

**Note of Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting held at Friends House,
London. Tuesday 18 September 2018**

For minutes and further information see:

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

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees

Alex Adrian	Crown Estate
Andrew Watterson	University of Stirling
Angus Garrett	Seafish
CJ Jackson	Billingsgate Seafood School
Clare Cavers	FIDRA
Clifford Spencer	National Aquaculture Centre
Craig Burton	Seafish
David Fletcher	RAS Aquaculture Research Ltd
David Jarrad	SAGB
Donna Page	Milford Haven Port Authority
Eleanor Adamson	Fishmongers Company
Elena Piana	Sea Farms
Emily Davis	Food Standards Agency
Emma Wootton	EMFF and Seafood Cluster Manager (South Wales)
Gill Banner-Stevens	Marine Conservation Society
Jack Cutforth	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
James Fox-Davies	Fowey Shellfish
James Taylor	Swansea University
Janice Spencer	National Aquaculture Centre
Jeff Gibbons	Marine Scotland
Jodie Mitchell	UKRI NERC
John Holmyard	Offshore Shellfish
Jonathan Shepherd	Consultant/Seafish Board
José Constantino	Welsh Government
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Leanne Muldowney	Seafish
Lee Cocker	Seafish (Chair)
Martin Syvret	Dorset Coast Forum
Michael Gubbins	Defra
Mike Berthet	Global Aquaculture Alliance
Mike Warner	SAGB
Morven McCulloch	Seafish
Oliver Tanqueray	ClientEarth
Owain Wynn-Jones	Offshore Shellfish
Paul Howes	Swansea University
Peter Tarrant	Maritek
Robert Ellis	University of Exeter
Sara Catahan	Defra
Sarah Horsfall	SAGB
Stuart McLanaghan	Seafish

Apologies were received from:

Carlos Campos	Cefas
Caroline Roberts	ABPmer
Chris Ryder	Lyons Seafoods
Chris Williams	New Economics Foundation
Felix Ameye	New England Seafood
Huw Thomas	Offshore Shellfish
Martin Cooke	World Animal Protection
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Neil Auchterlonie	IFFO
Oliver Robinson	British Trout Association
Patrick Blow	Cowrie Associates/M&S
Trevor Jones	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

2. Minutes from previous meeting held on 18 April 2018.

Lee Cocker welcomed everyone to the Aquaculture Common Issues Group (ACIG) meeting. The final minutes from the 18 April 2018 meeting were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting (this meeting scored 8.62 out of 10 on the feedback forms) and have been added to the ACIG 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. Matters arising: Various links were circulated.

Health and Safety in Aquaculture**3. Scoping report on global aquaculture occupational safety and health (AOSH).**

Andrew Watterson, University of Stirling.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803624/acig_sept2018_faoh_sproject.pdf

This was very much a scoping exercise to gain a greater understanding of occupational safety and health in aquaculture (AOSH) including fish farming; to bring together existing global information on AOSH; to provide 'new' information on AOSH not necessarily readily available within the public domain; and to identify both challenges and good practices to address AOSH in the sector and the way ahead. This has highlighted that there is not a lot of information out there and we need to fill in the gaps. The FAO commissioned this desk-based study because they thought this area had been neglected. A number of different regions were investigated and the same template was used throughout to profile aquaculture production and the challenges that we know exist. The SINTEF Norwegian study has already been published. The aim was to cover more African countries, China and a number more in Asia but information was limited.

Overview of some of the key results:

- Infrastructure is crucial and can be exceptionally varied in different parts of the world. We have to recognise that food producers need to produce the goods but variation in how that operates.
- There could be a difference between what looks good and what sounds good.
- The Scandinavian model looks very good, the US has a very different model – but what might be the best model?
- Scientists may reflect the industry agenda or the Government agenda and international agencies are a big driver as well.

- Whilst aquaculture production in Europe is relatively small it is still significant, and needless to say Norwegian production stands dominant
- Found very little information on Great Britain but occupational H&S standards are developing. It is our view the salmon sector does feel beleaguered but has been reticent to respond and yet they have a positive story.
- Certification schemes do integrate H&S into their standards but it is not clear how effective those schemes are.
- H&S is often side-lined but it needs to be integrated and addressed.
- The research team are keen to hear about good practice.

