

Meeting Minutes¹

Seafish Domestic Aquaculture Advisory Committee (SDAAC)

Date:

Fri. 6th May, 2016. 10:30am - 3:30pm

Location:

Wesley Hotel, 81-103 Euston Street, London NW1 2EZ

Attendance

Seafish Personnel

Chair: Tom Pickerell/Helen Duggan

Lee Cocker

Craig Burton

Former EAWG members

Michael Gubbins – DEFRA

Keith Jeffery – CEFAS

David Jarrad – SAGB

Oliver Robinson – BTA

Stacey Clark – MMO

Piers Hart – WWF UK

John Holmyard – Offshore Shellfish

Martin Jaffa – Callander McDowell

Beverley Perkins – Independent/shellfish

New Members

Jose Constantino – Welsh Government

Alastair Mitchell – Marine Scotland

Alex Adrian – Crown Estate

Stephen Bolt – Association of IFCA's

Trevor Jones – Extramussel Limited, Menai

Apologies

Martin Flanigan – Cross Border Aquaculture Initiative

Colette Connor/Mark McCaughan – DARD

Nick Lake – ASSG

Walter Speirs – SSIA

Scott Landsburgh – SSPO

Andrew Woolmer – Mumbles Oysters Company

MORNING SESSION

Seafish and Aquaculture - Updates

Context Setting – Seafish and the SDAAC: Tom Pickerell – Technical Director

TP gave a summary of Seafish and the background to its current aquaculture programme, including the Seafish Panels structure, how they lead the development and recommendation to the Seafish Board as to the content of the Corporate Plan. DJ sits on the Domestic and Exporters Panel and is the domestic aquaculture industry's "voice". DJ was congratulated for his critical role in establishing the Domestic Aquaculture Strategy Programme in the current Corporate Plan.

TP explained the overall aquaculture programme targets as laid down in the current Corporate Plan, and the more detailed targets that were set for year 1 (2015/16). For years 2 and 3 Seafish have decided to bring together a pan-UK advisory committee to guide and recommend what work we should and will carry out for the remainder of the Corporate Plan. Should success be demonstrated over the first 3 years this could increase the likelihood of a continuation of the Domestic Aquaculture Programme and its inclusion in the 2018/21 Corporate Plan.

Q: PH "Wasn't the original objective of EAWG to lobby?" – TP clarified that Seafish cannot lobby, but it can inform. So in the SDAAC structure LC can undertake work to inform decision making. In England particularly the Government are placing onus on industry to lead aquaculture development and growth. A proposal was raised to ensure there is awareness and hopefully Government support for this industry-led group being formed and

¹ Edited web version

of any outputs it generates. The committee agreed that it would be a strategic first move to notify Ministers that the SDAAC has been established.

TP stating the programme is multi-resource; as well as 100% of LC's time other Seafish personnel such as C Burton and M Pyke work on aquaculture/aquaculture-related issues. It was suggested that other Seafish work streams and the resources they possess (e.g. Marketing, Communications, Training, etc.) could be leveraged to support and enhance the aquaculture work. There was also a suggestion that core Domestic Aquaculture funds could be used to seek match-funding to increase available resource, e.g. from EMFF.

ACTION - Seafish to draft letter to be sent to Ministers from SDAAC Chair (once in place)

ACTION - Approach S Potten (SF) on the possibility of delivering EMFF/PMC update at the next SDAAC meeting

ACTION – LC to explore how Domestic Aquaculture can collaborate with other Seafish divisions/work streams

Seafish Domestic Aquaculture Strategy Programme: Lee Cocker – Aquaculture Manager

- 1 Year – Progress So Far (including the evolution of the English Aquaculture Working Group (EAWG) to the SDAAC)
- Year 2 – Draft Strategy and Proposed Work Areas

Year 1

LC gave a summary of the work undertaken within the Seafish' Domestic Aquaculture Programme in the first year, including commissioned reports (Several and Regulating Orders and Aquaculture Economics in Eng., Wales and NI), aquaculture-related Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) projects, online resources (e.g. the CEFAS Aquaculture Regulatory Toolbox hosted by Seafish), and RASS Aquaculture Profile Development, as well as a brief description on how and why the EAWG has transformed in to the SDAAC.

Q: *“Could having Government representatives in the Steering Group for the ‘Aquaculture Economic Assessment in EWNl’ report commissioned by Seafish allow content to be manipulated by the administrations prior to publication?”* LC and HD stated that any feedback generated from DAs is also being supplemented and sense-checked by the Seafish Economics team and LC to ensuring the final document satisfies the Terms of Reference/Scope of Work as specified in the Seafish ‘Invitation to Quote’.

