

<b>English Aquaculture Working Group (EAWG) Meeting Minutes - Final</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2016, 10:30am – 3:30pm
<b>Location:</b>	Wesley Hotel, 81-103 Euston St., London. NW1 2EZ
<b>Attendees:</b>	<b>Chair:</b> Lee Cocker – Seafish Tom Pickerell - Seafish Michael Gubbins - Defra Keith Jeffery – Cefas Stacey Clarke - MMO David Jarrad / Sarah Horsfall – SAGB Oliver Robinson - BTA Piers Hart - WWF Beverley Perkins - SAGB Text Alert System Reviewer / Independent
<b>Apologies:</b>	John Holmyard - Offshore Shellfish Martin Jaffa - Callander McDowell Andy Woolmer - Mumbles Oyster Company Ltd

## **MORNING SESSION**

### **Updates on recent developments in English Aquaculture by group members**

#### **SAGB Update - DJ**

Key points inc.:

- *Several and Regulating Orders*
  - Although the UK has an archaic SRO system, it can work if adapted, and application is less complex. A more strategic approach is needed to create 'positivity' around Orders, and DJ handed out 'Strategic Aquaculture Planning, SROs'. DJ highlighted that in France shellfish production is deemed compatible in all coastal areas, whether MCZs, or MPAs.
  - Recommendations for the future of SROs in UK inc., a SWOT review of existing sites; coastal mapping to identify where expansion of existing and /or new shellfish production/SROs could occur (with site ID to inc. water quality/classification); focused guidelines on SRO application/fast-tracking; creation of a 'library of sites'.
- *Water Quality Issues*
  - Last summer's extremely high bacteriological test results in southern England highlights 'flawed single testing' here in UK undertaken on shellfish harvesting. This incident could be basis for a case-study and initiate a full review of shellfish testing.
  - End-product testing could be seen as an alternative regime; this is used successfully on the continent.
- *European Mollusc Producers Association (EMPA) and the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC)*
  - EMPA inc. associations from England and Scotland and is keen to assist the new AAC. SAGB (through the EMPA) has secured its position in the AAC and is present on the General Assembly, Executive Committee, and Shellfish Working Group (and has close links to the Finfish working group).
  - Participating Member States are expected to support the ACC with €3,000 – would Defra be willing to cover this cost?

#### **ACTION**

- Copy of presentation to be circulated by LC
- 'Strategic Aquaculture Planning, SROs' handout to be sent to R Whiteley

### **BTA Update - OR**

Key points inc.:

- Antimicrobials in animal farming
  - BTA have been present at meetings discuss the use of the antimicrobials. BTA fully understands the need to develop trout vaccines to further the industry
- WFD - trout farm water abstraction/discharge licensing
  - A major asset underpinning trout production is the security of long term water supplies, and as such this change could negatively affect trout businesses access to finance and credit. The option to re-use/recycle water is feasible, but will be a very costly/impractical to many farmers already working at low profit margins. BTA has attended talks in March for non-consumptive water users to discuss their concerns over the re-issuing of water licenses abstraction discharge licenses for trout producers, which could have implications for the long-term viability of trout farms.
  - DJ and OR also commented that the Review of Legislation on Official Controls and the full cost recovery proposals within could be extremely damaging to trout and shellfish businesses alike. The UK is challenging these full cost recovery proposals at a European level.
- BTA seeking funding
  - BTA is seeking marketing/promotional funding to raise the profile of farmed UK trout.
- Trout Standard updated
  - Quality Trout UK (QTUK) Standard has recently been updated (14th January 2016).

### **MMO Update – SC**

Key points inc.:

