



Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board

Aqua Culture

Newsletter from B.I.M.

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PAT KEOGH, CEO STEPS DOWN IN JUNE

Pat Keogh who recently completed his second five-year term at the helm of BIM will step down from his position as Chief Executive Officer at the end of June.

Commenting on his decision to step down Pat said he had enjoyed his time as CEO of BIM and thanked the staff, management and Board level for their whole-hearted support. He said the new seafood strategy for the period 2007-2013 recently adopted by the Government maps out a dynamic role for BIM in the sustainable development of the industry over the next seven years and it was good timing for the new Chief Executive to take the helm.



Before his appointment as CEO in 1996, Pat held the position of Aquaculture Development Manager and Deputy Chief Executive for a seven year period and prior to that he held various other roles within BIM.

Chairman of BIM, Rose McHugh, paid tribute to Pat and the tremendous contribution he has made to BIM and the seafood industry in general, culminating most recently in his work with the Seafood Strategy Review Group.

"Thanks to Pat's dedicated stewardship of BIM, the organisation is well positioned for the implementation of the ambitious programmes set out in the new strategy, said Ms. McHugh".

Marine Minister John Browne also paid tribute to Pat and his leadership "Pat leaves behind a number of significant accomplishments that his replacement will undoubtedly further develop and enhance", he said.

From a BIM point of view we will miss Pat very much and we

all wish him every success and happiness in whichever direction the next phase of his life takes him.

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JASON WHOOLEY APPOINTED AS NEW CEO

The Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources, Mr. Noel Dempsey and the Minister of State Mr. John Browne welcomed the appointment of Mr. Jason Whooley as Chief Executive of BIM. The appointment was announced on the 2nd May 2007 by Ms. Rose McHugh, Chairman of BIM. Mr. Whooley is a native of West Cork and a graduate of UCC and has been Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation.

Mr. Dempsey said that "Mr. Whooley's appointment is very welcome and he will bring with him his tremendous experience of the sea fishing industry which he has gained over the last number of years when representing the interest of fishermen in the south west. Mr. Whooley understands fully the issues facing the industry and has been instrumental in bringing forward the change agenda which has been set down in the Cawley report "Steering a New Course".

Both Ministers also thanked outgoing CEO Pat Keogh for the dedication and commitment he devoted to the organisation during his two 5-year terms as CEO of BIM.

€597M FOR SEA FOOD INDUSTRY OVER NEXT 6 YEARS.

The launch of the report in February of *Steering a New Course, Strategy for a Restructured, Sustainable and Profitable Irish Seafood Industry 2007-2013* was welcomed by the Irish fish and shellfish farming leaders. Under the new plan a total of €212 million is envisaged being spent on the aquaculture industry, comprising €101 million from the public purse and €111 million from the private sector. A total of €597 million will be spent on the whole of the seafood industry.

In the report *Steering a New Course* the Strategy Review Group set out its vision for a sustainable, profitable and self-reliant industry that will maximise its long-term contribution to coastal communities based on fish stocks restored to sustainable levels in the context of a healthy and diverse marine environment. This will require a more innovative and coordinated approach to the marketing of seafood, capitalising on its healthy and nutritious image and maximising the value of seafood at every stage from the sea to the table.

The Group is firmly convinced that a more cohesive approach both within the industry itself and between the industry and the State is essential to effectively address both its deep-seated problems and its undoubted potential, in the knowledge that all sides are striving towards the same goal of maximising the industry's long-term contribution to the island of Ireland and particularly its coastal communities.

Speaking at the launch of the Strategy an Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, acknowledged the importance of the seafood sector. "I know how vital it is to the areas where it provides a critical source of year round employment at sea and on shore. It is a sector where the industry and the government both recognised that a new development strategy was needed".

"There is a great demand in the marketplace for seafood products and we need to be positioned at the premium end of that market to get the maximum value back to the fishermen and coastal communities, who are harvesting and processing the resource"

A copy of the report is available from BIM should you wish to receive one.

Contact:coyne@bim.ie

IRISH DELEGATES VISIT STOFNFISKUR'S FACILITY IN ICELAND.



L-R: John Power, SilverKing Seafoods Ltd., Liam Roche, ISPG, Jonas Jonasson, MD Stofnfiskur Iceland, Jon Kjerulf, Financial Manager, Stofnfiskur, Dónal MacGiolla Bhríde, Udaras na Gaeltachta and Pete McGovern, Stofnfiskur Ireland Ltd.

Representatives from BIM, Údarás na Gaeltachta, ISPG and some members of the salmon industry, undertook a three-day trip in Iceland, at the invitation of Stofnfiskur Iceland.

Stofnfiskur hf. is an international salmon egg breeding company located in Reykjavik, Iceland, with operations at seven locations in Iceland, as well as running subsidiaries and test sites for on-growing operations in co-operation with fish farming companies in Scotland, Chile and in Ireland. They have worked closely with BIM since 1999, when they started the Irish salmon broodstock programme, located at its fresh water site, in Corundulla Co. Galway.

Stofnfiskur distributes salmon eggs of the SAGA stock (a mixture of the old Mowi and Bolaks Norwegian strains) world wide from the month of July through April the following year. This has called for an increased interest in the salmon industry, which is moving more and more towards S0 smolt production. This is of primary interest to the Irish Salmon farming industry as many Irish farms have now moved to inputting S0 stock. The main reasons for this is so that farms have large healthy fish coming into the first summer and so that these farms would then be in a position to have all the fish harvested prior to the second summer. The best market prices for salmon are from September to Christmas. Over the past few years there has been a huge shortfall in suitable sized fish for this period, especially in Ireland. Irish farms are constantly looking for larger smolt going to sea earlier, i.e. mid October. They hope that by increasing their S0 input that this will give them the possibility of having a good percentage of fish in the three-quarters kilo category one year later Iceland offers unique conditions for culturing disease free salmon stocks. The largest site is used as a brood stock farm for Atlantic salmon. Fresh water and seawater that are naturally filtered through the porous lava gives great flexibility to different temperature and salinity regimes. Stofnfiskur uses seawater, drawn from boreholes via a totally closed system, which ensures that all water supplies retain an extremely high level of purity in terms of bacteria and viruses. The farm is closed to all new fish with the exception of 1-2 intakes of smolts per year, each transported from Stofnfiskur's own hatchery. The farm has a current annual output capacity of 50 million ova.

At the moment, Stofnfiskur hf is undergoing major investment and expansion and this was clearly obvious to the Irish delegation, where we were shown the latest Vaki fully automated feeding system where the feed is pumped with air to all the farm's tanks. At the hatchery, cold and hot waters from springs or drill holes are used. The temperature can be adjusted to increase or reduce the fish growth, which is important in order to secure delivery of the same size fish product throughout the year. A percentage of the company's broodstock is also kept at the hatchery. This is part of a risk management programme, designed to avoid having all the company's highly valuable broodstock located at just one farm.

Louise Collins, BIM, writes

Stofnfiskur owns and operates another farm, Hafnir, close to Kalmanstjorn. This land based farm will in the future be the centre for research and development for Atlantic salmon at Stofnfiskur. The farm will also play a part in the development of cod farming in Iceland.