Q: *“Has industry been fully consulted on the RASS Aquaculture concept and development so far?”* HD gave a detailed explanation of what wild RASS profiles do at present and how aquaculture profiles will sit within the web-tool. It was re-iterated that the aquaculture profiles are still in development and the concepts developmental progression has been put before the RASS Steering Group (which includes industry representation) to generate discussion and invite input/feedback to Seafish. This will continue as the project develops.

ACTION - LC to circulate a brief summary paper of RASS Aquaculture Profile concept including progress thus far; proposed next steps; details of who sits on the RASS Steering Group, and SG volunteers who wish to support development of the aquaculture profiles format during the coming months, etc.

Year 2

LC presented the Seafish aquaculture draft strategy for year 2 via a depiction of the 'Seafish Aquaculture Landscape'; describing the main work streams or elements within this landscape and how they relate to each other. This included detailing present and on-going work, and prospective/suggested work areas, projects, ideas, etc. for the committee members to consider.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Advisory Committee Discussion, Advice and Suggestions of Other Opportunities for Seafish Domestic Aquaculture Activities

The morning session and presentations encouraged a frank discussion in regards to draft year 2 strategy/suggestions, and the need to ensure that what the SDAAC does is driven by what the outputs will be, and an assurance that the outputs will be bought in to and supported by Government and others.

Q: LC *"The New Economic Foundation's (NEF) 'Blue New Deal' initiative intends to highlight aquaculture to MPs through a dedicated event/s, and possibly an All Party Working Group. Seafish has been involved in this initiative; should involvement continue?"* DJ amongst others agreed.

Initially talks centered around the pure business appetite for new entrants, and how there is a need to expand focus to include for instance being able to assist and inform regulators in aquaculture issues; how can we build a 'seafood community' within which aquaculture is a key part e.g. wild capture fishermen as a potential source of aquaculturists/'farming fishermen'. JH highlighted the lack of practical (e.g. sea-going) skills of new entrants in to the industry and the concern/issue this raises for employers and called for more training information/provision.

BP as well as others suggested before work/projects that fills narrower evidence gaps or incentivize entrepreneurs e.g. expanding 'toolboxes' to help new businesses to establish themselves, it may be necessary to re-visit *priority areas* and key barriers to growth. This could include highlighting 'aquaculture in UK policy' (providing transparency as to how the separate policies align and where aquaculture sits within them), 'coastal water quality' and 'access to inshore space/sites', e.g. shellfish production in MPAs. As a pan-UK group such deliverables would be within the SDAACs gift to deliver.

ACTION – LC to continue involvement in the NEF initiative

ACTION – KJ to send EC report 'Guidance on Aquaculture and Natura 2000' to LC who will distribute to all members

ACTION – LC to explore how Domestic Aquaculture can collaborate with other Seafish divisions/work streams, particularly off-shore training to follow up on JH comment/concern

Water Quality came through across the members as the number one barrier, and the priority issue to be dealt with to enable future sector growth. There was a proposal for

Seafish to create a report considering water quality and [shellfish] aquaculture through the lens of *“What is the opportunity; how can growth in aqua/mariculture be accessed sustainably?”* A need for caution was raised by many members in the sense that undertaking such a report from a purely economic stance would not work and it would be essential to incorporate environmental, social and economic benefits. This would entail a ‘holistic’ report scope; collating what’s being done and what needs to be done (including assessing the way in which safety is assured at the moment). A case study/case studies could be incorporated in to the report to highlight the range of on the ground challenges, and once the barrier of water quality is removed and expanding the industry becomes more attractive, this would enable economic growth projections to be made.

Such a report would establish a base of information to support industry, inform regulators and government and influence policy; a clear output for this group. BP also suggested stakeholder mapping to identify others with common water quality aims and objectives that Seafish/the SDAAC could collaborate with to achieve real world change.

ACTION – LC to create work proposal for year 2 of the Domestic Aquaculture Programme, based on the draft strategy and SDAAC comments, new work suggestions by members, and the overall feedback from today’s inaugural meeting. Disseminate proposal to all SDAAC members for comment

Naming of the AC – SDAAC or Other?

DJ suggested that the name ‘Seafish Domestic Aquaculture Advisory Committee’ could be changed to avoid confusion with the new European ‘Aquaculture Advisory Committee’ (AAC). DJ suggested the ‘Seafish Advisory Committee on Aquaculture’ (SACA). No consensus was reached on proposed change and the name SDAAC will remain.

Chair and Vice-Chair Suggestions/Candidates

The floor was opened to volunteers or suggestions from members for SDAAC Vice/Chair. DJ raised the issue of expenses/payment for the Vice/Chair. HD confirmed that no financial assistance would be available according to Seafish policy [subsequently confirmed by TP]. This was not well received by some members, particularly producers/independents who do not have expense accounts. Stacey Clark volunteered to become Vice-Chair. Chair was not decided on the day.

ACTION – Seek and confirm SDAAC Chair - SB has subsequently agreed to become Chair. Distribute proposal for time/s of next meeting