

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### NSW Seafood Industry Forum

1 May 2018

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The NSW Seafood Industry Forum held a meeting in Sydney on Tuesday, 1 May 2018. Specific issues considered by the Forum at its meeting are detailed below.

#### Attendees

**NSW Seafood Industry Forum members:** Tricia Beatty (Professional Fishermen's Association Inc), Mark Boulter (Safe Sustainable Seafood), Olivia Churchill (De Costi Seafoods/Tassal Group Ltd), Ross Fidden (Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative Ltd), Robert McCormack (NSW Aquaculture Association Inc.), Erik Poole (Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd), Melissa Walker (NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety).

**NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety:** Lisa Szabo, Chair (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Julia Harvey (Director Stakeholder Engagement & Customer Service), Jeffrey Go (NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety), Helen Chen (Senior Project Officer, Mission & Delegation, International Engagement), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), Ryan Moore (Acting Manager, Audit Systems & Verification Unit), Leanne Wilson (Program Leader, Commercial Fisheries Program, NSW DPI Fisheries), Margaret Figueroa (Secretariat).

**Apologies:** Anthony Mercer (De Costi Seafoods), Kerry Strangas (Master Fish Merchants Association of Australia), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety), Peter Day (Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance), Juliet Corish (Manager Strategy & Standards and Manager Aquatic Biosecurity), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement Unit, NSW DPI), Mark Mackie (Manager, Audit Systems & Verification), David Cusack (Manager, Strategic Policy & Projects), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications).

#### Industry updates

Members expressed concern about the proposal to release a CSIRO biocontrol agent to eradicate carp fish from Australian waterways. Members were aware of CSIRO studies showing mortalities in non-target species, some of which are important to aquaculture. They also raised concerns about the environmental impacts of mass fish mortality across inland fisheries and the effects this will have on water quality. They were concerned about impacts on non-target species, a small food industry (smoked carp for export) and the larger ornamental carp industry. These concerns will be passed on to the NSW DPI and further information will be circulated out of session to members.

#### Food safety program compliance report

The Forum noted a report on seafood industry compliance activities between 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017. During this reporting period 189 audits and 170 inspections were conducted with 9 failed audits and 9 failed inspections. There were 17 enforcement actions including the issue of 2 warning letters, 12 improvement notices and 3 penalty notices. There were no foodborne illness investigations in the seafood sector during the period. Key statistics show that the industry is running above the target of 95% with 95.2% compliance rate for the sector. Audit data analysis for the period shows that the main areas where failures are occurring are with monitoring records (not having them completed and available at audit).

and with failures to conduct mandatory verification testing. Overall the Department is satisfied with the good levels of compliance for the seafood industry sector.

### **Industry Survey Feedback**

A report on feedback received from a survey sent to industry consultative committee members to assist the NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) Compliance team in determining where to target its work priorities for 2018/19 was tabled for information. It was noted that there had been a good response from the seafood industry with 6 out of 7 respondents; appreciation was expressed to members for taking time to complete the survey and provide feedback.

There was further discussion on some of the responses given in the survey, particularly in relation to screening of imported raw seafood product and involvement of industry in communication of biosecurity protocols during an incident. Members were encouraged to contact the BFS Compliance team if they have any other issues they wish to raise or suggestions for possible future projects.

### **White Spot disease update**

Members received an update on advice received in April 2018 from the Queensland Government of a detection of white spot syndrome virus positive results through active wild prawn surveillance in northern Moreton Bay. This was detected as part of ongoing surveillance in place under the Queensland white spot program since the first detection in a prawn farm in the Logan River in south east Queensland in December 2016. All other surveillance, including Qld waters to the north of Moreton Bay, and repeat surveillance in Logan River, by the Queensland government has returned negative results.

NSW DPI is also actively participating in an extensive proof of freedom surveillance program, according to OIE guidelines, and there is no evidence of White Spot syndrome virus in any of the wild prawn populations or NSW prawn farms surveyed. The NSW DPI is maintaining active compliance and enforcing the Biosecurity Control Order that places restrictions on movement of uncooked decapod crustaceans and polychaete worms into NSW. Work is also continuing with the NSW prawn aquaculture industry to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place for farm activities. The Forum will be kept updated on this issue.