Stofnfiskur are offering S0 Fast growth, no concern of maturation – SAGA-FAST (Improved Bolaks and Mowi), and S-1 Moderate growth, secure late maturation - SAGA-LATE (Original Mowi-strain). They told the delegation that by streamlining deliveries of eggs one can control maturation and that the key is off season egg deliveries. From winter 2007 and onwards there will be a unique opportunity to streamline the smolt production S0 and S1 with no diseases of Stofnfiskur's Land based farms.

Huge investment is planned in Corundulla, with the building of a recirculation unit. One million eggs have already been delivered and with a further intake in August/November 2007 they predict that they will have 5-10 gram fish in March/May 2008, which will make 100-150gram S0's, and where the farmer will have 3-5Kg fish by the following November / December.

The future sees Stofnfiskur playing a key role in the production



The employees from Stofnfiskur Iceland preparing to ultrasound fish. Ultrasound images can be utilised to improve the accuracy of sex determination of Atlantic Salmon.



Salmon ova

of S0's, which would be very beneficial to the Irish salmon industry.

The Icelandic family selection programme for cod farming was a project that started in 2003, where the company IceCod was established where Stofnfiskur hf. are involved in the selective breeding programme. They are engaged in forming a base population and breeding and want to emphasize in juvenile production. In 2006, they have already stripped 105 females, where 80,000 genetically improved juveniles were produced. Wild juveniles were reared for comparison and these two groups will be followed right through to harvest.

Note: Louise Collins is being seconded to the Aquaculture Initiative and will be based at the BIM Office in Killybegs where she will act as the Donegal Regional Officer. Louise will continue in her advisory role to the salmon industry and can be contacted as usual on her mobile 087-4190340 and also on 087-6784487

Review of the Aquaculture Industry for 2006

The aquaculture sector turned in a solid performance in 2006. It was a very challenging year for the salmon farmers as they had to cope with the consequences of a serious IPN (a viral disease in the fresh water phase of salmon farming) outbreak, which impacted on the supply of juveniles going to sea. Notwithstanding this, the sector is now trading profitably and the sentiment for reinvestment has improved amongst producers.

The trout farming sector was more or less static overall in 2006 although the sea reared element continues to recover as forecast. This trend is likely to continue in 2007. Fresh water trout farmers are also expected to make modest increases in output in 2007 on the back of a healthy domestic market demand for their product.

Production of farmed charr and perch, although in small volumes, began to find its way onto the Irish seafood market in 2006 and this upward trend will continue in 2007.

Shellfish:

The market price for farmed mussels rose strongly in 2006 and remains high into 2007. The bottom grown sector in particular enjoyed very high prices, particularly for good quality product. This has created a new market segment for the rope grown sector, which is beginning to act as an additional source of seed mussel supply to the bottom growers as a supplement to wild caught seed.

In this current market cycle, driven largely by Dutch and Danish production shortfalls, it has been difficult for the added value mussel processors to get raw material at an economic price and there has been a reduction in their frozen inventories as a result. This in turn may create market supply difficulties in 2007 unless the buffer stocks can be rebuilt.

Prolonged biotoxin related closures were also a feature of 2006, especially in the south-west. The potential negative impact of the closures was mitigated to some extent by the ability of the affected growers to sell stock for relaying to the bottom grown mussel sector.

As in 2005, the seed mussel fishery in 2006 was somewhat disappointing although significant volumes of seed were found late in the season. The net result is likely to be an output from the sector in 2007 that will be similar to that experienced in 2006. The modest downturn in volume was compensated for in value terms due to the higher prices being paid for the product in 2006.

The Pacific oyster farming sector continued to consolidate in 2006. There was a modest increase in output of 15% and the market price remained steady. Strong interest in inward investment in the sector

was seen, especially from established French producers who are keen to buy sites in Ireland. Output from the native oyster fishery remained steady, despite the detection of bonamiasis in Lough Swilly during the course of the year. Farmed scallop output dropped a little in 2006, whilst manilla clam output continued its modest recovery trend.

The emerging abalone sector had several large scale projects approved under the last round of the NDP in 2006. These are now under construction and will start to operate in 2007. A steady source of good quality seed supply is crucial for these new entrants and BIM carried out upgrading work with the existing hatcheries in order to assist them to meet this anticipated demand in 2007 and subsequent years.

The ongoing difficulties of securing adequate supplies of scallop seed supply, a prototype grader was modified and imported from Canada. The purpose of this machine is to mechanise the tedious and slow job of grading small scallop spat sourced from collector bags. It will also separate the scallop spat from fouling organisms such as mussels and starfish. Results to date have been promising and the alleviation of this severe bottleneck in the handling of spat will allow farmers to spend more time putting out additional collectors to increase the overall spat supply. The land based nursery trials for scallop seed produced in the hatchery met with limited success. They will be continued in 2007 as some new equipment has been sourced which should improve performance.

Carrying Capacity :

The work to bring the State into compliance with the Designation of Shellfish Growing Waters Directive, undertaken by BIM at the request of the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources, achieved an important goal in 2006. A pending case in the European Court of Justice, taken against Ireland by the Commission, for failing to have in place water improvement plans on designated areas, was successfully closed off during the year without the State being fined. Work commenced in 2006 on the pilot phase of a 'Carrying Capacity' study, requested by the DCMNR and the shellfish industry. Initially three bays are being targeted to develop the novel modelling system. These are Killary Fjord and Wexford and Dungarvan Harbours. This choice of locations will allow for the development of a predictive model capability that can handle scenario generation for rope mussel culture, bottom culture of mussels and trestle oyster culture respectively.

Seaweed Development:

The activity level within the seaweed sector continues to grow as the players in the area grow their businesses. BIM supported an increased number and range of commercial projects from the seaweed industry in 2006. These included feasibility studies, the development of new manufacturing facilities within the horticulture sector, new processing capability within the edible seaweed sector, overseas market investigations by key players in the seaweed industry and the development of new horticulture and cosmetic seaweed products. BIM also assisted in improving processing capabilities and food safety within the edible seaweed sector.

BIM supported the Irish Seaweed Industry Organisation enabling them to contract an ISIO co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will work with the seaweed industry to create a cohesive structure for the ISIO and to further its aims through interaction with its membership, the commercial sector and various State Agencies.

On the seaweed aquaculture front, the hatchery production of the *Alaria* species of seaweed was increased with material being provided from the West Cork hatchery to seed 30 seaweed longlines for on-growing. The feasibility of adapting this technique for other seaweed species is to be investigated in 2007.

Quality Programme:

The drive to develop a greater range of quality standards continued in 2006, most notably with the completion of the Irish Quality Organic Salmon Standard. This new scheme has been approved by the Department of Agriculture and Food as the national organic standard for salmon. It allows the industry greater control over the direction of Irish organic standard development and also opens up new marketing opportunities.

