

**Note of Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting held at Billingsgate market, London. Wednesday 25 September 2012**

For minutes and further information see:

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

**Attendees**

Alastair Mitchell	Marine Scotland
Andrew Nicholson	Co-op
Angus Garrett	Seafish
Ann Moffat	Marine Scotland
Baukje de Roos	University of Aberdeen
Chris Brown	Asda
Clive Askew	SAGB
Clive Harward	Anglian Water
Craig Burton	Seafish
Daniel Lee	GAA
Dave Little	University of Stirling
David Bassett	British Trout Association
David Jarrad	SAGB
David Parker	Youngs Seafood
Dawn Purchase	MCS
Emma Maclaren	Seaweb
Francis Murray	University of Stirling
Huw Thomas	Morrisons
Ian Laing	Cefas
Ian Michie	Young's Seafood
James Wilson	Deepdock
Jamie Smith	SSPO
John Jukes	Coldwater
Karen Green	Seafish (Minutes)
Kate Evangeli	Client Earth
Kate Hedges	Defra
Katie Tearall	BBSRC
Mandy Pyke	Seafish
Mark Seager	Young's Seafood
Martin Bowes	Seafish
Matt Whittles	Defra
Martin Jaffa	Callander McDowell
Maureen Reynier	Seafish

Mike Mitchell  
Neil Auchterlonie  
Nick Bradbury  
Paul Williams  
Piers Hart  
Toby Parker  
Tracey Heyworth  
Walter Speirs

Youngs Seafood  
Cefas  
Biomar  
Seafish (Chair)  
WWF  
UFI  
Birds Eye  
ASSG

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

Paul Williams welcomed everyone to the Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting. Apologies were received from:

Alex Adrian  
Andrew Mallison  
Andrzej Nowosielski  
Anne Chamberlain  
Estelle Brennan  
Hannah McIntyre  
Ian Carr  
Keith Jeffery  
Lucy Blow  
Paul Morris  
Pete Southgate  
Stephen Cameron

Crown Estate  
IFFO  
Environment Agency  
IFFO  
Lyons Seafood  
Marks & Spencer  
EWOS  
Cefas  
New England Seafood  
Skretting  
FishVet  
Scottish Shellfish Marketing  
Group

### **2. Minutes/outstanding actions from previous meeting held on 15 March 2012/recent issues.**

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

#### *Warm water prawn/Farmed Atlantic salmon Responsible Sourcing Guides*

Two new guides have now been added to the Seafish website.

#### *Keo Films feedback*

There has been some new intelligence relating to coverage of aquaculture activities. There will be three programmes to air in January 2013. Whilst a number of avenues are being explored it would appear that aquaculture certification could be a topic and that filming has taken place at various shrimp farms in Thailand. An original approach was made to ASC to interview Chris Ninnes but this was not followed up.

#### **Actions:**

2.1 Seafish to continue to monitor approaches made to industry.

2.2 Seafish to maintain contact with Keo Films and report feedback to ACIG participants.

### Report on Food Unwrapped – what is in our food?

A programme on how prawns are farmed aired on Monday 24 September. This showed it was a big business, with 3.5 million tonnes farmed per year and that Thailand is the world's largest producer of tiger prawns. The programme followed two themes – size of the industry and breeding methods. Visited Thai Royal processing facility which employs 1500 workers and processes 0.5 m prawns per day. Showed the 'Blue army' who are paid on how many prawns are peeled per hour, with an average of 600-700 per hour. Also visited a prawn farm – shown to be sustainable and low impact and supplying UK retailers, with huge pools (2 million prawns per pool). Visited large hatchery with its own breeding programme and asked how can so many large prawns be guaranteed. Spoke with a Prof at Liverpool University who explained the process of ablation (removal of one eye) to aid ovarian development with reference to the FAO guidance on the procedure and the recommended way to do this. However the lasting impression was: 'horror' at the procedure; do they feel pain?; 'pluck the eye out'; Why are the prawns now so still?; hatchery did not want to talk about this aspect of their breeding programme! *It was pointed out that although they mentioned tiger shrimp in the programme they would, in fact, have been white shrimp as Thailand no longer produces many tiger shrimp. Re ablation it was also noted that it may be useful to get a welfare experts opinion on the issue.*

### **3. Standing items**

#### 3.1 UK Aquaculture Forum meeting in Brussels on 17/18 October – Ann Moffat

Ann updated the group on the next Forum meeting. Issues to be covered: the Scottish Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill; CFP and EMFF; offshore aquaculture; issues with trade barriers; health issues including the Oyster herpes virus. 130 have been invited to the evening reception which will showcase Scottish produce. There were comments that this Forum had established real engagement with the Commission.

