

**Note of Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting held at Friends House, London. Thursday 12 September 2013**

For minutes and further information see:

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

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

**Attendees**

Alex Keay	Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Research, Swansea Univ
Allan Reese	Cefas
Angus Garrett	Seafish
Anne Margaret Stewart	Seafish
Anton Immink	SFP
Carson Roper	Consultant
Catherine Wright	ClientEarth
Chris Leftwich	Fishmongers Company
Clare Blackledge	Environment Agency
Daniel Lee	GAA
Dave Little	University of Stirling
David Bassett	Trout Association
Elaine Connolly	Defra
Emi Katoh	MRAG
Francisco Aldon	IFFO
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Katie Miller	ClientEarth
Huw Thomas	Morrisons
Ian Michie	Young's Seafood Ltd
James Turner	Defra
Jim Masters	MCS
John Barrington	Scottish Sea Farms
John Holmyard	Offshore Shellfish Ltd
John Jukes	Coldwater
Mandy Pyke	Seafish
Martin Jaffa	Callander Mcdowell
Matt Elliott	MMO
Matt Whittles	Defra (lead on item)
Mike Platt	Co-op
Neil Aucherterlonie	Cefas
Nick Bradbury	Biomar
Robert Floyd	Welsh Government
Rod Cappell	Poseidon

Scott Landsburgh	SSPO
Simon Kershaw	Cefas
Stephen Woodgate	FABRA
Suzanne Hamilton	Frontline
Tom Pickerell	Seafish (Chair)
Tony Legg	Jersey Sea Farms
Walter Speirs	ASSG

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Tom Pickerell welcomed everyone to the Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting. Apologies were received from:

#### **Apologies**

Alex Adrian	Crown Estate
Ann Moffatt	Marine Scotland
Caroline Miller	Aldi
Chris Brown	Asda
Chris Ninnes	ASC
Claire Tibbott	Fishmongers Company
Clive Harward	Anglian Water
Craig Burton	Seafood Scotland
David Jarrad	SAGB
Dominique Gautier	Sea Farms
Hannah MacIntyre	M&S
Ian Dunhill	Environment Agency
Ian Pike	Consultant
James Wilson	Deepdock
Jonathan Shepherd	Consultant
Mark Seager	Youngs
Martin Syvret	Aquafish Solutions Ltd
Paul Williams	Seafish
Patrick Blow	M&S
Pete Southgate	FishVet Group
Piers Hart	WWF
Richard Slaski	SARF
Sheelagh Johnson	Tesco
Stephen Cameron	Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group
Steve Bracken	Marine Harvest
Toby Parker	UFI
Tracy Heyworth	Birds Eye Iglo

### **2. Minutes from previous meeting held on 12 March 2013.**

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

### **3. SFP's approach to aquaculture improvement projects (AIPs) and Aquaculture Profiles on FishSource.** Anton Immink, SFP.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1009406/sfp\\_aquacultureimprovement.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1009406/sfp_aquacultureimprovement.pdf)

This covered the current SFP aquaculture team; views of the impacts of aquaculture; lessons from fisheries management; the zonal approach and planned Fish Source profiles. SFP is aiming to produce aquaculture profiles at a zonal level, not at individual farm level. This is still being discussed and feedback is welcomed.

#### Discussion

- Who is funding this initiative? This is mostly through the Packard Foundation who fund three of the Aquaculture Improvement Projects.
- Who is asking for this and is it necessary? In Hainan industry has come together to define their own route to improvement and their own Code of Good Practice.
- Who is certifying the farms? There are various schemes but mostly GAA and ASC.
- Zones will vary and water quality will differ – how will you ensure the advice is consistent? We will have to use geographical limits but we won't be able to produce one mechanism to cover a whole area, however there will be consistency across an area.
- One of the challenges is that legislation is imposed at different levels. There are examples of this in South East Asia. Zonal management is well developed for salmon. Is your metrics going to pick this up? If so it is likely that salmon will score very well (when up until now the Packard Group has been anti-salmon). Another example is the interpretation under the GAPI programme whereby initially salmon scored very well but when a cumulative GAPI score was used it dropped down.
- Is the zonal management approach finding resonance with the three major certifiers? There is already dialogue with ASC but also need to involve the others.

**Action:** Next developments to be communicated to the group.

#### **4. MMO/Seafish project to collect economic information on UK aquaculture for 2012.** Suzanne Hamilton, Frontline.

<http://www.seafish.org/media/1009409/frontineposeidon.pdf>

This outlined a pilot study into the collection of economic data for the marine aquaculture sector in the UK to examine the practicalities of conducting an annual economic data collection programme, advise on the most appropriate methods for future economic data collection and • gather data on the economic performance in 2011 (and 2012). 95 responses had been returned – 17% of total.