Alongside this, eco-standards for salmon and mussels have also been devised. Focusing on sustainability, ethical trading and environmental impact reduction, these standards allow Irish aquaculture producers to prove their environmental credentials to buyers and retailers. These aquaculture 'Ecolabels' will be unique amongst world assurance standards and will afford Irish farmers a special opportunity to differentiate their product at a premium price in the market place. France has always been a major market for Irish aquaculture products and 2006 saw the final approval being given for the Label Rouge Irish Salmon quality mark. The first audits of farms and processors were completed in late 2006 and Label Rouge labelled product should be available, at a premium price, to discerning French consumers in early 2007.

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Aquaculture Initiative set up new office in Lisburn.

In February 2007, the Aquaculture Initiative set up dedicated office space in Lisburn, Northern Ireland. Martin Flanigan and Delphine Pouligny are the Aquaculture Initiative Resource Development Officers that work full time in Northern Ireland and they are currently operating from the new office space.

It was felt that Lisburn was a good, central location for an office to be based from, as the motorway gives us good north/south and east/west links, and Belfast can sometimes be too busy to routinely hold meetings with producers. 2007 is a key year for the Aquaculture Initiative as the organisation is moving forward with significant developments in the North, such as the development of CLAMS groups and also with the establishment of an innovative, crayfish hatchery project in Co. Down. The crayfish work is a cross-border project funded by the Interreg IIIA programme, and there is no doubt that this new office space will help in progressing this project, and also in the wider field of helping the Aquaculture Initiative's delivery of service and support to the aquaculture sector in general.

The Aquaculture Initiative are keen to assist both established aquaculture producers and new 'start-up' ventures in aquaculture. They can be contacted at the Lisburn office; Rosevale House, 171c, Moira Road, Lisburn, BT298 1RW, Co. Antrim. Tel / Fax (048 from R.O.I) 028 92 60 40 91, the e-mail addresses are; flanigan@aquacultureinitiative.eu or pouligny@aquacultureinitiative.eu.



Delphine and Martin outside their new offices.

IRISH SALES OF SEAFOOD INCREASED BY 9% IN 2006

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) - the Irish Sea Fisheries Board reported on 1st April that Irish sales of seafood in 2006 increased nine percent to 724.6 million for the year ending December 31, 2006.

The 2006 Annual Review of the Seafood Industry reports relatively buoyant markets despite tight quota restrictions leading to reduced raw material supplies and higher operating costs for the Irish seafood industry.

Domestic seafood sales to the retail sector grew 15 percent to 157.7 million while sales to the food service sector increased 18 percent to 204.7 million.

BIM Chief Executive Pat Keogh said the increase in sales was mainly driven by the growing consumer awareness of the health and nutritional benefits of seafood.

Approximately half of the increase in domestic seafood sales was of Irish origin with the other half being met through increased imports. In contrast, export sales were up by a mere two percent to reach 362.2 million. This was the result of sharply opposite trends with pelagic exports falling by 27 percent (to 78.8 million) while increased exports were recorded for all other categories, the most notable being the increase of 16 percent in shellfish exports (to 147.0 million).

Four fifths of exports were sold on European Union markets with France accounting for 25 percent of total export sales, while Great Britain and Spain jointly account for 37 percent.

Total BIM grant-aided investment in the seafood sector amounted to 27.6 million, supported by National and EU grant-aid of 17 million. Aquaculture accounted for 48 percent of grant aided investment (13.352 million) while total grant-aided investment for the future fleet and sea fisheries amounted to 7.699 million and 6.538 million for processing and marketing.

Additionally 35 fishing vessels over 15 metres in length, involving BIM/EU expenditure of 11.863 million, were withdrawn from the fleet under the Fleet Decommissioning Scheme, which was aimed at re-aligning fleet capacity with available fish resources.

In the absence of quotas and benefiting from buoyant market conditions, the aquaculture industry now accounts for 38 percent, by value, of fish raw material supplies and is due to further increase its share of total fish supplies into the future.

The continued strong focus on training and education saw attendance on BIM training courses up 19 percent on 2005 with 2,098 trainee places, equating to 1,635 individuals availing of one or more courses. During the year BIM's new state-of-the-art mobile Coastal Training Unit was launched, and along with the existing unit visited 30 locations around the coast.

"The latter half of 2006 was dominated by the work of the Government appointed, independent Strategy Review Group into the seafood industry, for which BIM provided secretariat. This report, subsequently adopted by Government and incorporated in the new National Development Plan 2007-2013, sets out an achievable vision and strategy which can help to secure a viable future for the Irish seafood industry," said Mr. Keogh.

MINISTER DEMPSEY LAUNCHES TWO NEW MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR THE MARINE SECTOR

Noel Dempsey, T.D., the Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources launched two new major initiatives for the Irish Marine Section on Friday, 16th February. These are a €365 million National Marine Research and Innovation Strategy entitled **Sea Change**, and a new award scheme to support marine research in 3rd level education institutes as well as a prestigious international prize for world-class marine research.

The **Sea Change** strategy aims to drive the development of the marine sector as a dynamic element of Ireland's knowledge economy. It uses a series of carefully calculated possible scenarios for Ireland by the year 2020 to define global market opportunities linked to the development of marine technologies and resources, as well as practical costed action plans and clearly defined objectives regarding how those opportunities might be achieved. **Sea Change** also highlights the need for a shift away from the traditional view of the sector as one primarily associated with the harvesting of food, and points towards a wide variety of market-led opportunities in sustainable energy, functional food products, transport, technology and environmental well-being.

Speaking at the Marine Institute Headquarters Minister Dempsey outlined the importance of new research strategy; "This Government is committed to the marine sector and to the people who earn a living from the sea. **Sea Change** is an exciting, innovative and integrated research programme to deliver high-growth, high value-added industries and ultimately jobs. It will lead to a 50% increase in the sector's turnover, by driving the development of the marine sector as a dynamic element of Ireland's knowledge economy from 2007 to 2013."

The new awards scheme is based on the principles of the highly successful Charles Parsons energy research awards, are designed to support marine research activities in 3rd level edu-

cational institutes. The awards are aimed at attracting researchers of international standing to the Irish marine research community at the principal investigator and researcher level and offer the security of a seven-year contract in each case.

A total investment of €20 million over seven years will be provided. The positions will be actively promoted throughout the world in order to attract the best internationally available talent to Irish marine research.

The Minister also announced the inauguration of a highly prestigious prize to be awarded to a world class marine research scientist, Irish or international who is active in research collaboration with Ireland.

"I want the Irish marine industry to be the pride of Europe. I want every Member State involved in marine emulating our success. My vision is for increased job opportunities and new markets for all those working in the industry. Investing in marine research capacity is a logical and necessary step, in order to ensure a sound knowledge-based support to this marine development." said Minister Dempsey.

Three major marine projects, funded under the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI) were also announced on the 16th February by the Minister. These projects will focus on marine functional foods, marine environment and climate change, and integrated marine exploration.

"The new schemes announced to-day with the €600 m. investment pledged under the Cawley Report are tangible evidence of the genuine commitment this Government has to the future development of Ireland's Ocean Economy. I want the Irish marine industry to become a sustainable and profitable one and the measurement in place will allow the Irish marine sector to transform itself over the next 7 years to achieve this" said the Minister.