**Action:** Ann to provide further information on the Brussels meeting

#### 3.2 Consultation on Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill in Scotland – Alistair Mitchell

The Bill is due to be introduced in Autumn 2012. The aim for the aquaculture sector is to drive sustainable growth and instigate better interaction between farmed and wild-caught interests. The consultation began at the beginning of the year and has polarised opinion. It is important that we recognise the work that the industry does. Areas to be reviewed specifically include: farm management; sampling; technical standards; species; escapes.

#### 3.3 Consultation on English Aquaculture Strategy – Matt Whittles

There was a report on the England Aquaculture Consultation Group workshop on Monday 24 September. This was an opportunity to present and consider the 40 responses to a recent consultation on growth in the English aquaculture sector. These responses were all supportive of the aquaculture industry – but raised a number of issues for consideration. The aim of the workshop was to identify where further work or action could contribute to growth and how these could best

be taken forward. The first step will be to establish a 'virtual' aquaculture group within Defra. All the summary presentations given at the workshop can be found at: <http://www.seafish.org/aquaculture/aquaculture-common-issues-group-/england-aquaculture-consultation-group>

**Action** – ACIG to be kept informed of developments.

#### 3.4 STECF report Economic Performance of the EU Aquaculture Sector. Karen Green

According to the report, in 2009 the aquaculture sector production in the EU-22 (excluding the 5 landlocked Member States) accounted for 1.3 million tonnes, with a turnover estimated at 3.33 billion Euros. The EU has around 14-15,000 companies whose main activity is aquaculture production that accounted for a Gross Value Added of almost 270 million Euros in 2009. Profitability for 2009 is negative (the sector has been suffering losses) at -1.6 %. For the 16 countries that it has been possible to estimate - 12 of them had profits and only 4 had losses. Note: Environmental impact assessment is noted as the main reason for stagnated growth and it is not due to the market or natural conditions. Innovation and technological development are seen as ways forward, as well as better governance and management. There were comments throughout on missing data from Belgium, France, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom. *Comments were made at ACIG that it was disappointing for the UK aquaculture industry that inadequate statistics had been provided.*

[http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/218925/12-03\\_STECF+EWG+11-14+-+EU+Aquaculture+Sector\\_JRC70424.pdf](http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/218925/12-03_STECF+EWG+11-14+-+EU+Aquaculture+Sector_JRC70424.pdf)

#### 3.5 Seafood Summit, Hong Kong – David Bassett, British Trout Association.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/645831/acig\\_davidbassett\\_seafoodsummit2012\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/645831/acig_davidbassett_seafoodsummit2012_201209.pdf)

##### **Discussion**

Themes that emerged: ENGO attitudes to Government, retailers, industry and lobbying; increasing consideration of aquaculture at the summit; GSSI (by 2015) aims to create a level playing field for global seafood certification programmes: differing attitudes to sustainability; focus on retailers sustainability policy; sustainability within certification schemes; aquaculture certification not necessarily going smoothly; emerging trends ie LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability); need aquaculture industry engagement with the ENGO community.

#### 3.6 Update on aquaculture certification – Karen Green

Karen Green tabled a paper providing the latest position re the development of aquaculture standards for abalone, bivalves (clams, oysters, mussels & scallops), pangasius, salmon, seriola and cobia, shrimp, tilapia and trout; as well as news on the last reports on eco-labels.

**Action** - The update document will be added to the Seafish website.

### 3.7 Sustainable Seafood Coalition – Kate Evangeli, ClientEarth

The SSC Codes of Conduct are voluntary agreements, adopted and adhered to by the SSC Members. They are developed collaboratively by the SSC Members (with advice from non-member experts). So far, the Members have worked on the development of two codes, the labelling Code and the sourcing Code.

The SSC Code of Conduct on Environmentally Responsible Fish and Seafood Sourcing sets out a number of commitments in relation to sourcing policies and best practice. The Code of Conduct on self-declared environmental labelling of fish products aims to use harmonised seafood labelling to provide consumers with accurate information on sustainability. The SSC Members commit to limiting their self-declared environmental claims regarding fish to two types of claim; those regarding 'responsibility' (i.e. 'responsibly fished/farmed/sourced') and those regarding 'sustainability' (i.e. 'sustainably fished/farmed/sourced'). The claims will be made only when a Member has satisfied the criteria set out in the Code.

The labelling Code is now in its final stages of development and it is hoped that this will be signed off at the next Members meeting. The Code will then be subject to a six week public feedback period before finalisation. There will be sector-specific guidance documents to support the Code. The sourcing Code is at an earlier stage but potentially could be signed off by the end of the year. Again, it will then be subject to a feedback period before finalisation and development of the guidance and individual implementation plans. SSC is also now in a position to extend SSC membership beyond retailers to the foodservice sector.

