He also called into question Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's problem with the big five – and whether there was any issue at all with farmed salmon and farmed prawns. Did consumers really want to eat the alternatives being suggested? RB responded that consumers want fresh fish with health benefits.

PH thought this added a further layer to the whole certification process. MW asked whether there had been any industry involvement from producers/catchers and the response was no. It was felt that aquaculture producers needed to be involved.

**Action** – SSC to keep the group updated on the progress of this initiative.

## **5. Cleaner Seas Forum – Elaine Connolly, Defra**

EC outlined the progress of the Cleaner Seas Forum since it was launched in October 2010, chaired by Richard Benyon. Twenty three attended that meeting covering tourism, public health, coastal land owners, Local Authorities and shellfish interests. Since then there have been 51 pilots of real time combined sewer overflow (CSO) warnings on beaches, attempts to tackle barriers to CSO warnings at shellfish waters and engagement with Local Authorities to tackle urban diffuse pollution issues. EC also referred to the Surfers Against Sewage text messaging system and whether this kind of system could be extended to shellfish waters. The next meeting on 8 November will look at an extension of the CSO trials, a new Water Framework Directive catchment approach and changes to the regulatory framework. The presentation can be found at:

[http://www.seafish.org/media/522906/defra\\_cleanerseasforum.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/522906/defra_cleanerseasforum.pdf)

PW also reported that Seafish are close to agreement with one of the water companies for a CSO approach re shellfish waters.

## **6. Trimmings, fishmeal/fish oil and the North Atlantic – Toby Parker, Welcon Group**

TP explained how the United Fish Industries facility at Grimsby works. The factory predominantly uses trimmings. Trimmings are officially fish frames left for reprocess – normally as a by-product of the human food industry. Because it is a by-product, trimmings meal and oil is sought after because: it is seen as part of an organic feed ration - though definitions vary from accreditation body to accreditation body; trimmings products are seen as sustainable - from well managed stock; trimmings products are effectively approved by end users (multiples / retailers) as they verify the fish stock caught; trimmings products are invariably local and have a great deal of traceability. The presentation also looked at supply and demand, world production, composition of feeds and the composition of fishmeal and fish oil. The presentation can be found at:

[http://www.seafish.org/media/522924/fishmealtrimmings\\_welcongroup2.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/522924/fishmealtrimmings_welcongroup2.pdf)

PH asked whether the amount of trimmings is likely to increase. TP responded that in fact it was decreasing. A lot of salmon frames are now going to Europe (to make pâté) and to Africa to make soup. RS asked whether fish oils for human consumption (ie for capsules) come from trimmings. TP said they do not use UK trimmings because they do not have a high enough Omega-3 content, they are more likely to use jack mackerel and anchovy.

IP reported that 20% of fish oil globally is now going to dietary supplements and nutraceuticals (fetching better prices than in feed) and that this figure was growing. This will have the impact of reducing the amount of fish oil available for the aquaculture sector. DP thought this was a very important point in relation to future availability of fishmeal and fish oil for the aquaculture sector. These are limited resources which must be used strategically and where they deliver the most benefit.

IP also commented on the whole issue of intra-species recycling. It is well known that salmon can not be fed back to salmon, however farmed fish cannot be fed back to farmed fish per se (although there was a comment that this might change). This means that the market for trimmings is going to be predominantly restricted to agriculture. The basis for this stems back to issues with fish silage. However fishmeal and fish oil production operates at high temperature that would kill anything.

**Action** – The issue of fish oils in the nutraceutical sector will be revisited.

## **7. Scottish aquaculture consumer/retailer research – Karen Galloway, Seafish.**

### *Research collaboration*

KGa commented on a new collaboration involving the Rowett Institute, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh and the Universities of Stirling, Reading, Southampton and St. Andrews to share their plans on human intervention studies into the health benefits of seafood per se, as opposed to the use of supplementation. This will hopefully result in a side meeting at ISSFAL 2012 to consider a multinational approach in this field.

### *University of Aberdeen*

KGa commented on the progress of the study being undertaken by the University of Aberdeen to research the health benefits of a diet rich in Omega-3. This study will focus on the benefits of eating fish rather than relying on Omega-3 supplementation.

