

Minutes - BGMCF - Meeting 3

Date: 27/04/2009

Venue: BIM, Crofton Road, Dublin

In attendance: Mr Donal Maguire – Chairman of the BGMCF
Mr Michael Murphy – Secretariat
Ms Joanne Gaffney – Secretariat
Mr Kenny Parker - DARD
Mr Greg Griffiths - DARD
Mr John Kelly – DAFF
Mr Barry Fox – Loughs Agency
Mr Declan Quigley - SFPA
Ms Fiona Geoghegan - Marine Institute
Mr Raymond Dougal – Industry Rep Belfast/Larne
Mr George Golden – Industry Rep Carlingford/Dundrum
Mr Michael Havelin – Industry Rep Foyle
Mr John McLaughlin – Industry Rep Swilly
Mr Arthur McCarthy –Rep Castlemaine/Shannon/Cork/ Clew Bay
Mr Stephen Kelly – Industry Rep Kinsale/Waterford/Wexford
Mr Michael O’Driscoll – Vessel owner and operators association
Mr Richie Flynn - IFA

Apologies: Mr Paddy Campbell - DARD
Ms Judith Tener - DARD

Donal Maguire (DM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for agreement on the minutes of the last meeting - All action points will be addressed through agenda items 2 - 12 except the development of the Stock tracking system. This action point has been delayed as a result of budgetary restraints

No amendments to the minutes were requested, thus the chairman signed and accepted the minutes as presented.

EU Health of aquaculture animals 2008

Fiona Geoghegan of the Marine Institute gave a presentation on the new Shellfish Health Legislation

Areas of the legislation that prompted more in depth discussion were (1) the authorised individuals under this legislation, (2) the Transporters Register, (3) the notification requirements associated with Movements from the Irish Sea, and (4) the administrative burden on the industry.

1. Currently under the Fish Health legislation MI staffs are the authorised personnel i.e. they will have roles of inspection and enforcement. There may be cases when more

organisations may need to be deemed as authorised personnel under this legislation i.e. SFPA, District Veterinary Officers, Regional fisheries personnel. The CEO of the MI can appoint people as authorised under the legislation as and when needed. Industry will be made aware of appointments

2. Industry contended that traceability is already assured through current movement notification and export documentation (CMR) and thus a register of transporters and additional administrative requirements as required under the ROI enabling legislation is unnecessary and unworkable. There is no distinction between transport for relaying and transport to market, these movements pose different risks and Transporters who deliver product direct to the market in Europe should be excluded. Fiona Geoghegan indicated her willingness to meet with industry members to discuss this point in more detail

DARD do not intend to compile a register of transporters but according to the NI legislation, all transporters of aquaculture animals must comply with the legislation in terms of biosecurity, traceability, record keeping etc

Action: *Fiona Geoghegan to meet with Industry reps from the Forum*

3. Fiona Geoghegan presented proposals for inspection of Irish Sea mussel seed in the coming season

Movements from the Irish Sea to sites in Ireland - PROPOSAL

- Notify the MI at the beginning of the season
- Reconcile tonnages with the MI at the end of the season
- Report anything abnormal

This was regarded by industry members on the forum as being an acceptable arrangement

Movements from the Irish Sea to NI - PROPOSAL

- Fishery is managed on an All-Ireland basis
- The Irish Sea is an Approved/ Category 1 Area i.e. movements from the Irish sea are not a risk with respect to the diseases listed in the legislation
- Certify each vessel at the beginning of the season (i.e. examine first load)
- Ensure each bed is examined at least once
- Reconcile tonnages/stock destination for each boat at the end of the season
- Individual consignments may still be examined by DARD inspectors on arrival in NI

DARD indicated that their policy remains that all loads must be inspected and certified before moving to NI. Industry reps, Richie Flynn (RF) and SFPA all indicated that they support the MI proposal. Mussels are neither susceptible to, nor a vector of *Bonamia ostreae*, and the entire island of Ireland is free of *Marteilia refringens*, so there are no issues in relation to the mollusc diseases

listed in Directive 2006/88/EC. Individual load inspections are therefore, regarded as unnecessary. For the upcoming seed fishery arrangements remain as they were last season

Action: *Fiona Geoghegan, SFPA and DARD to discuss this matter further.*

4. The Administrative Burden on the industry.

It is not the intention of the MI to add to the administrative burden that industry must deal with. MI personnel are available and happy to discuss record keeping requirements with all industry members and where possible would like to see the record keeping requirements been satisfied through producers own stock management systems. For more information, please contact Lisa Fitzpatrick on 091 387 200 or email fishhealth@marine.ie.

Mandatory notifications

Requests have been submitted to the regulatory authorities by the BGMCF secretariat on all reporting requirements with a view to compiling an industry handbook. Some responses are outstanding but it is hoped to present a draft of the handbook at the next industry meeting

Action: *Secretariat to follow up and compile draft*

Feedback from technical meeting held on surveying

The draft minutes of the technical meeting were presented to the group; Amendments were requested to the minutes to remove discussions relating to policy due to the absence of any DARD policy representative at the meeting (Minutes included)

DARD indicated that they were willing to discuss individual surveying requests with industry. If an industry member wishes to survey a specific area, please contact DARD who will establish if there is other gear deployed in the area or any other relevant considerations such as conservation designations to be taken into account. DARD will also endeavour to make fishery officers available to monitor the survey. These measures are regarded as necessary to avoid conflict with other interests and users in the area. Industry members expressed themselves as being dissatisfied with this arrangement and felt there are large amounts of NI waters that have never been surveyed as a direct result of this policy.