**Action:** ClientEarth to keep the group up-to-date re progress.

### 3.8 Seafish News – Paul Williams, Seafish.

Seafish now has a new board and three sector panels (Consumer/supply, Domestic, Importers) in place, and is currently finalising work programmes and the new corporate plan. This will create greater transparency over Seafish work areas and how the levy is being spent.

## **4. Asian farmed shrimp and prawn – sustainability myths and reality.** **Francis Murray, University of Stirling.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633301/acig\\_murrayf\\_shrimpmysths\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633301/acig_murrayf_shrimpmysths_201209.pdf)

### **Discussion**

Discussed project to compare current 'sustainability' messages on shrimp farming against research outcomes in Asian producer countries (Sustaining Ethical Aquaculture Trade - SEAT). There have been calls to not eat tropical shrimp for a variety of reasons: ecological destruction; land and other resource dispossession; human-rights abuses; labour rights (esp. processing); and food safety issues. Particular points were that whilst there have been issues in the past there were major improvements: the average farm size is now larger and there are fewer of them and the Government is much more involved.

## 5. Shellfish issues. David Jarrad, SAGB.

The big issues facing the shellfish sector were highlighted namely:

- Gangmasters: The Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) is the UK agency that regulates the supply of workers to the shellfish-gathering industry. Whilst SAGB fully support the ethos of the agency (to handle itinerant pickers) it does not think their remit should extend to the cultivated sector. It is costly to regulate and time-consuming. The SAGB has been lobbying against this for some time. There have been moves to exempt farmed shellfish but there needs to be a change to the legislation (although a moratorium is in place) which SAGB and ASSG are helping with.
- Oyster herpes virus: This has caused large scale mortality in France and Southern Ireland over the last decade. It has been known for 90 – 95% of a year class to die within a matter of days. In 2010 there was an outbreak in Whitstable (10 million died over one weekend) and in 2012 an outbreak in the Blackwater Estuary (5 million died over two weekends – mostly seed – vector is unknown). This issue has created market supply problems in France. The French Government has compensated French growers who have been looking to buy up UK seed stocks to return to France for on-growing. This has distorted the market and disadvantaged UK growers and could in turn cause shortages in the UK this Xmas.
- England Aquaculture Consultation: Really need Defra to state they want an increased, more vibrant aquaculture industry and reduce regulatory burden.
- Class A waters: Announcement in September of 5 Class A waters in the UK (out of 340). This represents 1.5% compared with 36% in Southern Ireland, 38% in France and 100% in Holland. This is due to the way legislation is implemented. One pollution event has the potential to put a grower out of business.

## 6. Shellfish Waters – Working in Partnership - Clive Harward, Anglian Water.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633304/acig\\_anglianwater\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633304/acig_anglianwater_201209.pdf)

This looked at Anglian Waters initiative to better engage with the Industry and the formation of the East Anglian Water Quality Forum. As part of this new approach a Combined Sewerage Overflow (CSO) text alert pilot has been initiated: to provide useful information to harvesters; to notify harvesters (through Seafish) when CSO's and STW discharges have occurred; and to support harvesters and help them to make better informed decisions about harvesting. The CSO trial started on 6 August in Essex but despite the extreme rainfall and weather conditions this summer no alerts have yet needed to be issued.

### Discussion

- The shellfish industry would benefit most from a lot more Class A waters in the future. Is the water industry going to invest in better water treatment to make this happen? There is no regulatory driver

for Anglian Water to invest in further treatment. Any further investment would therefore be dependent on customers willingness to pay. We need to balance the interests of all our stakeholders and customers.

- Observation that it is not just the water companies creating pollution ie Environment Agency and agriculture need to be engaging as well.
- In the past the UV systems to meet the standards imposed by the Bathing Water Quality Directive have been turned off in the winter. Does this still happen? Yes, our discharge permits only require UV treatment during the Bathing Water season. However where secondary treatment is required for shellfish there will be year-round controls.
- How much horizon-scanning is done to mitigate against problem areas in the future? It is vital we look ahead especially as East Anglia is generally dry and flat and is likely to be more affected by climate change.
- Are CSO requirements a legal requirement? They are under the Bathing Waters Directive but not a legal requirement for shellfish.

### **7. The Consumer and their Understanding of Fisheries Science. Maureen Reynier, Seafish.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633307/acig\\_seafish\\_understandingtheseafoodconsumer\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633307/acig_seafish_understandingtheseafoodconsumer_201209.pdf)

#### **Discussion**

- Fish consumption is very unequal and is dominated by a relatively small number of consumers. How much fish were they actually eating? There were a number of layers – no fish; limited consumption; experimentation with fish. But there was an underlying understanding that fish is good for you.
- The challenge is to get people to eat, or at least, try fish. What is being done to address this? There are a wide range of small-scale initiatives under the Seafish ‘Fish is the Dish’ campaign but the key theme is ease and versatility.