**Action** – There will be a presentation on this at the next meeting.

### *Aquaculture attitudes and perceptions among the public, retailers and NGOs.*

KGa presented the findings of a Scottish-based, but UK-wide study, conducted at the beginning of 2011 which looked at attitudes to aquaculture among the public, retailers and NGOs. The aim was to consider if it was necessary to develop marketing messages for the promotion of aquaculture and to inform policy development. Amongst consumers the survey showed that wild vs. farmed is not a salient factor in choice, but that some are aware of price difference. 'Foodies' see wild as superior and there was a very low awareness of shellfish farming. For most retailers wild vs. farmed was not a salient issue, and aquaculture simply provided a way to meet customer demand. A minority see as significant the differentiator vs wild salmon. The general impression of Scottish aquaculture seems positive: consumers are generally satisfied with the product; ignorance of, and reservations about it, are not off-putting; retailers have sufficient confidence in it to use it as a major source; and NGOs query specific issues but not the general necessity. The presentation can be found at:

[http://www.seafish.org/media/522912/crd\\_aquaculture\\_attitudesandperceptions.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/522912/crd_aquaculture_attitudesandperceptions.pdf)

MJ commented that the majority of consumers do not have a negative attitude about aquaculture, but 'foodies' do value wild over farmed fish. HT asked for



clarification on whether retailers were critical of food labelling, with the response that there were a variety of different views. AM commented that there had been a lot of positive comments in the response from NGO's. PH commented that if you conducted the same survey in other European countries you would get a completely different response. PW added that EWOS conducted a blind taste test many years ago and that generally farmed fish was preferred. Since this survey there have been changes within Marine Scotland. There are six working groups on the Ministerial Group on Aquaculture (MGA). The MGA is currently under review.

#### **8. BBSRC: developing a strategy for aquaculture research – Huw Tyson.**

HT talked about the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and its strategic research priority in food security, posing the question: How do we feed 9 billion sustainably by 2050? He alluded to the “perfect storm” of energy, food and water shortages by 2030. Research would be essential to meet the huge challenge to increase production sustainably, reduce waste, reduce GHGs, enhance food safety, and improve nutrition. He outlined how the UK public funders of food-related research were working together through the newly established multi-partner Global Food Security programme. He also referred to UK public funding of aquaculture research 2000-2008.

BBSRC are developing a strategy for aquaculture research, including engagement with the industry, and are looking for feedback on potential bioscience research priorities. HT posed some questions for discussion: what the UK aquaculture industry will look like in 10 years; opportunities for seaweed and shellfish; integrated multi-trophic aquaculture; what basic biology research will be needed to support future developments in the industry. The presentation can be found at:

[http://www.seafish.org/media/522915/bbsrc\\_aquaculturestrategy.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/522915/bbsrc_aquaculturestrategy.pdf)

RS commented that SARF had been looking to establish a dialogue with the BBSRC and liked the reference to ‘curiosity-driven’ research. TP questioned whether genetic modification (GM) was inevitable in aquaculture with the response that BBSRC provided funding for GM as an essential research tool, although the main focus to date had been on GM crop research. It was pointed out that much of the world's soybean production was now GM and non-GM sources were likely to become scarcer and more expensive.

**Action** – Any comments to [huw.tyson@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:huw.tyson@bbsrc.ac.uk) The BBSRC draft strategy will be circulated to the group.

#### **9. Astec Aquaculture – Kevin Haddrick.**

Kevin Haddrick talked about a new business venture providing the UK's only warm seawater business centre with an incubator and trial and research facilities. The aim is to support small businesses setting up in the aquaculture sector. Their real unique selling point is a constant flow through supply of warm seawater. The



presentation can be found at:

<http://www.seafish.org/media/523164/astecaquaculture2.pdf>

#### **10. Any other business**

RS suggested that with the EMFF due to come on stream it would be useful to have somebody come along from the Marine Management Organisation to give a presentation at the next meeting. Another topic could be the Cefas mapping project. Any other agenda suggestions to [k\\_green@seafish.co.uk](mailto:k_green@seafish.co.uk)

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 15 March 2012 at the MIC Hotel, London.