Discussion

- **Question.** There was mention of Asia and the information gap. Are their plans to follow this up and gather evidence on the ground? **Answer.** We had to scope the nature of the problem and the FAO is keen to follow up. There is an Asian profile but the information is not substantial. There could be a lot more work going on than we are aware of. But we need documented, validated information. We are also keen to investigate certification schemes, in particular whether what could be very good in a large company may not work in a smaller one.
- **Q.** With the gaps in information I am concerned about making assumptions particularly about Scotland. Could the University of Stirling present this to the aqua sector in Scotland to try to encourage feedback? **A.** Approaches have been made and work is being done but they seem to be doing it rather than talking about it. It should be easy to lift H&S up the agenda. We want to be able to pull the positives from the UK industry.
- Certification schemes have a strong H&S component which is not a box ticking audit but, for example, in the case of GAA BAP, a three day physical audit. These standards are all available publically.
- There was mention of the 'AquaSHAD' Consortium looking at H&S in Scottish aquaculture by going round the country talking about relevant H&S issues. This is aimed at businesses and works very well.
- In terms of UK/Scottish aquaculture, there may be opportunities to highlight good H&S practice as yet another positive of the industry
- **Q.** When it comes to standards are you looking at the standards themselves or the real life impact? **A.** It is both. What the standards are? How effective these are? Has the impact been evaluated? Has somebody outside monitored and evaluated this?

Action: Circulate links to the report.

Certification from a user perspective

4. The Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC): the role of certification in sourcing and labelling decisions. Oliver Tanqueray, Sustainable Seafood Coalition.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803627/acig_sept2018_ssc.pdf

Oliver explained the SSC Voluntary Code of Conduct on Sourcing Standards, which was the result of three years' work and which maps out (for aquaculture): legality; farm site management practices; the wider environmental impact; and marine feed ingredient sources. It maps out a decision tree. Whilst it refers to 3rd party certification, where 3rd party certification is not available it allows for working with farmed facilities where there is some sort of improvement programme in place. A second code looks at environmental claims made on the packaging with four provisions: sustainably caught; from sustainable sources; responsibly sourced; and responsibly farmed. There are guidelines for how

these terms should be used. Aquaculture certification schemes talk about responsible farming.

Discussion

- **Question.** How do you determine which certification schemes are credible?
Answer. We don't endorse specific schemes partly due to competition law, but also because different businesses have different certification requirements. We knew the SSC had to agree on the characteristics of a credible certification scheme. The guidelines set out the criteria for credible 3rd party certification.
- **Q.** How does SSC engage with GSSI benchmark? **A.** This was a key topic at the SSC summer members meeting. **A.** The SSC is cautious about even endorsing a benchmarking scheme. This is not a mandatory requirement but we are in dialogue.
- **Q.** Is there any progress on calling farmed fish sustainable? **A.** This should be a decision going forward as the industry moves forward. There could be some products where this could be the case.

Action: Circulate link to SSC website.

5. How certification supports best practice. Mike Berthet, Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA).

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803630/acig_sept_2018_gaa.pdf

Mike outlined the history of the GAA and how BAP can support the market, as well as the argument for the need for certification. BAP is comprehensive with four key pillars: food safety; environmental: social welfare and animal health and welfare. Globally only around 10% of farmed fish is certified, and predominantly by GAA, ASC and GlobalG.A.P.

Recent developments:

- The Responsible Fishing Scheme is moving home to come under the umbrella of the Global Seafood Alliance. There will be a transitional period. It will evolve to become the Responsible Fishing Vessel Scheme. This creates the link – with wild capture fish entering the farmed fish supply chain.
- We have to be more proactive on educating consumers on farmed produce. We are not doing enough as an industry. The GAA will be quizzing the Foodservice sector at GOAL on what more can be done. Certification is being used to underwrite the food safety element of product specifications. We want to produce simple effective communications about aquaculture. In Foodservice we want to be able to name the farmer and the farm. We need pre-competitive information to educate consumers. Lots of POS marketing support.