IFA AQUA 20/20 CONFERENCE : LICENSING A MAJOR ISSUE

Louise Collins writes:

Aqua 20/20, hosted by IFA in Enfield Co. Meath, was held on the 3rd and 4th April 2007. Aqua 20/20 referred to both the year to try and predict future options for the seafood sector and also the clear "20-20" vision necessary to deliver on a range of challenges which included business, marketing, environmental and regulatory. The aim of the event was to put the entire state of fishing and aquaculture, both finfish and shellfish, at global, EU and local scale in context.

The first session of the morning was chaired by Mr. Donal Maguire, BIM, who welcomed the IFA President Pdraig Walshe. Walshe spoke about the recent developments regarding the recent funding that had been announced for the sector. He said the Seafood Strategy report, produced by Dr. Noel Crowley, had 39 key IFA proposals in the final document, which is proof of the hard work put in by the respective salmon, freshwater and shellfish committees within the organisation.

Lorcan O' Cinneade, Irish Fisherman's Organisation, gave an overview of the wild fisheries in Ireland. He said what is needed is an integrated commercial aquaculture/fishing policy, and how

the two industries need to work in harmony. Richie Flynn presented Dr. Rhona Subasinghe, FAO, Senior Fisheries Resources Officer at the Fisheries Department of the FAO, who was unable to attend. He said that aquaculture is probably the fastest growing food-producing section, now accounting for almost 50% of the world's fish food and is perceived as having the greatest potential to meet the growing demand for aquatic food. Given the projected population growth over the next two decades, it is estimated that at least an additional 40 million tonnes of aquatic food will be required by 2030 to maintain the current per capita consumption and aquaculture has the potential to make a significant contribution to this increasing demand for aquatic food in most regions of the world. Courtney Hough, General Secretary, Fed. European Aquaculture, spoke of the immense importance of aquaculture in keeping rural communities alive all over Europe. He spoke of how trout was the biggest species in Europe being produced and that new species doing well and making good profits were pike-perch and perch. He held the view that if hatchery problem

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SUCCESSFUL ICMSS CONFERENCE IN NEW ZEALAND.

Breda Smith, BIM, writes:

Blenheim, Marlborough, New Zealand, known for its beautiful scenery, wineries and greenshell mussels, was the venue for this year's 6th International Conference on Molluscan Shellfish Safety from the 19th to 23rd March. Attended by 190 delegates from 27 countries this was the first time the ICMSS conference was held in the Southern Hemisphere. Ireland was represented by people from the Marine Institute, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, NUIG and BIM.

The conference, was spread over 5 days, with about 75 presentations, poster session and field trips covering all aspects of molluscan shellfish safety.



Hon. Annette King

New Zealand's seafood industry employs more than 2,500 people and exports shellfish to more than 60 countries earning New Zealand more than \$250 million annually. The flagship species are the Greenshell™ Mussels followed by King Salmon and Pacific Oysters.

On opening the Conference the Hon. Annette King, Minister for Food Safety, said that "In 2006 NZ completed a full revision of their shellfish safety standards and the Bivalve Molluscan Shellfish Regulated Control Scheme came into effect in July 2006. For unilateral agreement on standards and systems, we look to Codex Alimentarius Commission, the international standards-setting body whose fundamental purpose is to protect consumer health and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade. New Zealand places a great deal of importance on the Codex process to harmonise those standards and systems that relate to all facets of shellfish safety...Consumers around the world assume that when they buy shellfish, regardless of where it is from, that it is not going to make them sick. They trust that shellfish safety programmes are in place and effective – that all the scientists and regulators and industry members have done their job, and provided a safe product. But sometimes we are reminded painfully of where we have fallen short. That is why it is important to have harmonised standards

and to be able to draw on international advances that address and solve these issues, and that's why it is important to have a shellfish safety community that works together".

Prof. Lahsen Ababouch, Chief of the Fish Utilisation & Marketing Service at the United Nations, FAO, in Rome, Italy, spoke about International regulatory framework and initiatives to ensure molluscan shellfish safety and the different international initiatives undertaken by the FAO and WHO. In 2004 bivalves represented 10% of the total world fish-



Prof Lahsen Ababouch

ery production; 26% in volume and 14% in value of the total world aquaculture production. In 1990 it grew from 3.3 million tonnes to nearly 12 million tonnes in 2004, of which 84.1% of bivalves production in the world was cultured. Market access requirements for molluscan shellfish are very stringent especially in relation to consumer and environment protection. They encompass requirements for monitoring harvesting areas, product certification and traceability and require basic and applied science to ensure the reliability of the methods of the surveillance programmes and the standards used.

Philipp Hess from the Marine Institute, Galway, presented a paper on the first day of the Conference about "Review of proficiency testing for shellfish toxins" which dealt with the increasing importance of quality control in the provision of official tests for shellfish toxins as outlined for the EU in Council Directive 93/99/EEC, and the use of internal and external QC tools becoming more important. There are two main external QC tools available to laboratories; certified



Pupils from St. Charlotte's College Kapa Haka Group perform the Haka ritual (more familiar to us as being performed by the All Blacks on the rugby pitch!).

reference materials (CRMs) and proficiency testing.

Another of Philipps' talks was on the "Result of the ASTOX-project (Azaspiracids standards and toxicology) – an example of systematic multidisciplinary research in support of sustainable shellfish production." Azaspiracids (AZAs) are shellfish toxins causing symptoms associated with gastro-intestinal disorders. The aims of the Azaspiracids Standards and Toxicology project were to provide quality control tools for the analysis of AZAs in shellfish and to clarify the toxicity of azaspiracids. Shellfish materials secured in 2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005 which were contaminated with AZAs and



Chibo Chikwillwa, Ministry of Fisheries Namibia.

Dinophysistoxin-2 (DTX2) were used to prepare shellfish tissue reference materials. Isolation and purification studies included a total of 14 isolation batches and led to purified AZA1. The collaboration with NRCC allowed for the prepara-

tion of a CRM for pure AZA1,-2 and -3, and a candidate shellfish tissue CRM for AZAs, all of which will be made available globally once certification is complete.

Phil Busby from the NZ Food Safety Authority spoke about the



Sam Bark CEFAS, Sinead Keaveney, MI, David Lyons, FSAI, and Bill Doré, MI.

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ICMSS (Contd.)



Dr. Caroline Cusack, MI presenting her paper on the presence of known toxic phytoplankton species and toxin levels in shellfish Irish waters 2002-2006.

“Challenges of setting new shellfish safety standards in a small country – the New Zealand experience.” Bivalve molluscan shellfish grown in New Zealand is exported to over 60 countries and it is critical that the regulatory shellfish safety standards encompass best international practice to provide the official assurances required. In 1991 NZ developed its first shellfish safety standards under the Meat Act 1981. When the Animal Products Act 1999 superseded this, the shellfish safety standards underwent a complete revision and came into effect on 1st June 2006 as the Bivalve Molluscan Shellfish Regulated Control Scheme (BMSRCS).

Annika Allard, Dept. of Virology, Umea University, Sweden, presented her paper on the persistence of infectious adenovirus (Type 35) in mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) and oysters (*Ostrea edulis*). The aim of the study was to investigate the persistence of viable adenovirus type 35 after controlled contaminations of blue mussels, *Mytilus edulis* and oysters, *Ostrea edulis*.