#### Discussion

- I am concerned about the 17% response rate and would be quite sceptical about how representative that would be. What is the minimum response deemed to be representative? What is the incentive to fill in the survey form? Obviously there is a better response rate when it is compulsory. Surveys can start with a patchy response but when they recur response rates usually improve. We do need to build up a robust database.
- Industry needs to be able to see a benefit. What value is there in this to industry? Trade Associations have been supportive. This is an EU led

process. The UK has to provide this information and there could be penalties if we do not comply. There is also the possibility it could be linked to future EU funding

- Why would businesses co-operate? It is worrying that the views of 17% could determine the future of EU funding in this area. Most businesses understand that the UK is required to undertake this survey. The results of this survey will act as a trigger mechanism. We are not suggesting that this data will inform policy, the data needs to be more robust in order to do this, and there is no immediate link between this and future funding but the key point is that this data could be useful to help individual businesses access funding in the future.

**Action:** Group to be kept informed of progress.

### **Certification in practice in the UK**

**5. First native oyster cultivator in the UK to meet the requirements of the new Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) standard.** Tony Legg, Jersey Sea Farms.

<http://www.seafish.org/media/1009412/nativeoystercultivationandasc.pdf>

Tony Legg explained that Jersey Sea Farms had chosen the ASC route for their oysters because it was the obvious way forward, however they had also considered this route for their abalone production, and because the audience here is French chefs, had not proceeded. Auditing for the oysters was due to take place in October/November. The process had been simple and the cost around €10,000 to €12,000 for the three farms.

#### **Discussion**

- Why are French chefs not receptive to ASC? They are only interested in quality, for them sustainability aspects are completely irrelevant.
- A couple of different logos have been shown for the oysters – do you use both of them? Yes effectively we have a set of logos.

**6. New Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) mussel standard and collaborative working.** Daniel Lee, GAA.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1121098/acigsept2013\\_gaa\\_musselstandardandmou.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1121098/acigsept2013_gaa_musselstandardandmou.pdf)

Daniel Lee explained progress with the new GAA mussel standard. The particular features of the BAP standard are the food safety component, that traceability/chain of custody is included and the Processing Standard is GFSI benchmarked. He also talked about the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ASC, BAP and GlobalG.A.P. in April 2013. It is not the intention that the certification programs will eventually merge, the MoU explicitly recognises the continued integrity of each programme and aims to find operational efficiencies. As a start the MoU defines some areas where there are with good opportunities to co-operate e.g. to define future feed requirements, common IT platforms and ways of undertaking combined audits to reduce duplication of effort for farms that undertake certification against more than one standard.

## Discussion

- Do consumers really care? There is no compulsion for retailers to use the label however the GAA logo is used a lot in the US where it is really seen to add value.
- There are already too many labels – is this about assurance or price? We never push a price premium or increase expectations of one, this is not an automatic money spinner.
- Most of the mussels in the UK come from Grade B waters. Can they still be certified? The GAA BAP standard allows for depuration so BAP mussels can come from Grade B waters.
- Could the new MoU recognise IFFO RS? The GAA BAP standard already recognises IFFO, ASC is ambivalent on this and GlobalG.A.P does not set a required level – so there is some confusion.
- The MoU sets a shared objective but if there is variation between the standards how can you have a combined audit? It will be a combi-audit to one standard with add-ons where appropriate.

## **7. GLOBALG.A.P. Full Production Chain - Finfish, Crustaceans, Molluscs.**

John Barrington, Scottish Sea Farms and Ian Michie, Young's Seafoods Ltd

[http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/ScottishSeaFarms\\_GlobalGAP.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/ScottishSeaFarms_GlobalGAP.pdf)

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1013629/youngsseafoods\\_globalgap.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1013629/youngsseafoods_globalgap.pdf)

Scottish Sea Farms is the second largest salmon producer in Scotland. Scottish production was 162,000 tonnes in 2012. 70-80% of Scottish salmon production is GlobalG.A.P. certified. The SSPO, Industry Code of Good Practice is 65% compliant with GlobalG.A.P (SSPO represents 95% of the industry). There are plans to set up a National Technical Working Group to formally benchmark COGP with GlobalG.A.P., with aim to reduce auditing costs and time.