### **8. Development of a British-led standard for assessing GHG emission in seafood. Angus Garrett, Seafish.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633310/acig\\_seafish\\_carbonemissions\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633310/acig_seafish_carbonemissions_201209.pdf)

Part of a collective action on GHG emissions in seafood systems.

#### **Discussion**

- It is important that accreditation bodies accept these standards, however it was highlighted that whilst this is an important area it is not a mandatory ie it is not a requirement under the GAA standards. The standard provides a measurement of carbon footprint and a means to reduce it.



- Language is an issue. It is unclear whether the terms 'greenhouse gas', 'carbon emissions', 'GHG emissions', 'carbon footprint' all mean the same thing.
- Question over where fish feed comes into this? Response was that feed is seen as a product of the seafood system.
- Have you engaged with WRAP and their work? In the past yes, but not more recently. The aim is to re-engage.

**9. Human intervention study on the health effects of consuming two portions oily fish (Scottish farmed salmon) per week (current UK recommendation) using fish raised on different feeding regimes – Baukje de Roos, University of Aberdeen.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633313/acig\\_univofaberdeen\\_scottishsalmon\\_2012\\_09.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633313/acig_univofaberdeen_scottishsalmon_2012_09.pdf)

The Fish Dish study will investigate the health effects of consuming two portions of oily fish (Scottish farmed salmon) per week (current UK recommendation) using fish raised on different feeding regimes (two different types of salmon will be grown between April 2012 and January 2013 on feeds that differ in their Omega-3 levels). The 18 week trial will start in February 2013 with 17 – 20 per group. A portion size is deemed to be 140 g, to be measured raw and cooked.

- Group 1 will eat two portions of salmon per week (HPUFA) with high EPA/DHA levels in feed and in salmon fillets ~15% of total feed fatty acids, equal to wild salmon.
- Group 2 will eat two portions of salmon per week (SPUFA) with 'sustainable' levels of EPA/DHA in feed and in salmon fillets ~6-8% of total feed fatty acids, similar to most Norwegian farmed salmon.
- Group 3 will eat no fish.

**Discussion**

- Not sure this study addresses the main issue which is the Omega 3: Omega 6 balance, and an excess of Omega-6 in the diet. Response was that there were two schools of thought on this – one that it was a question of balance, the second that it was about absolute values.
- Comments on a recent Omega-3 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association which questioned the benefits of Omega-3 in the diet and showed supplementation with Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids was not associated with a lower risk of cardiac death, sudden death, heart attack, or stroke. This study was deemed to be flawed and has been criticised.  
<http://media.jamanetwork.com/news-item/omega-3-fatty-acid-supplementation-not-associated-with-lower-risk-major-cardiovascular-disease-events/>
- How will you deal with volunteers and the effect of their previous diet? If the control group were fish eaters we will encourage them to continue. However it is likely we will not select big fish eaters.



- How will you support the volunteers? Fresh salmon will be supplied each week and there will be a website, blogs, social events, menu ideas etc.
- Is there any way of ensuring compliance? We have to assume honesty. Volunteers will be required to keep a food diary. The Omega-3 index test is a pretty good marker of compliance.

**Action:** Progress to be reported back to ACIG.

**10. Issues/challenges/positive developments facing the farmed salmon sector. Jamie Smith, SSPO.**

[http://www.seafish.org/media/633592/acig\\_sspo\\_scottishsalmon\\_201209.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/633592/acig_sspo_scottishsalmon_201209.pdf)

**Discussion**

- If the plan is to increase Scottish salmon production from 158,000 tonnes in 2011 to 210,000 tonnes by 2020 how is this going to be achieved? With more sites and bigger sites and by moving offshore. Stocking density will remain the same.
- How will scientific evidence gaps be addressed? Through a combination of means – SSPO, Scottish Government, BBSRC, SARF.
- Would you consider accepting GM feeds or poultry meal in feeds if they were allowed? GM feeds are currently not permitted but it is difficult to argue against GM products when there is already so much GM product on supermarket shelves. EU legislation is changing re Processed Animal Proteins (PAPs) so that debate is coming closer. It is likely that it will be the retailers making the decision on those issues.

**11. Any other business**

Two forthcoming events were mentioned:

**24-25 October**      **ASSG Conference 2012.** Corran Halls, Esplanade, Oban, Argyll. PA34 5AB.

<http://assg.org.uk/#/conference-12/4545432645>

**2 November**      **The Mediterranean Diet Revisited, Fishmongers Hall, London.**

<http://www.fishhall.org.uk/Notice-Board/Fishmongers-Company-to-host-conference-in-association-with-national-charity-Heart-Resarch-UK-this-Autumn/>