Graham Fletcher from the New Zealand Institute for Crop & Food Research Ltd. presented his paper on “Inactivating *Listeria monocytogenes* in Greenshell™ mussels (*Perna canaliculus*) by high pressure processing.” New Zealand Greenshell™ mussels are currently shucked by heat and this can be used as a listericidal step in food safety plans. Shucking by high pressure processing



Q & A Session: From left: David Lees, CEFAS, Prof. Lahsen Ababouch, Gail Greening, Inst. of Env. Science & Research, NZ, James Lowther, CEFAS, and Philipp Hess, MI.

(HPP) offers some advantages over heat shucking; increased meat yields, less alteration of raw characteristics and in some instances decreased labour costs. Before HPP is implemented, processors need to understand the implications of this technology on the safety of their product with respect of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Temperature is a key parameter to monitor as well as pressure and time. There were also significant reductions in the counts of *L. monocytogenes* during the time taken to bring the pressure up to the set pressure.

Malcolm Green from the National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research, (NIWA), Hamilton, NZ, spoke on an “Early warning system for shellfish harvest based on neural network”. Accurate early warning of faecal contamination would enable management of shellfish harvest to prevent contaminated product reach market. They are developing a way of producing such warnings based on a neural network (NN), which is, in effect, an extensively nonlinear multiple regression. This is better suited for detecting patterns and connections in complicated datasets than linear regression techniques which have previously been applied to this kind of problem.

David Cassis from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, presented his paper on “Predicting cadmium concentration in cultured Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) with empirical models based on environmental variables.”

Cadmium (Cd) concentrations of cul-



Helen Smale, Chairman, Organising Committee ICMSS 2007, and Allan Cembella, Alfred Wegener Institute, Germany.

tured Pacific oysters and environmental variables (temperature, salinity, nitrate, phosphate, silicate, dissolved Cd, particulate Cd, and phytoplankton composition and abundance) was monitored bi-weekly in the summer and monthly during the winter, for one year in British Columbia, Canada.

Cd concentrations in oysters followed an annual cycle, with accumulation during winter and depuration during summer. Correlation matrices demonstrated that Cd concentration in the oysters was positively correlated with dissolved Cd and salinity, and negatively with particulate Cd and temperature ($p < 0.05$). Three empirical models were tested and they found that their third option “non-linear model using temperature, salinity, nitrate and



Colleen Kern, Nelson Marlborough DHB, Catia Delmiglio, Auckland Regional Public Health Services and Jeremy Melanson, National Research Council of Canada.

total phytoplankton biomass” was best which had an R^2 of 0.924 and a 5.0% error. This model uses variables easily measured by oyster farmers and could be used as an empirical model for the prediction of Cd concentrations in cultured oysters throughout the year. The models strongly indicate that environmental conditions present during upwelling could



Catamaran mussel harvesting boat.

lead to high Cd content in cultured oysters in British Columbia.

The foregoing is but a very brief sample of the talks that took place. Proceedings of the Conference will be issued in due course.

A field trip was arranged to the Marlborough Sounds to see the NZ Greenshell Mussel™ industry up close. The Marlborough Sounds are New Zealand’s largest aquaculture growing area.

The Conference ended with a very enjoyable Gala Dinner and as Helen Smale, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the ICMSS 2007, said in her opening notes, that the Maori people of New Zealand have a philosophy called **Manaakitanga**, which implies a responsibility upon a host to show kindness, to entertain and to take care of guests and an invitation to a visitor to experience the very best we have to offer.....your **Manaakitanga** responsibility exceeded it’s definition Helen!

The next ICMSS Conference will take place in Nantes, France, in June 2009.



Aquaculture Review 2006. Contd. from page 3

The *Review of the Irish Rope Mussel Industry report*, published in 2006 by BIM and MI made recommendations around 12 core development themes for the industry. Addressing the producer and processor relations and improving product quality themes has led to the development of a raw material exchange protocol. This will standardise quality testing methods and aims to reduce reject rates and improve profitability for all parties. The research and development of this protocol was carried out in 2006 and the commercial rollout of the system will take place in 2007.

The Irish Quality Oyster standard was also completed in 2006 and submitted to the National Accreditation Board (INAB) for accreditation under the EN45011 system. The standard is primarily aimed at the wholesale oyster market and will guarantee the shape, size grading and overall quality of the product to the buyers.

Environment Programme:

ECOPACT continues to be the benchmark system for the aquaculture sector to address their need for environmental management systems. The continual improvement process, advocated by ECOPACT enables producers and

processors to define and reduce their environmental impacts in a managed way. The system is operational in all aquaculture sectors and the provision of training by BIM in environmental awareness also runs alongside the management framework.

To comply with the Habitats Directive, an "appropriate assessment" of all licensed aquaculture activities carried out within Natura 2000 sites is now being demanded. To address this requirement, a screening approach has been developed in conjunction with DCMNR, the Marine Institute and National Parks & Wildlife Service. This administratively elegant approach allows for the systematic and consistent assessment of licence applications and their likely significance in terms of environmental impact on the relevant SAC.

General environmental work including the ongoing operation of the "Barrel Replacement Scheme" in on-going. This work is vital to maintain and enhance the "clean and green" image of the industry and it also promotes good relations with other users of the shore and marine resource.

Projects tailored to the particular needs of industry in each bay or CLAMS area were delivered throughout 2006. These

actions included predator control programmes, bay management systems and the development of navigation marks and plans to improve the safety of the bays for all users.

Work continued on the Designation of Shellfish Growing Waters on behalf of the DCMNR. Sampling of the designated areas was ongoing throughout the year and will continue in 2007. There is also the prospect of a major expansion in activity in this regard if the designation of further areas goes ahead in 2007.

Total investment in aquaculture projects supported by BIM during 2006 was €13.352 million compared with €18.710 million during 2005. The fall in the volume of investment in 2006 is partly explained by the fact that investment in 2005 was boosted by the arrival of five new mussel dredgers which had been approved during 2003 and 2004. It also reflects the fact that there was a 23 month gap in approving the last tranche of aquaculture projects at the end of June 2006 and this delay is reflected in the implementation of investment on the ground.

THE FIRST EVER FARMED COD HARVESTED FOR MARKET.

The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamon O Cuív TD has announced the harvesting of the first cod farmed to market size in Ireland. The project was pioneered by Trosco Teo, which was established in 2005 by three local salmon farmers from Connemara, and by Taighde Mara Teo., an R & D subsidiary of Udarás na Gaeltachta. The project was also supported by the NUI Galway - the Martin Ryan Institute in Carna - the Western Development Commission, BIM and the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources.