### **Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome update**

An update was tabled for information following the detection of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) in feral/wild Pacific Oysters from the Port River, Adelaide, South Australia in March 2018. Following confirmation of this virus, the South Australian government implemented movement restrictions across its entire oyster farming estuary whilst the SA POMS Response Plan was implemented. In addition, SA restrictions in place include prohibition on take of wild oysters and bivalves from the Port River. All movement restrictions were revoked on 16 April 2018 following active surveillance which found no further evidence of POMS virus in any oyster farming area.

It was noted that there is no additional risk to the NSW oyster industry from the SA outbreak, and the NSW DPI was reminding NSW seafood processors of the restrictions in place regarding waste and waste water conditions that manage any risk.

### **National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021**

A draft strategy for reducing foodborne illness in Australia which had been put out for consultation between 12 February to 29 March 2018 was tabled for information. The draft

strategy was developed by jurisdictions following a meeting in April 2017 of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation who identified the need to develop a nationally-consistent approach to reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, as the first of three priority areas to focus on for 2017-2021. There have also been targeted consultations with various groups, particularly the poultry industry and egg industry, and the draft strategy has been circulated to all Food Authority industry consultative committees out of session.

Appreciation was passed on to those people who have put in submissions on the strategy to the Food Regulation Secretariat. These submissions will be used to further develop the strategy. The strong message coming through from industry respondents was consistency. It was noted that the seafood industry is recognised as having a very strong food safety record and at present it is not an industry of concern.

Members still wishing to comment on the strategy were encouraged to provide feedback to the Food Authority.

### **Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) for seafood for immediate consumption**

Leanne Wilson, Program Leader of the Commercial Fisheries Program in NSW DPI Fisheries, gave a presentation on work they have been doing to gain a better understanding of consumers' seafood purchasing behaviours. This research work is being done following on from Recommendation 18 of the NSW Legislative Council Report into *Commercial Fishing in NSW* which was to consult on a CoOL scheme for seafood sold for immediate consumption and commence implementation of a scheme, and to consider the creation of a NSW seafood label as part of the planned community awareness program.

Results from survey work focusing on the 93% of people who currently consume seafood were presented; they show that currently NSW consumers eat seafood about three times a week. It was noted that consumer preferences can be complex and often based on previous knowledge or experience. This research work will help inform where industry will get greater benefit in disclosing Country of Origin. Members thanked Leanne for her presentation and asked her to present further findings from the research at the October meeting of the Forum.

### **Communications update**

Members received an update on communications in the seafood industry sector since the last meeting. This included:

- Work on the next edition of *Foodwise*.
- Continued engagement with the public through 'Name and Shame' which has 20,000 visitors per week to the Food Authority's Facebook site.
- Communications focussed around recalls (labelling, allergens). FSANZ have a proposal about using plain English labelling for allergens and mandatory allergen labelling for lupins is coming in on 1 July 2018.
- Facebook posts on fish and aquatics, White Spot, and starting a seafood retail business, with educational links on the website.

### **Biosecurity update**

Members were advised that the Department conducted a major emergency exercise in March this year with Queensland (Exercise Border Bridge) to test its systems and assess how NSW and Queensland can prepare and respond to a biosecurity incident occurring across two jurisdictions. There was a good outcome from this exercise and learnings that came out of that will be shared around midyear.



The Department had a Biosecurity and Food Safety display at the Sydney Royal Easter Show which was very successful.

The Department is doing a social research project with Monash University around biosecurity messaging in the aquatic space. Biosecurity education work is ongoing with the Department of Education and Tocal in doing a live stream around biosecurity issues in schools. The second round of Biosecurity Act training is also commencing this month. Members also spoke of the importance of engaging at a greater depth with individual communities and non-English speaking cultural groups.

#### **International Engagement Unit update**

Members received an update on recent work of the International Engagement Unit, particularly in relation to developing opportunities for export of seafood to China.

#### **Ciguatera update**

Members raised concerns over the need to progress research into Ciguatera. Large numbers of Spanish Mackerel over 10 kgs are being caught which cannot be sold and this is a resource that fishers want to be able to access. It was noted that data sharing and engagement is occurring internationally on this issue and members were encouraged to apply to SafeFish for a research grant into Ciguatera.

*The next meeting of the NSW Seafood Industry Forum will be held on Tuesday 16 October 2018.*