

Aquaculture Representative Group (ARG) in N. Ireland.

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Aquaculture Common Issues Group

Friends House, London.



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

AN ROINN
**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O
**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**



**European Union
European
Maritime and
Fisheries Fund**

Aquaculture Representation

- * 1. The rationale to the need for representation.
- * 2. What Aquaculture Initiative did about it.
- * 3. Next steps – for the next phase of the ARG.

1. NI Aquaculture is expanding and changing.

- * 2017 reached record value year ever in NI.
- * 2012-2017 finfish increased from £4.1M to £6.8M
- * From 2012 Oyster production increased from 137T to 912T.
- * Proportion of value from Bottom grown mussels 48% to 37%.

Year	Total Volume (Tonnes)	Total Value (£M)	Finfish Vol	Finfish Value	Shellfish Volume	Shellfish Value
2012						
	5,865	8.658	945	4.118	4,919	4.539
2017						
	7,079	15.888	1248	6.813	5,831	9.073

1. Three options looked at.

- * Option 1: Irish Farmers Association (IFA) membership in NI
 - * [Membership fee]
- * Option 2: Establishment of a type of “Producer Organisation” (PO) organisation
 - * [Rules are derived for fisheries sector (managing quotas, number of members, recognition thresholds) – ill suited to fish farming]
- * Option 3: Ad hoc grouping, with the Aquaculture Initiative EEIG acting as secretariat.
 - * [1st meeting, October 2012]



1. Origins of ARG

- * Understood the need for a voice for Aquaculture was more important than the need for a constituted, formalised organisation.
- * **Barriers** for Aquaculture representation include;
 - * Comprises **small number** of businesses.
 - * Made up of **very different sub-groups** (Fresh water, Marine, shellfish, finfish, hatchery, on-grower etc.).
 - * Couldn't be funded from **membership fees** to meet costs of a standalone organisation.
 - * Must be inclusive – avoid being **personality** led.

2. OPERATING THE ARG

- * Aquaculture Initiative act as secretariat.
- * Removed difficult issue of membership cost.
- * Trade off; less cost, but less formal / less hierarchy.
- * Looked for easily agreed foundations.
- * Aim was to create a single, inclusive organisation.

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1. Open to all Fish Culture **Licence holders**
2. There are 3 sub-sectors i.e. **Mussels, Oysters, Finfish.**
3. Each sub-sector nominates **representatives.**
4. All members are of **equal** importance. All sub-sectors are of equal importance.

2. Consultations and Meetings.

- * 2012-2016 series of meetings between ARG and DAERA.
- * 1st meeting, DAERA gave ARG support and endorsement.
- * ARG are **an effective communication tool** used in consultation responses to engage in policy development.
- * ARG also initiated 5 communications to a Minister or Department.
- * **Representation empowers producers to get their own information** e.g. to invite key stakeholders (WMU, FSA, MI) as a **'guest spot'** to their meetings.
- * Set up an e mail address for the ARG (aquaculturerepresentativegroup@gmail.com)

2. ARG's written communication on Aquaculture Issues.

- * Over 10 consultation responses in total. As **experts in their field** and the **ultimate end-user of policy**, Aquaculture can make a significant contribution to enhance the development of proposals.
- * **Review of the Shellfish Waters Designations.** Protection of Shellfish Waters Beyond 2013.
- * DARD Investment Proposals for EMFF (2014-2020). **Multi-Annual plans** required consultation with stakeholders. (2016)
- * Fisheries Bill NI (NI) **Marine Plan** for NI. (2018)
- * Regulations relating to technical standard for aquaculture facilities. (2018)

2. Other representation ideas.

Enable Business to Business contact. Peer to peer support through discussion is an effective way to improve farm performance.



- * **CLAMS Groups** are around the coast of the island of Ireland, process of organising aquaculture at a single bay level with a good level of producer input.
- * *Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture COM (2013)* cites CLAMS Groups as an example of how Marine Spatial Planning can be brought about.
- * 2 main CLAMS Groups in NI (Belfast Lough and Carlingford Lough)
- * **Sectoral group meetings.** E.g. Finfish and Oyster. Evening meetings to create an exchange of news and views.

2. Impact of CLAMS Groups

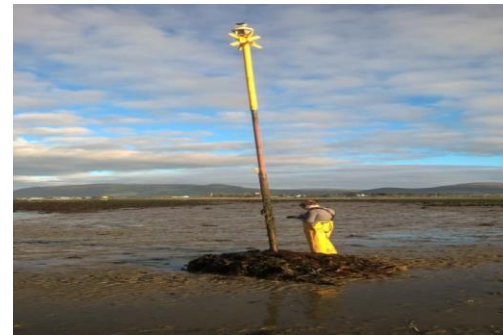
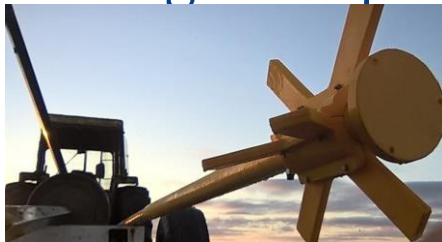
- * **Carlingford CLAMS**

- * Special Unified Marking Schemes (SUMS).



Bord Iascaigh Mhara scheme. Sites are standardized with highly specified marks.

- * Maintenance costs are low as there are fewer marks and of a longer lifespan.



- * **Belfast CLAMS**

- * Group arranged 2 dedicated Water Quality Meetings inviting the key stakeholders (Regulators, Water Company, FSA). 2018
- * A 3rd Key follow-up meeting scheduled for June 2019.

3. Next Steps for ARG – Changes to be made.

- * Since ARG set up in 2012; new licences, new owners, increased production, higher expectations, higher aspirations.
- * Changing face of Aquaculture – requires changes to ARG.
- * Oyster and Finfish sector groups in 2018 renew / re-nominate representation – but wanted a new format for sectoral representatives.
- * Taken a “panel” type approach to representation at meetings. i.e. to ensure someone is available to attend ARG / Departmental meetings.

3. Next Steps – New structure needed for the future

- * How to bring about effective Aquaculture representation is a common issue (UK, Ireland, EU).
- * Further Aquaculture **expansion** in the coming years means **representation will be more important** for regulators to engage directly with the sector.
- * The Aquaculture sector wants to have **access to decision makers** in Government Departments.
- * Current ARG format has worked since 2012, but the aim is to look at the options available of how to set up a formalised **self- sustaining group**.
- * **ARG General meeting** arranged for 21st May, agenda is the potential Terms of Reference for an **updated ARG** to use for the future.

Thank You