- *Marine Planning and Aquaculture*
  - SC pointed out aquaculture policies and area maps in both the East and the draft South plans.
  - Highlighted the more supportive MMO policy wording in the South plan in regards to aquaculture areas and infrastructure provision (i.e. 'must' and 'will' are used, unlike 'should' in the East plans).
  - Better aquaculture data sets have been accessed to create the draft South plan, and IFCA input has forthcoming.
  - Although the MMO have/will specify future potential for aquaculture areas in east and south plans, no budget has been made available to expand such mapping of aquaculture areas for the remaining plan areas. If this is to be undertaken, other bodies will have to take on this activity.
  - Although aquaculture co-location/co-existence with other industries is inc. in MMO policy, SH asked whether its message/intent is reciprocated and incorporated in to the policies of other industries, e.g. renewables? SC replied that is often not the case, but having the terms within the Marine Plans does drawn attention to the issue to other industry developers. Co-location/co-existence in renewables policy in the draft south marine plan there are very few renewables specific policy, and none directly related to co-location. However, there is a generic co-existence policy (S-CO-1).
  - SC stated that data that addresses SRO locations and the value of species/aquaculture per plan area would be very helpful for future MMO Marine Plans and these could be added as data layers to the MMO Marine Information System.
    - TP stated that if GIS co-ordinates can be collated for all SROs then Seafish Kingfisher team could locate/map these.
    - DJ, SH and BP enquired why MMO needs financial data? SC stated any planning policy is greatly helped if the economic importance is shown. DJ, SH and BP suggested that looking at social, environmental as well as economic aspects of

shellfish/aquaculture (Ecosystems Services) would give a much better picture, i.e. 'Direct' and 'Indirect' value of aquaculture.

- MMO has study on bio-remediation giving positives and negatives of different techniques but inc. no monetary values. This report is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/500275/Evidence\\_Supporting\\_the\\_Use\\_of\\_Environmental\\_Remediation\\_to\\_Improve\\_Water\\_Quality\\_in\\_the\\_South\\_Marine\\_Plan\\_Areas\\_report\\_1105\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500275/Evidence_Supporting_the_Use_of_Environmental_Remediation_to_Improve_Water_Quality_in_the_South_Marine_Plan_Areas_report_1105_.pdf)

- *Marine Licensing and Aquaculture*

- There continues to be confusion around whether or not a marine licence is required for shellfish farming.

- KJ and DJ state in many cases where a marine licence would seem not to be required the 'obstruction or danger to navigation' issue often deems it necessary for a producer to gain his/her licence from the MMO.

**ACTION**

- Copy of presentation to be circulated by LC
- SC to provide MMO bio-remediation study link (see above)
- LC to liaise with Kingfisher on SRO mapping

**CEFAS Update - KJ**

Key points inc.:

- Cefas aquaculture projects

- Current and future aquaculture projects that have international and national interest where listed.

- KJ stated that Grant Stentiford at Cefas was in discussions over involvement in a 'shellfish network' bid along with another partner in response to the BBSRC-NERC UK Aquaculture Initiative Networks call. KJ advised SAGB (and BTA) on approaching Cefas in relation to their participation in such a network/s

- *Aquaculture Regulatory Toolbox*

- Phase1

- Update on Phase I of toolbox. PDFs sent to Seafish

- LC stated Seafish now started internal process to create web-page, upload PDFs

- Phase II (III and IV)

- KJ gave initial ideas on Phase II (III and IV), and asked group for feed back

- MG commented that the toolbox highlights the complexity of the English permission/licensing system, and would help to show how things could be changed.

**ACTION**

- Copy of presentation to be circulated by LC
- KJ to send Phase II suggestions to group for comment
- SAGB to contact Grant Stentiford at Cefas re. shellfish network bid

**Defra Update - MG**

Key points inc.:

- *Defra and English Aquaculture Policy*

- General aquaculture overview on English and European context

- Those in Defra team - Aquaculture Policy Lead: John Manning / Aquaculture Policy Advisor: MG (until June). MG stated Defra still unsure as future budgets have not been finalised.

- *MANP*

- Although the MANP has been released it is seen as 'vague' in its detail. Still it does facilitate access to EMFF funding

- Defra are looking at the processes (e.g. MG focusing on SROs), and to provide guidance to enable industry to lead aquaculture development.
- DJ asked, what is Defra stance on Pacific oysters? MG has spoken to the Minister to provide information but stated different opinions hold sway within Defra. Currently issues on Pacific oysters are treated on a case by case basis, but a national policy is needed, however a straightforward answer will not be available in the foreseeable future.