Certification to GlobalG.A.P started in 2007 at the request of a retailer – all 50 sites (8 freshwater, 42 marine) are now certified (26,000 tonnes).

Ian Michie explained why Young's Seafoods work with GlobalG.A.P. UK retailers see it as the baseline B2B farm assurance standard - some will apply 'bolt-ons' to audits for own brand value requirements. It is not an ecolabel but an assurance of good aquaculture practice.

Under GlobalG.A.P standards farms producing bivalve molluscs to be supplied directly for human consumption carry out depuration according to legal requirements or industry standards, in accordance with the requirements of Codex Alimentarius. Records of depuration time and parameters measurement of successful depuration must be in place.

## **8. Certification and complementary public and private governance.** Dave Little, University of Stirling.

<http://www.seafish.org/media/1013032/certifysustainableaquaculture.pdf>

This article published in Science in September 2013 states that sustainability certification is a market-based system and that whilst certification makes a

contribution, it also has significant limits and should be considered one approach among many for steering aquaculture toward sustainable production. Certification is complex and expensive and assumes a level of managerial capability that most aquaculture producers in the Global South do not have. Comparative advantages and potential synergies of certification should be explored alongside a mix of other private governance strategies.

#### **9. Monterey Bay Aquarium Eco-certification Benchmarking Project.**

MBA has assessed 29 standards from 10 different eco-certifying programs (including ASC, MSC, Friend of the Sea, Naturland, Canada Organic, GAA, Certified Quality Salmon, Thai Code of Conduct, GlobalG.A.P. and Food Alliance) to find which are equivalent to at least a Seafood Watch Good Alternative (yellow). This was a snapshot – not a global benchmarking exercise.

#### Discussion

- Although it does not claim to be so Seafood Watch is very eco-centric, is not broad enough and does not take into account economic and social elements.

#### **10. Five minute updates**

**10.1 UK Aquaculture Forum.** Karen Green, Seafish on behalf of Marine Scotland.

The next meeting of the UK Aquaculture Forum will take place on 5 and 6 November, in Scotland House, Brussels. Day 1 will focus on EU policy issues and day 2 on aquatic animal health issues. Guest speakers from the EU institutes will be invited to give presentations/discussions/Q&A sessions on topical subjects. There will be a networking reception in Scotland House on 5 November to hear from the industry about the continuing success of the UK aquaculture sector, its prospects for growth and how the European institutions can assist. The guest list will include MEPs from various member states involved in the fisheries and environment committees, NGOs and key representatives from the EU institutes. Scottish producers also provide seafood to be showcased at the reception.

**10.2 The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill.** Karen Green, Seafish on behalf of Marine Scotland.

The Bill was passed by Scottish Parliament on 15 May 2013 and received Royal Assent on 18 June 2013. The Act is due to commence on 16 September 2013. The primary purpose of the Act is to ensure that farmed and wild fisheries – and their interactions with each other – continue to be managed effectively, maximising their combined contribution to supporting sustainable economic growth with due regard to the wider marine environment. Scotland's Marine Plan consultation document includes targets to increase marine fish production sustainably to 210,000 tonnes (159,269 tonnes in 2011) and shellfish to 13,000 tonnes (6,525 tonnes in 2012) by 2020.

An implementation plan has been developed to ensure the timely progression and introduction of the Act provisions, including guidance on compliance activity.

The Act is the first step in delivery of the manifesto commitment to modernise the management structures for salmon and freshwater fisheries and will be followed later this year by an independent Review of management of salmon and freshwater fisheries with the intention of creating a structure fit for purpose in the 21st century. The Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture (MGSA) has been established to enable Scotland's aquaculture industry to achieve these 2020 sustainable growth targets – The Group meets every six months and is scheduled to meet again in November 2013.

### **10.3 English Aquaculture Plan and aquaculture under CFP reform.** Matt Whittles/James Turner, Defra.

Matt reported that there had been little real progress in the last six months. Under the terms of the CFP reform process a UK Multi Annual Plan (MAP) for aquaculture has to be developed which will in turn allow access to EMFF funding. EU guidance was issued in the summer on compiling the MAP but this was not clear. James Turner was introduced as the new person within Defra who is taking over the English Aquaculture Plan. A meeting between the devolved administrations is planned and that a consultation with industry would follow. Once the MAP is agreed it will be possible to focus on the English aspects.

