

## **BGMCF - Meeting 10**

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011

**Venue:** BIM, Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire

**In attendance:** Mr Donal Maguire – Chairman of the BGMCF  
Ms Joanne Gaffney – Secretariat  
Ms Sarah McLean – Loughs Agency  
Mr Kenny Parker – DARD  
Mr Michael Murphy – Secretariat  
Mr Greg Griffiths - DARD  
Mr Keith Kelleher– DAFF  
Mr Damien Clarke - DAFF  
Mr Raymond Dougal – Industry Rep Belfast/ Larne  
Mr Arthur McCarthy–Rep Castlemaine/Shannon/Cork/Clew  
Mr Michael Havelin – Industry Rep. Foyle  
Mr George Golden – Industry Rep Carlingford/Dundrum  
Mr Michael O’Driscoll–Vessel owner and operators association  
Mr Richie Flynn – IFA  
Mr Declan Quigley – SFPA

**Apologies** Mr Danny Gallagher – Industry Rep Swilly  
Mr Arthur McCarthy–Rep Castlemaine/Shannon/Cork/Clew  
Mr Barry Fox – Loughs Agency  
Mr Seamus Gallagher - SFPA  
Mr Stephen Kelly – Industry Rep Kinsale/Waterford/Wexford

Donal Maguire welcomed all to the meeting.

### **1. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted, and it was agreed that all action points would be addressed through the agenda

### **2. MSC Certification**

DM updated the group on progress to date on MSC. Following input from Bord Bia, NGO’s and mussel importers in the Netherlands, funding applications have been submitted in NI and ROI for MSC certification of the sector on the Island of Ireland, there will be a single assessment which will generate two MSC certs, one for NI and one for ROI.

The ROI application has been approved subject to a number of terms and conditions while the NI application will be assessed in early September.

Given the delays in getting to this stage, it is planned that the tender process for a certification body will be undertaken prior to the September DARD Decision with a view to

being in a position to appoint a certification body soon after the NI funding decision (If this is positive).

GG expressed concern that it has taken so long to get to this stage and queried if MSC could be notified of the intention to certify the fishery and thus list it on their website. JG indicated that this is not possible as the certification body must be appointed and report this to the MSC, the assessment is a very structured process and thus we will have to wait until September.

JG indicated that there are some data-gaps that will need to be addressed in the coming months if we are to achieve certification - one of which is by-catch monitoring. Industry agreed to cooperate in assisting with data provision.

### **Seed Mussel Fishery 2011**

**ROI** - The spring fishery yielded limited amounts of seed, with traditional seed grounds displaying evidence of a lot of storm disturbance over the severe winter of 2010.

Further surveys will be undertaken in the Irish Sea before the autumn opening.

**NI** – Donaghadee yielded about 2500tonnes of seed. It was closed when waste levels became too high. What remains at Donaghadee is reported as being ‘extremely patchy’.

Industry members expressed the view that the area should be “cleaned” of mussel in an effort to promote a new settlement in the area.

KP and GG indicated that DARD would be unlikely to support this as they wish to ensure that the substrate in the area is not disturbed and thus, in their view, available for a new settlement.

KP acknowledged that this issue is an area of contention between the department and industry and that there is a divergence of view. Reaching consensus could only be settled with increased scientific understanding. He indicated that it might be possible to get funding for such a project under the DARD evidence and innovation strategy, with the scientific work to be undertaken by AFBI.

He pointed out that departmental management policies must in so far as possible be fact based if DARD are to defend their position to the environmental authorities and NGO’s.

AFBI will undertake their surveys before the autumn fishery and an industry survey will be facilitated if required.

**Action: JG to liaise with industry and AFBI on surveying requirements, and an exploitation plan if required**

### **Castlemaine Harbour**

The TAC committee looking at the Castlemaine assessment met on Monday of this week and it is hoped that all the committees' views and recommendations will go to the Minister early next week to inform his final decision.

The Marine Institute are of the view that the fishery, as presented in the Fisheries Natura plan, will not pose a significant risk to the protected site and thus the area should be opened subject to certain conditions.

DC highlighted that any activities or eventualities not included in the plan, such as taking seed from the Irish Sea to Castlemaine, are not covered by the plan and it's appropriate assessment and therefore would not be permitted until a supplementary assessment is completed.

One issue that had been highlighted by NPWs was the control of alien species. JG advised the group that this issue will need to be addressed by the sector for the assessments in all other growing areas that are covered by a Natura designation. It is hoped that some work will commence on this issue in the coming months.

The status of the aquaculture licences in Castlemaine following the completion of the AA was queried. DC stated that aquaculture Licencing is a parallel but separate process and that the Aquaculture and foreshore management division of DAFF are responsible for the determination and issuing of licences, after consideration of the findings of the AA and taking into account other issues, recommendations will be made to the Minister in due course for his final decision.

Castlemaine is the first area to have undergone the full Assessments but this process will be rolled out around the coast, the next area of interest to the Bottom Grown Mussel sector will be Lough Swilly, with this process starting before the end of the year.

MOD queried the role of NPWS in this process, and again expressed dissatisfaction that NPWS have continually refused to attend the Forum.

DC stated that DAFF and NPWS have established formal contact and consultation on the AA's and that their role is to provide conservation objectives and guidance to the Department on the AA procedures.

RF stated that while the completion of the Castlemaine AA was to be welcomed, this is only the first out of 59 and that during the delay in reaching this point and the further delays expected in completing all 59 areas, the aquaculture sector in Ireland is losing jobs and markets to our competitor countries. The Minister is obviously unhappy with these delays and it is hoped that things move faster from now on.

### **Relaying Embargo in Netherlands**

As industry members are aware there is currently a survey for Alien Species being undertaken in all growing areas by Dr Arjan Gittenberg. The findings of this survey will support the importers licence to relay in the Netherlands.

The Secretariat has assisted Dr Gittenberg in scheduling sampling collection but it is at the discretion of all industry members to participate or not

### **Crepidula**

DARD have drafted a protocol that would support movements of mussels for relaying from Belfast lough, this draft will be open for consultation in the coming week and once submissions have been received, DARD will notify industry members on the planned way forward.

### **Loughs Agency Aquaculture Implementation Plan**

Sarah McLean indicated that there have been no developments since the last meeting

### **AOB**

#### **Electronic Logbooks**

DAFF, DARD and the SFPA indicated that no formal decision has been made on the requirement for electronic logbooks for the mussel fleet. This matter will be subject to further consideration and discussion.

In the interim, DARD, DAFF and the SFPA confirmed that there will be no requirement for electronic logbooks for the mussel fleet in 2011.

Action: Chairman of the Forum to write to the departments and agency to request joint consideration and a coordinated decision to be taken on this matter in accordance with the policy of the 'Rising Tide Review' to have harmonised arrangements governing the fishery on the island of Ireland.

### **Biotoxins**

Industry members are reminded that there has been a change in sample destination and Laboratory in the Biotoxin Monitoring Programme;

With effect from 4th of July 2011 all routine Biotoxin samples must now be sent to Complete Laboratory Solutions

**Action: JG to circulate info note with the minutes of this meeting**

### **AIS**

MH indicated that there appears to have been a change in the requirement for vessels to carry AIS, he queried if this is linked to changes in legislation or just interpretation of the Regulations.

**Action: JG to investigate further and report to the next meeting**