

NSW Shellfish Committee

Wednesday 21 May 2014

Summary of meeting outcomes

The NSW Shellfish Committee (NSWSC) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday, 21 May 2014. Specific issues considered by the NSWSC at its meeting are detailed below.

NSW Food Authority Audit Verification Program

NSW Food Authority has instigated a new audit process for the oyster industry which relies on a desktop verification process to capture key food safety indicators resulting in immediate notification of system failures and non-compliances which will in turn improve food safety outcomes and implement immediate corrective action across the shellfish sector. Shellfish businesses are not required to alter their current reporting requirements. A general circular has been sent to all shellfish licensees to inform them of the new audit requirements.

OISAS 2014

The NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS), compiled by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has recently been gazetted and can be found on the NSW DPI website. OISAS 2014 outlines a strategic pathway to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the oyster aquaculture industry and provides best practice guidelines for the industry to follow, including new signage options.

Brisbane Water Quarantine

NSW Aquatic Biosecurity advises that the quarantine restriction on the movement of shellfish and equipment from Brisbane Water remains in force following confirmed findings of OsHV-1, the causative viral agent for Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) in 2013. The quarantine restriction aims to minimise the risk of OsHV-1 being transmitted to non-affected estuaries. Current options for the sale of shellfish from Brisbane Water include harvest and depuration within the Brisbane Water estuary itself or movement to other confirmed OsHV-1 estuaries (ie Hawkesbury River) for relay or translocation and harvest.

Strategic Economic Plan for the Oyster Industry

OISAS outlines a management strategy for the NSW oyster industry but does not target economic development. In 2010 an Australia wide benchmarking study into oyster aquaculture sustainability and economics was completed and it was agreed that a similar NSW orientated study be completed in a targeted approach to increase profitability and advance the oyster industry within NSW. An industry led group consisting of the oyster aquaculture industry members of the NSW Shellfish Committee, with assistance from NSW DPI will look to advance this study. Existing studies will be accessed and current benchmarking and other economic research will be reviewed to target areas prioritised by industry.

Socio-Economic Evaluation of the NSW Coastal Aquaculture Industry

Commercial fisheries have recently progressed an FRDC application to evaluate the economic contribution of the wild capture sector and look at the social contribution the fishery makes to the community. Efforts are underway to see if aquaculture may be included in this study as there is a shortage of information of how much the NSW oyster industry contributes to the state.

State Shellfish Levy

The current state shellfish levy funding model was approved by the NSW Food Authority executive for the 2014/15 financial year with the NSW Shellfish Committee industry members in support of the model.

The next meeting is to be held on 20 August 2014