DARD emphasised there was no one being prevented from surveying as such but that approval had to be obtained from the Department first. The DARD representatives reiterated that this approach was Departmental policy and there was no indication this would change as it was regarded as important to respect the rights of other interests and seeking to avoid conflict was in the best interests of the mussel industry.

Industry members indicated that if Donaghadee has created a precedent for how seed beds are to be consulted on, it will be impossible for the aquaculture sector to operate.

DARD indicated that Donaghadee is a unique situation and that it should not be regarded as setting a precedent.

Annual seed surveying results

DARD- Skullmartin and Donaghadee

KP circulated survey results for all beds off the Ards peninsula. Sections of Skullmartin and Donaghadee will open. The Feathers will remain closed for the spring fishery

L. Agency – Foyle and Carlingford

Foyle survey has been completed - The Loughs Agency is in discussion with operators in the area as to whether the beds will open. There appears to be a consensus that it should remain closed until the autumn.

BIM (DAFF) - East coast

No survey results were available at the time of the meeting.

Areas closed to seed fishing as of the 30th of April 2009

ROI : Areas that will remain closed are those in or adjacent to Natura 2000 sites,

NI: Areas that will remain closed are the area at Donaghadee set aside for the proposed public fishery and all other areas where seed is deemed to be too small or waste levels are too high.

Allocations of mussel seed 2009 – The chairman reminded the meeting that the role of making individual seed mussel fishing allocations does not sit directly with the Forum.

The department representatives reiterated support for the recommendations in The Rising Tide Review, however they did stress that there is some flexibility in the system. When a producer fills his allocation, he may request an additional allocation from the relevant department.

The conclusion to the discussion was that all requests for increases in allocations should be submitted directly to the relevant departments. Such requests will then be assessed by the department and, if deemed necessary or appropriate passed to an ad-hoc allocation committee which would make recommendations to the ministers.

Temporary seed relaying areas

The consensus was that seed mussel fishing allocations will remain linked to licensed ground as this is the established means of gauging the seed requirement of producers and ensuring that individual Loughs do not become overstocked. However if a producer wants to bring forward a structured proposal for a variation in this system based on best practice principles then the relevant Departments and Agencies are prepared to consider it and respond.

The department representatives made it clear that the issue of temporary relaying would be considered on a case by case basis and only if there is a safety concern associated with moving the stock directly to its allocated area. Stock must not be temporarily placed in an area subject to restrictions because of alien species or disease issues.

The relevant departments and agencies i.e. **ROI** - DAFF and SFPA, **NI** - DARD Fisheries Inspectorate must be consulted prior to relaying

Natura 2000

A roadmap for compliance for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in ROI has been prepared for submission to DG environment in Europe. There is a meeting between the NPWS, DAFF and DG Environment scheduled for the 13th of May. It is hoped that this meeting will achieve agreement on an assessment technique and schedule that will allow the department to initiate assessments

Specific questions relating to the Natura 2000 implementation process were submitted by the AIMDPO prior to this meeting. Donal Maguire and John Kelly suggested that a representative from NPWS be invited to the next meeting of the Forum to address these issues. Industry members agreed with this approach but cautioned against getting the NPWS to field a representative that would not be able to answer in sufficient details on their policy requirements.

Kenny Parker (KP) indicated that DARD have completed a “test of likely significance” for the potential of impact of the seed mussel fishery on protected features at selected sites off the Ards peninsula for the 2009 season. No significant potential impacts were identified.

Action: *A suitable representative from NPWS is to be invited to attend the next meeting of the forum*

Additional Environmental Issues

Coast watch Conference - Dublin

Richie Flynn (RF) reported that he has written to the European office in Dublin to lodge the industries’ dissatisfaction with the above conference.

Donaghadee seed fishery

KP circulated a briefing document on the proposed fishery at Donaghadee. Paddy Campbell from DARD fisheries policy was due to attend this meeting of the Forum but unfortunately got called away on other business. Any queries can be directed to Paddy Campbell in DARD.

Industry members queried if the proposed public fishery area has been surveyed this season to establish the predation pressure on the seed resource. KP indicated that this has not happened yet this season

Industry members further requested that the points raised be carried forward onto the agenda for the next meeting

Action: DARD representatives to update the Forum at the next meeting regarding the queries raised and on any developments relating to the opening of this fishery.

Monitoring exotic species associated with mussel culture

The secretariat reported that the SFPA have given an undertaking to coordinate this sampling programme requested by the Dutch authorities.

AOB

Declan Quigley asked that the BGMCF remind industry that during the coming fishery that Spat books must be submitted within 24hours of each fishing operation. All industry member are also reminded of the requirement to submit diagrams of their fish holds, indicating cubic capacity to the regulators

It was reported that some black boxes were not currently registering on the network – The SFPA representative reminded vessel owners that this was a legal requirement and that owners must ensure that their boxes are working prior to the fishing season. He reported that the competent authorities will contact vessel owners regarding this matter in the coming week.

There being no other business, the chairman closed the meeting and suggested that the forum should meet again in late July to review the June fishery and any other matters arising in the meantime.