#### Discussion

- I fully appreciate the joined –up approach but cannot see how waiting for guidance on the MAP has prevented us from articulating an English plan. There are special requirements/conditions/species in England which are distinct from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Why has this been delayed? The MAP should reflect regional differences but money is tight and how it is spent is crucial. Industry could always take this forward.
- An MAP that is aligned to EMFF! That sounds backwards to me? EMFF has certain themes and we want to make sure the MAP aligns.
- EMFF is not a done deal yet. Surely the MAP should come first – we don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past? The UK has a rough idea of the money that it is likely to receive.

### **10.4 Industry position statement on greenhouse gas emissions.** Angus Garrett, Seafish.

In addition to the wider concern for climate change, one of the reasons for undertaking GHG emissions related work in the seafood industry was as a reaction to unsubstantiated commentary in the media concerning food miles and seafood trading. Several months ago there was a level of interest in finding a common position on carbon and food miles as these issues relate to seafood. As such, Seafish and several industry stakeholders, have discussed the issue and produced a draft position statement. The hope is that we can reach a finalised statement that can be used as a generic industry statement (providing overarching context for various energy/GHG emissions work currently underway) and that could potentially be tailored for use by particular stakeholder groups and individual companies. This draft position statement was circulated before the meeting for discussion and endorsement at the Aquaculture Common Issues

Group meeting (and at the Common Language Group (CLG) meeting in November). This is about providing a common sense statement – it is not about imposing a single statement.

#### Discussion

- This is a useful document with a strong message which has captured the key points.
- Would this be strengthened by the addition of some numbers to put this into context? We have considered this but were mindful we needed to balance numbers that were useful versus numbers that could be abused.
- Data is critical as this would show the complexity of the seafood trade. Suggest some re-ordering of the text and the inclusion of import/export data.
- This raises the issue of A selling to B and then B selling back to A. This needs to be accessible and understandable for consumers.

**Action:** Comments to be taken into consideration and draft circulated round CLG.

#### Shellfish focus

**10.5 Shellfish Update.** Mandy Pyke, Seafish

[http://www.seafish.org/media/1013623/seafish\\_shellfishupdate.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/1013623/seafish_shellfishupdate.pdf)

Mandy covered a number of issues namely:

- Water quality - A pilot of a text alert system is taking place with our partners including South West Water. Anglian Water is ready to expand the scheme with us to the River Blackwater Oystermans Association operational areas and adjacent waters. Welsh Water and Scottish Water have both talked with Seafish and may consider taking part in the future.
- Norovirus - DG Sanco has not implemented EURL proposed controls yet. They have stated, '...doing nothing is not an option...'. The UK does need a single sound bite on this that would encompass an alternative to the proposed controls. This may include an assurance scheme that encompasses regional variations in implementation. Activated sludge and UV appear to have been shown in a recent study to have a significant effect on levels of Norovirus. Exclusion Zones have the potential to be introduced into the UK. This would almost certainly close a significant part of the ready to eat bivalve supply chain from the UK.
- Welfare - Animal welfare has been proposed for live bivalve mollusc's at depuration centers. There is no legislative basis for requiring depuration centres to have staff trained in 'animal welfare'.
- BIPs - Seafish staff are working on the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) Border Inspection Post's (BIP's) Committee. This gives us an ability to observe how legislative controls are interpreted by this important group. The BIP's committee strives to ensure a standardised approach is taken throughout the country.
- Toxins – the YTX limit has been raised from 1 to 3.75mg eq/Kg. The FSA is working on a new sampling plan for biotoxins and chemical

contaminants. There is currently debate surrounding a very recent paper on mycotoxins which concluded “At this point, we think it would be pertinent to begin screening edible shellfish for mycotoxins in order to protect consumers.”

### Discussion

- The industry representatives at the meeting called for Seafish to do nothing with regards to animal welfare. As this would give credence to a poorly thought through isolated event.
- What is the industry take-up of text alerts? This is still in a trial phase. The details of the production area affected by a Combined Sewerage Overflow (CSO) is relayed via mobile phone to a harvester once they have registered for notifications. Users sign a letter of agreement during this process. The Food Business Operator (FBO) must make the decision on whether to harvest or not. No one else can make that decision for the FBO.
- It is interesting that last year was the wettest on record and yet there was not a single ‘outbreak’ of norovirus where shellfish were implicated. However it is bivalves that are under a continued reputational risk threat. How can we ensure that best practice is always emphasised? The pilot in Helford (South West Waters) uses text alerts regularly and as this moves ahead we need more involvement from industry.
- There was the comment that text alerts are a pragmatic approach – we talk about the polluter pays but the polluter does not pay and more could be done. The reality is that ultimately the consumer pays. The response was that we cannot continue to be in conflict - we must work together and collaborate. As an example Anglian Water has joined the SAGB and has been instrumental in founding a forum for the shellfish industry on the East Coast with Seafish and other interested parties.