Discussion

- To develop the aquaculture industry four key words apply – Government and its agencies – they need to truly support the industry and move it forward otherwise we are not going anyway. Aquaculture plays a key part in Seafood 2040 but we need genuine movement from Government to truly move this industry on.
- This is a stumbling block around the world. Some Governments cannot see the importance of aqua and do not help to support this.
- **Question.** How does BAP support those smaller businesses for which certification is a stretch? **Answer.** We put them into an improver programme (iBAP) which looks at issues such as area management; examples in Ireland and Vietnam. In Vietnam 800 farms have been put into a single quality management system thereby alleviating the need for different audits.

Action: Circulate link to GAA website.

6. The benefits of certification. James Fox-Davies, Fowey Shellfish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803633/acig_acig2018_foweyshellfish.pdf

James outlined how Fowey Shellfish has evolved and its different branches: FloGro Fresh (warm water prawns) and Three-Sixty Aquaculture with lumpfish and wrasse.

They see the value of the certification route:

- Soil Association 'Organic': the first organic mussel farm in the UK.
- Best Aquaculture Practices: have started the path to certification. Have been very impressed with the scheme. Wanted to be able to demonstrate sustainability and provenance. BAP has given us the framework and guidance to work with i.e. carrying capacity, spacing, density, what chemicals are permitted etc.
- SALSA Food. Works to best practice and customer requirements. Given us a set of rules to work to.
- Sustainable Seafood Coalition. We have recently joined.

Discussion

- **Question.** What was the initial driver? **Answer.** Not sure I could say we would get a premium price but maybe that was the initial driver, but now I think it is more about doing this right. Following best practice and having the framework and guidelines that we can adhere to. Increasing the value of the product has increased our potential pool of customers.
- **Q.** What are the standards aimed at? Are they customer focussed? **A.** It is often hearts and minds that stop aqua development. Effort is involved in achieving certification and we report on this to our stakeholder base. The guidelines support development by providing suggestions on how to deal with comments with sections on keeping the local community abreast of developments. BAP are trying to encourage you to engage.
- From experience the minute you set yourself up on pedestal there is the danger that someone will knock you down. Over the years aqua has had a bad press. There are those who will have a go at you. Fish farming seems to be judged by different standards to land-based farming. We need to get the message out there and not just to the consumer, we also need to work with NGOs and foundations (it is lucrative for NGOs to work with the foundations).

7. Seafish update. Lee Cocker, Seafish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803636/acig_sept2018_seafish.pdf

Lee explained how Seafish ongoing work was being structured under one of five challenges. .

- Aquaculture and Fishing Co-Existence. July meeting with Crown Estate, Crown Estate Scotland, MMO, and the AIFCAs in relation to local fisheries and aquaculture interaction and co-existence to explore ways to: facilitate better communication and relations between the two sectors; and enable constructive dialogue between aquaculture and fisheries.
- Seafood 2040 Strategy progress.
- UK Aqua research landscape – looking at better knowledge exchange.
- The introduction of aquaculture profiles. This is a multi-stakeholder initiative which provides information and illustrates how industry is working to mitigate any issues.
- Size and value of farmed shellfish sector in the UK. Developing a scope of work.
- SSWG and DASSH project. Shellfish Stakeholder Working Group (SSWG) has been Seafish facilitated since July 2017. On behalf of SSWG, Seafish (Eunice

- Pinn) is pulling together a new pan-UK project - Developing an assurance scheme for shellfish and human health (DASSHH)
- Regulatory toolbox for England. This is Cefas guidance which is hosted on the Seafish website. This has been expanded. New aquaculture guidance for regulators is in hand.
- Shellfish Purification Guidance – exploring the creation of new guidance.