#### **ACTION**

- Copy of presentation to be circulated by LC

#### **AFTERNOON SESSION**

##### **Seafish Aquaculture and EAWG – LC**

Key points inc.:

- Part 1: Seafish Progress Update
  - Seafish Aquaculture work priorities detailed to the group inc., RASS Aquaculture Profiles; new aquaculture reports (i.e. Several and Regulation Orders (R Whitley consultant), and Aquaculture Economics (J Hambrey consultant)); SIF-supported aquaculture projects (mariculture in lagoons and sheltered locations and multi-species hatchery design, S Wales; and Aquaculture and Fisheries Centre, Brixham); Aquaculture Regulatory Toolbox for England.
- PART 2: An English Aquaculture Body and Alternative Strategies
  - Following on from the 'English Aquaculture Body' discussions at the EAWG meeting in July 2015 an 'English Aquaculture IBO Proposal' document was produced by Seafish and circulated to EAWG members. Although many comments were generated, no consensus on pursuing the IBO route was forthcoming.
  - In light of the comments regarding the IBO proposal, alternative options/strategies were put before the current meeting attendees. These included:
    - A continuation with exploring with further 'options appraisal' for an English Aquaculture body
    - A pro-aquaculture 'lobbyist' to influence Ministerial/government opinion, either by direct lobbying via an independent advocate, or indirect but targeted information dissemination through Seafish. This could have either an English or UK scope.
    - A proposal to adapt and/or modify the EAWG to take on either an Advisory Committee (AC) structure to guide Seafish English aquaculture work, or to expand the group to become a multi-national working group or multi-national AC structure to guide Seafish domestic aquaculture work. An English AC would have direct influence on how part of the Seafish Domestic Aquaculture budget (£50,000 per annum) was directed/spent; a multi-national AC would have influence over the spending of the vast majority of these funds.
  - TP stressed that all the above options would need to align with Seafish' NDPB remit, its current Corporate Plan, and bodies representing levy payers such as the SAGB would ultimately have the final say.

#### **Discussion**

- SH raise the point that if an Advisory Committee role was pursued, the EAWG would essentially lose its first intent i.e. to "motivate Defra". TP stated this was indeed a risk, but highlighted that aquaculture within Defra may be facing budgeting restraints and industry may need to act independently.
- 'Lobbyist'
  - The proposal of a lobbyist generated initial interest from DJ, PH, and OR, and KJ asked whether lobbying would just be governmental in nature or to counter-act anti-aquaculture groups? TP clarified that direct lobbying had to be separate from Seafish funding and the group would have to seek alternative funding streams to employ the services of a lobbyist.

- The idea of EMFF funding of a lobbyist was considered. This could be under the guise of 'marketing', but Seafish could only be involved in generic aquaculture marketing, and not specifically support the marketing of purely English or UK aquaculture products.

- DJ liked the concept of a lobbyist, but was unsure how Seafish could truly be involved, and besides lobbying was a major part of the current remit of the SAGB and the BTA.

- **Advisory Committee**

- The group responded positively to the concept of a multi-national AC, and recognised that many aquaculture issues within the UK are cross-border, as well as with the past commitment of the SAGB and the BTA there already is multi-national representation within the EWAG.

- Many in the group questioned how regulators and government bodies would be accommodated within an AC? TP clarified that regulators are already part of the EAWG and would be free to express their opinions in a multi-national AC. KJ and MG found engaging in group discussions useful to highlight what issues need to be confronted, and welcomed the opportunity to possibly engage with a larger group such as a multi-national AC.

- Again the possibility of EMFF funding was raised, and the potential Seafish resources to be aligned to co-funding larger projects/undertaking EMFF applications on behalf of a multi-national AC.

- Again TP stressed that all the above options would need to align with Seafish' NDPB remit, its current Corporate Plan. Although a multi-national AC would have influence over the Seafish Domestic Aquaculture Programme funds, bodies representing and/or levy payers would have primary say on any Seafish AC decisions.

- BP emphasised the need to design and define any AC. TP highlighted that any AC structure could be based on the successful models developed by Seafish for its regional work in the SW, Wales and NI.

- The group unanimously agreed that a multi-national ASC would be the best strategic option to pursue.

#### **ACTION**

- LC to clarify the AC structures of Seafish regional teams, and design the structure of a new multi-national, domestic aquaculture AC.
- LC to ensure all those current involved in the EAWG are invited to become members of a multi-national AC; Seafish to determine who will be invited to join said multi-national AC.
- LC to organise a new multi-national AC meeting early in the new FY 2016.