Speaking at the announcement, Minister O Cuív said "Trosco Teo has pioneered the research and development of this product. In two short years the company has proven that cod farming has a viable commercial future and is to become an integral part of the aquaculture industry in the West of Ireland". Pádraig O hAoláin, CEO, Udarás na Gaeltachta said "that they look forward to supporting projects that will develop a substantial cod farming industry in Ireland" and Prof. Michael Guiry, Director of the Martin Ryan Institute NUI Galway confirmed that the University will continue to support the aquaculture industry through applied research innovations. Dr. Peter Heffernan, CEO, Marine Institute, expressed his delight with the success of the project because there was so much concern for the future of the wild cod fisheries and now something concrete can be done by the application of research and innovation to create a viable alternative supply to this important food fish. Trosco Teo plan to harvest eighty tonnes of cod this year and the company will be a fully certified organic cod producer in 2008.

Clean up of Cromane Point and Strand

A full scale clean up of the Point at Cromane and the strand was organised by Castlemaine CLAMS (Coordinated Local Aquaculture Management Group), Board Iascaigh Mhara, Castlemaine Harbour Fisheries Society and local residents on Thursday 29th March 2007. Frank and Donie McCarthy, Cromane co-ordinated the clean up which follows from the very successful clean up organised in 2006.

Local Fishermen and residents all volunteered their time and took to the shoreline to clean up the area.

Castlemaine Harbour is an important mussel and oyster production area, however, as there is no pier or designated work area, the Point at Cromane has to be used as a launch and storage area. Inevitably, a certain amount of waste accumulates over time. Killarney Waste Disposal were contracted to remove aquaculture and fishing waste. Metal was taken for recycling. Kerry Co. Co. provided bags for the collection of general waste along the strand. The co-ordinators, Frank and Donie, distributed the bags to local residents who did a fantastic job of col-

lecting paper and plastic waste that had been washed ashore following the winter tides and storms. Over 150 bags of paper and general waste were collected along the strand. Kerry County Council then organised the pick up all all bags of general waste.



Frank and Donie McCarthy

The following people must be mentioned for their time and effort that was put into the clean up and for a job well done. Frank and Donie McCarthy, Helen Teehan, Noel Foley and John F. McCarthy, Johnny O Reilly and Bernie Willis.

The clean up will ensure that the area will remain tidy, safe and usable by marine stakeholders, local residents and general public for sometime to come.

Diary Guide 2007

May 17-19: Fishlink 2007, Iloilo Iloilo, The Phillippines.

FishLink 2007 will sponsor conferences covering responsible advanced aquaculture technology, advances in production, product development and marketing. Details: Maria Rovilla, J. Luhan. e-mail: aquasoc_87@yahoo.com

May 22-23: The Shellfish Association of Great Britain, London.

Details: Lorraine Andrews, Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge, London, EC4R 9EL, UK.

Tel: +44 (0)20 72838305; Fax: +44 (0)20 7929 1389;

SAGB@shellfish.org.uk; www.shellfish.org.uk

May 28-31: Global Trade Conference on Aquaculture, Quingdao, China.

The FAO conference, organised in partnership with the Fishinfo Network, will look at the impact aquaculture is having on food security and employment in developing countries. Details: InfoFish, PO Box 10899, 50728 Malaysia. Tel: +603 26914466; Fax: +603 26916804; e-mail: infish@po.jaring.my; www.fao.org

June 8-11: AquaPartners: Athens, Greece.

Presenting the latest developments in the Mediterranean in terms of technology, products and services. Details: EuroPartners, 101 Syngrou Avenue, 117 45 Athens, Greece.

Tel: +30 2109221254; Fax: +30210 9221589;

e-mail: info@europartners.gr; www.europartners.gr

June 17-20: 7th the Nordic Symposium on Fish

Immunology, Stirling, Scotland. Details: Dr. Janina

Costa, Institute of Aquaculture, University of Stirling, Stirling RK9 4LA, UK. Tel: +44(0) 1786 467912;

Fax: +44 (0) 1786 472133; e-mail: noffi@sir.ac.uk;

www.noffi.org

June 22-24: Shanghai International Fisheries & Seafood

Expo. Shanghai, China. Details: Kim Yang, International

Dept., Shanghai Gehua Exhibition Service;

e-mail: kim.yang@sifse.com; www.sifse.com

August 5-8: Asian Pacific Aquaculture 2007, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Details: WAS Conference Manager, PO Box

2302, Valley Centre, CA 92082, USA. Tel: +1 760 7515005;

Fax: +1760 7515003. e-mail: worldaqua@aol.com;

www.was.org

August 14-17: Aqua Nor 2007, Trondheim, Norway.

Details: The Nor-Fishing Foundation, Klostergt 90, NO-7030 Trondheim, Norway. Tel: +4773568640;

Fax: +4773568641; e-mail: mailbox@nor-fishing.no;

www.nor-fishing.no

September 25-28: World Seafood Congress 07, Dublin, Ireland.

Hosted by Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Enterprise Ireland

and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the International

Association of Fish Inspectors. Details: www.worldseafood-

congress07.com

Nov. 6-9: Caribbean & Latin American Aquaculture

Congress 2007, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Annual

Conference and Exhibition of the Latin American &

Caribbean Chapter. Details: www.was.org

The Water Abstraction & Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations - (Northern Ireland) 2006

The Water Abstraction & Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 were made on 27th November 2006 and will come into operation on 1st February 2007. The making of this legislation and its subsequent implementation will fulfill Northern Ireland's obligation to the European Commission under the Habitats and Water Framework Directives to establish a water resource management, assessment and licensing regime. The new Regulations aim to provide a single and consistent 'risk based' approach for all abstractions and impoundment operations, these powers will help protect our water environment including protected species and dependent ecosystems and will help deliver efficient and sustainable water usage in Northern Ireland.

These Regulations apply to anyone who abstracts/diverts water and/or anyone who owns or operates an impoundment. The Department are keen to engage with each of the relevant sectors affected, raise awareness of the new legislation and to work in partnership to develop a best practice guide and effective mitigation as a means of ensuring there are no detrimental environmental effects. Fish farms and hatcheries are one sector the Department plan to work constructively with. Under the new legislation fish farms and hatcheries will be required to obtain an abstraction and impoundment licence (if applicable); this reflects current regulatory practice in the rest of the UK. The key criteria used in the determination of licence applications within this sector will include the volume of water diverted, the return location to the natural environment for this water, the scale and operation of any associated impoundment, the management of compensation water and the environmental sensitivity of the location being assessed.

For further information, advice and/or an application form please contact:

Abstractions & Impoundments Licensing Team

Water Management Unit

Environment & Heritage Service

17 Antrim Road Lisburn BT28 3AL

Tel: (028) 9263 3463

Visit: <http://www.ehsni.gov.uk>

Email: AIL.Team@doeni.gov.uk

USER FRIENDLY LOGBOOK GUIDE

The user friendly guide to filling in the EU Logbook forms an integral part of control and enforcement under EU Fisheries Policy and under current legislation all fishing vessels over 10 metres are required to record details of their fishing operations in the logbook. The current requirements, however, to complete the logbook are complex and can be challenging for fishermen to understand and, more importantly, comply with.

In order to address this BIM, in consultation with DCM&NR, the Naval Service and industry representatives have produced a **User Friendly Guide to Filling in the EU Logbook**, taking account of all the different layers of regulation.