### Actions:

10.5.1 Keep up-to-date with the latest developments.

10.5.2 Defra to respond on issues surrounding humane killing - this issue could also be raised at the SAGB Mollusc Committee meetings.

## **11. Look forward to Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers Annual Conference.** Walter Speirs, ASSG

Walter detailed the topics to be covered: Dutch pioneer of (on-) growing mussels off the bottom; MPAs and the shellfish farmer; protection of Scottish shellfish waters; growing your business; seeking EU funding – options and opportunities; IBIS Project – working with shellfish farmers; shellfish cookery demonstration; abalone farming - finding a local market for a rare and expensive product; the prevalence and distribution of algal toxins in Scottish waters 2008-2013; managing shellfish toxin risk; reducing business risk from harmful algal bloom events; fate of norovirus in shellfish waters - new evidence from field studies and implications for shellfish growers and regulators; integrated multi-trophic aquaculture. <http://assg.org.uk/#/conf-papers-13/4545432645>

## **Fish Feed focus**

**12. LAPs and PAPs in aquaculture feed – horizon scanning.** Stephen Woodgate, Foodchain and Biomass Renewables Association.

<http://www.seafish.org/media/1013752/lapsandpapsinaquafeed.pdf>

Stephen the current issue and explained the terminology: Animal by-Products (ABP); PAP is Processed Animal Protein from Category 3 Land/Fish ABP; Fishmeal is PAP derived from Category 3 Fish ABP; Land Animal Protein (LAP) is PAP derived from Category 3 Land Animal ABP; MBM is the global term for processed proteins. The 2001 feed ban and the 2002 ABP Regulation introduced a risk based approach to processing and zero tolerance. In June 2013 the EU approved the re-introduction of poultry PAP, feathermeal PAP and porcine PAP for aqua feed (porcine bloodmeal PAP was re-introduced in 2011). The question now is what will aqua feed uptake be and will EU consumers discriminate between 3<sup>rd</sup> country and EU produced farmed fish especially if one sector use LAP's and the other sector does not?

### **Discussion**

- Will this be a global or a UK standard? It will be a UK standard under the umbrella of Assured British Foods/Red Tractor. This is in early draft form and feedback is welcomed.
- There are some potential issues with regard to religious concerns ie pork, halal? In the EU everything has to be labelled which should address this.
- The big unknown is what consumers will think. Have you any insight? There is a policy to provide information but it is unlikely there will be any publicity surrounding this. The Commission made this change because it is backed by scientific considerations and evidence that control and detection are possible. It is likely this will be dealt with at a scientific level and this change will happen quietly. Any consumer response is likely to be influenced by how the question is phrased.

## **General**

**13. Risk Assessment for Sourcing Seafood (RASS). Aquaculture factors for RASS.** Mandy Pyke, Seafish

There was some debate about a new project at Seafish to develop an online, web based Information resource; built on the back of the Seafish responsible sourcing guides which will be based on objective data and will flag up high, medium and low risks for various factors. This project is approved and supported by the sector panels and the Board.

### **Feedback**

- If Seafood Watch is used as the basis I feel the outcomes could be slightly unbalanced. The response was that Seafood Watch is not used as the basis – merely used as an example.
- Need to be clear on the scale of this – will the assessment be at farm, region or country level? This is unsure at the moment.
- It is important there is collaboration with existing projects such as SEAT.

- The WWF Aquaculture Dialogues could be a good start in identifying key factors. The Aquaculture Dialogues were a multi-stakeholder initiative led/facilitated by WWF.
- Will the producers be involved? Behaviours are very important and this could enhance the work.
- Although this will present a neutral view re risk there could be recourse if an assessment resulted in reduced market share. This is agreed so accuracy is paramount.
- Could trade associations be informed about the assessments before publication? Yes.
- As the salmon and trout sectors in the UK do not pay levy will salmon and trout (and pangasius) be included? This has been mentioned but whilst there are concerns these are consumed in large volumes in the UK so cannot be excluded.

#### **14. Any other business**

There was a request to include details on local hotels close to the venue for the next and subsequent meetings.

#### **15. Date of next meeting**

Frequency of meetings was mentioned. Aquaculture meetings are held twice a year to dovetail with the CLG. The next meeting will be spring 2014.