Shellfish marketing and promotion

8. Shellfish Week – its aims and objectives. Leanne Muldowney, Seafish.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803639/acig_sept2018_shellfishweek.pdf

Leanne explained Shellfish Week (1-8 March 2019) is at a very early planning stage. It falls under Fish is the Dish consumer campaign which is being refreshed and re-launched. This will create a platform for business with a marketing toolkit, campaign assets and a linkedin campaign as well as numerous consumer marketing opportunities. Seafish has also partnered with the British Heart Foundation for the next year.

Discussion

- Question. How will this campaign be different from what we have done before? There is a lot of talk about the success in driving consumption but consumption is actually going down. Answer. We need consistent messaging not just a single campaign.
- As well as efforts to convince consumers to eat shellfish there also needs to be a drive to foodservice. Getting shellfish into restaurants that week will be much more beneficial than targeting consumers.
- Whilst the industry supports any media savvy work there is a worry about the dates due to seasonality and the fact it will be 'Brexit month' which could be a real dampener. Ideally we would want October (when it is Seafood Week anyway) – but there will always be winners and losers. 80% of UK shellfish is exported.

9. SAGB marketing project. Mike Warner, SAGB.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803642/acig_sept2018_sagbshellfishpromotion.pdf

The project, which launched in May 2017, aims to:

- Promote the benefits of eating UK-landed shellfish, either from wild capture or aquaculture.
- Explore new marketing opportunities and exploit existing markets both domestic and export.
- Establish better dialogue across the supply chain, from producer to consumer.
- Foster better connections between producers and 'key influencers' (hospitality, educational establishments, the media)
- Highlight the nutritional, health and wellbeing benefits of consuming shellfish.
- Raise awareness of shellfish species that are primarily exported and to develop more of a shellfish-eating culture.
- Increase SAGB membership across all categories.

Mike highlighted in particular: Rick Stein's 'Summer of Shellfish'; The Pommery Dorset Seafood Festival; Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast; Langoustines promotions; and various films and videos. A video on the Cornish spider crab was shown.

Discussion

- There were various comments on the logistical difficulties of getting spider crabs onto the London market and attracting the interest of chefs; the slight worry that the video seemed to be negative towards farmed fish in one of the comments (certainly not the intention).
- We need to be aware of the market structure in Europe. Shellfish are exported because they pay more in Europe, not because we want to deprive UK consumers.
- The issue surrounding getting more people to eat more shellfish is the issue of shells – they have to be sold in a ready form. Must engage with retailers,
- PFDs should always be worn when at sea. We need to push the message about safety.

10. Challenges we face encouraging consumers to eat more shellfish. CJ Jackson, Billingsgate Seafood Training School.

http://www.seafish.org/media/1803645/acig_sept2018_shellfishconsumer.pdf

The Seafood School at Billingsgate delivers training for the industry, general public, schools and catering colleges. As a charity their main focus is to encourage young people to eat more sustainable seafood as part of a healthy diet. This year the School has demonstrated and taught nearly 18000 people to encourage the '2 a week' message at home and at festivals. There is a 'fear factor' with shellfish. To remove that 'fear factor' we need:

- More plain English communication on legislation on the safety issues
- More simple messages on the health benefits of shellfish and where that sits with fish
- Excellent promotion of cholesterol issues by SAGB
- Focus on children as next generation consumers (at home and at school)

Discussion

- **Question.** What about role models that would appeal to the younger consumer?
Answer. Pokémon eating a few prawns would be great. Not easy to find role models for that age group.
- **Q.** In terms of talking to schoolchildren are teachers an obstacle? **A.** There have been no issues with teachers but parental influence can be difficult.

11. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be in April 2019. Date and venue TBC.

12. Follow on workshop: Climate change adaptation in aquaculture. Seafish work in this area is concerned with understanding climate change as it affects UK aquaculture (domestic and international sources) and exploring how industry can respond to the anticipated changes. This work is in collaboration with scientists involved in two EU Horizon 2020 projects investigating climate change and seafood. The work will produce summary climate change driver/impact tables. This workshop is an opportunity for industry stakeholders to review and critique these and suggest adaptation responses for industry and other stakeholders. For further information **E:** [Angus Garrett](#).