The guide is split into two sections. The first deals with general points to remember when filling in the logbook during the course of a normal fishing trip. The second section is made up of a number of different examples of logsheets covering a range of gear types/area/target species and demonstrates how to fill in the logbook from leaving port to landing.

A series of maps and tables are also provided, containing all the necessary information need to complete the logbook accurately.

The final guide is due for distribution shortly and it is hoped fishermen will find it a useful source of information to unravel the mysteries of the logbook!

Available from Fisheries Development Division, BIM, Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Tel: 01-2144100.

Irish Oyster Producers receive a warm welcome in France

Trish Daly writes....

Last March a group of Irish oyster producers were invited through BIM by the Section Regionale de Conchyliculture (SRC), Arcachon, to visit the Bassin D'Arcachon. The President of the SRC, Marc Druart, and Vice-Presidents, Olivier Laban and Sylvie Latrille and a large group of producers received the Irish delegation on the evening of their arrival at a welcome reception in their offices and set the scene for 2 days of open and friendly discussions and information exchange.

Oyster production in Bassin d'Arcachon

The first day of the trip was spent on the water visiting the main seed collection and on-growing sites in the Bassin d'Arcachon. This area contains 365 oyster farms, with an annual production of 12,000 tons. From an Irish perspective it is better known as the major area for production of wild gigas seed. In an average year, spatfall in Arcachon may represent a total volume of 4 billion gigas seed, which



Traditional tile collectors typically located off a tourist village in the Bassin d'Arcachon.

could in theory sustain a production of 100,000 tonnes. The Basin's producers are not in a position to handle these quantities, even after mortalities of 50% on collectors and a further 50% at grading, so a significant proportion of it is sold into areas of Brittany, Normandy and to a lesser extent into the Mediterranean and Ireland.

The main on-growing areas in the Bassin are Ile d'Arguin, Ile d'Oiseaux, La Belle Izaire and Le Tes. All must be accessed by boat. Typically one producer will have a number of small licensed sites in these areas, all less than a hectare, and further areas for collecting seed. In the case of one farmer, 25 licences were required to allow him to farm a total of 6 hectares.

The Directorate of Affaires Maritimes, equivalent to our Department of Marine controls licensing. Currently the Directorate is working closely with the SRC and other relevant representative organisations to implement a maximum

stocking density of 700 trestles per 10,000. It has already legislated that not more than 25% of any farmers licensed ground can be collection area. This is to ensure a sustainable oyster industry in Arcachon by contributing to the brood-stock population. Despite this, many of the larger producers have intertidal on-growing sites in Normandy and Brittany and bottom culture sites.

Seed collection areas are for the most part well inside the Bassin d'Arcachon and along the shoreline away from the entrance and channels. Clay tiles coated with lime are the most popular collector, despite the labour intensive nature of deploying and harvesting. However, the belief is that the lime on the tiles gives a stronger shell and covers the hinge, reducing the risk of damage. The scraping of the tiles can also be done by machine much more efficiently. Alternative systems include coupelles, tubes and plastic trays called "plenos" which allow for more mechanisation.

In addition to the oyster farming activi-



Plenos

ties, the Bassin d'Arcachon is a major tourist area. Literally thousands of mooring buoys for pleasure boats could be seen along the shorelines. Yet there is no conflict between these two industries. In fact, they complement each other. The original oyster sheds have preservation orders on them and many small producers have set up oyster bars on the beach to cater for the holiday makers.

Seed settlement in 2006

2006 has been an excellent year for set-



Heavy settlement experienced in 2006

tlement with an average of 1,000 juveniles being removed from tiles. This can present its own problems in that it can



Seed removed from tiles and graded twice. Note the presence of fresh lime particles.

result in a lot of doubles and an average of 500 per tile would be more desirable. If seed is harvested early, around December / January, the number of doubles can be reduced and quality in terms of shape improved. This seed will have been heavily graded at that time and again in March/April prior to sale. However, it is a practice for some producers in Arcachon to harvest late, March/April, to reduce handling in the belief that less stress may reduce the incidence of summer mortality.

The seed shown to the group was being harvested and put through two graders before being packed into 2 – 6mm mesh bags, depending on the size of the grade. Prices were quoted at the time as €5 - €10/000, again depending on size. T6 grade was €5/000.

● The trip provided an opportunity for Irish producers to forge trade links with the French industry and also to learn something first hand about the wild seed trade. It is important, however, to note the many considerations to be taken into account with wild seed: Seed should not be more than one year old if it fits in 4 or 6mm bags. This is usually reflected in the shell thickness and colour.

● Proportion of doubles should be less than 10%.

● Average weight, usually pieces per kilo, which varies for tile v coupelle seed

● Percentage dead shell should not be more than 10%.

● The risk of mortality will be higher if seed is purchased in May/June.

● The buyer should make as accurate an assessment of numbers as possible.

● The large grade is not necessarily the best as it will have more doubles. However quality will reduce in the smallest grade and the risk of other species present is increased.

● The seed should preferably come from an early harvest.

● In the case of tile seed the proportion of lime mixed in with the seed should be reasonable and it should be white and easy to break up. A darkened hard lime indicates more than one year old seed.

● There should be a frill on the shell, no matter what size and it should not be all

Contd. on page 11

Contd. from page 10

black, again an indication of older possible stunted seed.

- There should be no mussel seed in the batch.

- Guarantees should be sought regarding survival rates, settlements of mussels, percentage of doubles and the presence or absence of dog whelks. Also the risk of flat oysters, polydora and crepidula being present should be considered. A knowledge of the area from which your seed is sourced would give a good indication.

- The status of *Martelia* and *Bonamia* must always be established. All seed, wild or hatchery, must be certified by IFREMER and will indicate the probability of the presence of *Martelia* and *Bonamia* in a consignment.

Biotoxin closures in oyster producing areas

From a French perspective the visit provided an opportunity to share experiences relating to biotoxins. 2005 and 2006 were difficult years for producers in Arcachon due to protracted closures from April – August 2005 and April – November 2006

for DSP. These periods represented peak selling times for the local market during the tourist season and then heading into the busiest time through the winter months.

The move to the 24 hour mouse bioassay in 2002 in France has caused much conflict between authorities and the industry who believe that the 5 hour test, upon which they had relied for 20 years should be sufficient. In September of last year demonstrations were held outside the Prefecture of Arcachon in protest.



Group pictured outside Codimer, one of the bigger buyers, handling 3-4,000 tonnes of oysters per year.

Simultaneous reports of 2 deaths in the area linked to the consumption of oysters caused a massive media frenzy. Although these reports were later retracted, it is felt that the damage to consumer confidence had already been done and the SRC are now seeking compensation from the State. The French industry continues to fight for a change to the biotoxin monitoring programme to include the 5 hour test, along with phytoplankton analysis and chemical analyses.

Strength in numbers

Among the most notable things for the group during the three days was the level of organisation within the industry, both locally and nationally. The SRC represents most of the oyster producers in the Bassin d'Arcachon. Funding is provided through the government and by an "obligatory voluntary contribution" paid as part of the annual licensing fee by every producer. The SRC is represented on a national level, along with its sister groups from all other major producing areas, by the CNC. This group is included in all relevant discussions and decisions at government level.

Clearly these relationships do come under a strain at times but the fact that our group, through the SRC, met with both the Directorate of Affaires Maritime and the veterinary authorities during the trip demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of Producer Organisations for any industry.

Summary

Overall the Group felt the trip was a very worthwhile exercise. It was an opportunity for some to see something of the wild seed industry for the first time and for all to share common concerns. From a marketing perspective it was a great boost for Irish oysters, opening further doors with the French Producer Organisations and communicating to a larger audience through the press.

Seeing Light at the End of the Tunnel : Organic Session's theme at World Aquaculture Conference. 2007

Vera Heffernan from the Aquaculture Development, Environment & Quality Section recently attended the World Aquaculture 2007 Conference and Tradeshow in San Antonio to present a paper at the U.S Organic Aquaculture Session.

The U.S Organic Aquaculture Session was held over the final day of the triennial conference. Given the Organic Session's theme of *Seeing Light at the End of the Tunnel* there was much discussion in the areas of challenges for organic aquaculture; past, present and future, the status of organic aquaculture standards development in the U.S., promoting organic standards as ecological management and discussed by Vera Heffernan, Critical Research Priorities for the Development of Organic Standards in Aquaculture.

Of note was speaker George Lockwood of the National Organic Aquaculture Working Group (NOAWG), giving a background on the group's work to date assisting the U.S. National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) with the development of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic standards for aquaculture. The USDA have been undecided about the organic future of aquaculture and George Lockwood informed the session of the NOSB Livestock Committee's recommended standards to the USDA earlier that week. The recommendations include the designation of some farmed-raised seafood as organic, however, open-net pens where most salmon are raised, and fish that require a diet including fish, are excluded from the forthcoming standard.

Since the conference, the NOSB held a meeting in Washington on March 27-29 to receive public comments in

Vera Heffernan, BIM, reports: person on the recommendations. The recommendations have been approved for the use of the organic seal on fish grown in closed-containment systems, which will allow many tilapia and catfish farmers to use the USDA organic seal once the standards have been transposed into legislation, which is not expected until 2008 or 2009.

The NOSB is expected to take up the issue on whether to include open-net cages and wild-caught fish feed at its next meeting in Autumn 2007.



(IFA Contd. from page 5)

were sorted with cod and tuna, these could move forward in production. Breeding will be the basis. Health control will be essential, biotechnology, ethics and consumer demands would all need to be considered, as well as feeds and feed resources.

In the freshwater sector he said opportunities do exist in the form of diversification into restocking. He spoke of how important it is to encourage young people into the industry. What is needed is skilled, competent labour and management.

Donal Maguire, Aquaculture Development Manager, BIM, spoke of the challenges for the seafood sector in the Crawley report, while Richie Flynn, IFA, spoke on the licensing issue. He said the biggest problem was getting the licensing sorted out, which was still proving a huge problem for the ISA and ISGA.

There were various speakers over the two days of the conference representing salmon, oyster, mussel and trout growers and they all said that licensing was a major issue for the future of their sector.

John Harrington said that at the moment production was between 8-10,000 tonnes and his 20/20 vision was that we should be pushing for 70-100,000 tonnes. "What we want in the rope mussel sector is a fair harmonised regime, simultaneously being imposed on everyone else in Europe....we are the cutting edge of the biotoxin regime".

In oyster production, the 20/20 Vision was on clean waters, where County Councils need to live up to their responsibilities and testing and classifications of bays. Purification and biotoxins and market development were also major factors.

Joe Lee, from Muirachmanni Teo, South Connemara, spoke of the importance of investing continually in the best technology that was avail-

able to the industry, and of how it was vital in supporting rural communities with few job opportunities. Ger Kerwin, Goatsbridge Trout Farm spoke how constant regulation was hindering his industry.

Tom Mc Sweeney, Marine Correspondent, RTE, was the last speaker of the afternoon. He said that the importance of aquaculture is not getting across to the national media, and as a result, consumers are confused. He posed the question "are you fishermen, farmers, fish farmers, aquaculturists? You should perhaps decide and get it clear to the public, because people are confused". He spoke of his own impression of the industry in that there were very good things happening but the public do not hear enough of it. There's not really a system that issues information and issues it with pride. He urged the industry to put positive stories out there, because unless we do that the public won't know.

The day also saw the launch of the Irish Organic Salmon Standard, where Donal Maguire, BIM, said the Standard builds on the existing Irish Quality Salmon Standard, providing an excellent means of further differentiating Irish products on the global market. Also there was cooking of seafood, by Neven Maguire of McNeans bistro.

Day two, saw a series of workshops, with two workshops running alongside one another. One for finfish, where presentations were given on developments in recirculation technology in Denmark, as well as a presentation from Anthony Murphy, Skretting and Fiona Geoghegan, Marine institute.

In the shellfish workshop, a joint presentation on the Carrying Capacity project was given by Benen Dallaghan and Brian O' Loan, BIM.

Training courses for the industry for both shellfish and finfish were presented by Dr. Susan Steele, BIM.

DATE FOR YOUR 2007 DIARY!

world seafood congress 07

innovation ...gamy to the future



l-r: IFA President, Pdraig Walsh; Marine Minister, John Browne, TD; Chef Neven Maguire; Vera Heffernan, BIM and Ian Mannix BIM.

dublin, ireland
25-28 september 07

The 2007 World Seafood Congress will be one of the premier international seafood events of next year.

The Congress' three-day Dublin-based offering, running from 25-28 September 2007, will consist of a conference and an exhibition dedicated to the theme of 'Innovation in the Seafood Industry'.

Due to unprecedented, global interest in the Congress, WSC organisers are advising potential delegates to book promptly and avoid disappointment.

Presenters, exhibitors, industry members and students are invited to register their interest in the Congress by visiting the Congress website www.worldseafoodcongress07.com.

The World Seafood Congress looks forward to welcoming you to Ireland for one of the most important events in the 2007 global seafood calendar.

www.worldseafoodcongress07.com

Over 100 restaurants, pubs, hotels and seafood retailers receive the 2007 Seafood Circle Plaque

More than 100 restaurants, pubs, hotels and seafood retailers from all over Ireland received their 2007 Seafood Circle plaques having met the criteria necessary for becoming a member. The awards ceremony took place on 28th February with Marine Minister, John Browne, TD, launching the initiative. Congratulating the businesses Helen Brophy, BIM's Market Development Manager said "the retail and hospitality businesses recognised to-day are located in both urban and rural areas throughout the country and are consistently delivering best practice in seafood retailing and hospitality. I look forward to seeing these businesses prosper as a result of their association with the Seafood Circle".

The retail part of Seafood Circle is divided into two distinct categories: *Seafood Specialist*, which is aimed at the independent fish retail sector and *Supermarket Seafood Counter*, aimed at the multiple groups and growing number of independent supermarkets and specialist food shops. In this sector the retailers invited to apply for membership. All premises receive a minimum of two visits from experienced BIM staff and an independent assessor. A strict set of criteria applies and the assessors report to an Approvals Committee prior to awarding membership. A full list of all members is available at www.seafoodcircle.com

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