

# NSW Shellfish Committee

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### NSW Oyster Conference 2024

An application to Destination NSW for a \$24,000 grant by Oceanwatch Australia to host the NSW Oyster Conference has been successful. Dates and location are not locked in; however, Port Macquarie is being viewed as a likely location and August the most likely month. More details will be released by Oceanwatch Australia as planning of the event progresses.

### Detection of *Steinhausia* in Mussels

*Steinhausia mytilovum* a protozoan parasite which affects the ova of mussels has been identified in Twofold Bay and Jervis Bay. *Steinhausia* is established in Europe, USA, South America and Western Australia. This is the first identification of the parasite in NSW. It was identified following routine testing of broodstock intended for select breeding purposes. Mussel mortality has not been observed; however, *Steinhausia* can cause deformities of the ova which reduces the number of eggs in host shellfish. *Steinhausia* is not a food safety concern and is not transmittable to humans.

### ASQAAC 2023

The Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (ASQAAC) met in October 2023. Items supported by ASQAAC included:

- Amendment to shellfish relay requirements. The ASQAP manual states that shellfish relayed from sewage impacted harvest areas must observe a 21 day period in water at the relayed location. Proposal is to amend the section to "withholding period of shellfish relayed from sewage contaminated harvest areas is 21 days from the date shellfish were removed from the harvest area or from the end of the sewage closure, whichever is shorter.
- Appointment of ex-NSW Shellfish Committee Chair Mark Boulter as the new Chair of ASQAAC.

### Industry Communication Pathways

A paper received as incoming correspondence regarding mapping the various committees within the shellfish industry, their members, roles, responsibilities and regulatory governance was accepted. The NSW Oysters website lists much of this information and can be accessed [here](#). Privacy laws may prevent the publication of the names and positions of members unless the members agree to their details being made publicly available. The current NSW Shellfish Committee industry members have previously agreed to the publication of their names and contact details to facilitate greater engagement with the wider industry, the contact details of the current Shellfish Committee members are available [here](#).

### Reporting Food Borne Illness Events

Timely and accurate reporting of food borne illness is critical to establishing commonalities and identifying possible events linked to specific foods. The NSW Food Authority has a Food Incident Response team established who work very expediently on illness events as the very nature of food borne illness requires a swift response. The NSW Food Authority requires all retail food businesses to have a food safety supervisor on hand who has obtained a food safety certificate. The food safety certificate course outlines numerous food safety aspects including illness events and mandatory reporting requirements.

### Marine Heatwave Warning

BOM and CSIRO has forecast a marine heatwave to impact the NSW coastline in the coming summer months. This will affect the ambient temperature of the water and may result in reduced nutrient availability, algal blooms, increase in pathogen activity and possible mortality of shellfish. DPI is developing a marine heatwave strategy in preparation for extreme water temperatures. Farmers are

urged to monitor real time water temperature data, possibly relocate stock to deeper or cooler waters when temperatures are elevated and encourage shading and spraying during hot days.

### ***Vibrio* Risk Management**

An ongoing *Vibrio* survey across NSW has identified elevated *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* levels in some samples. *Vibrio* are naturally occurring marine bacteria that thrive in brackish, muddy, warm marine environments. With a marine heatwave warning current, it is critical that farmers ensure shellfish are kept as cool as possible from the moment they come out of the water and follow the current storage temperature requirements outlined in the NSW Shellfish Industry Manual found [here](#). It was agreed that a Marine Heat Wave article be included in the next edition of the Oceanwatch Australia Oyster News.

### **Shellfish Wet Storage Requirements**

A final draft of the proposed shellfish wet storage requirements was endorsed by the NSW Shellfish Committee. It was agreed that the proposed requirements be provided to all NSW Food Authority businesses licensed for shellfish cultivation or harvest as well as known NSW based shellfish wet storage system manufacturers for comment.

### **Dates for 2024 NSW Shellfish Committee Meetings**

- 28 February 2024
- 22 May 2024
- 7 August 2024
- 6 November 2024

Industry members with matters to raise are to be made aware that they should consult the Shellfish Committee industry representatives to raise the item on their behalf, contact details can be found [here](#). If items are raised after the agenda item submission deadline (2 weeks prior to each meeting), they may be held over until the following meeting. NSW Food Authority licensed shellfish businesses wishing to attend the meeting as an observer can apply with an expression of interest sent to [food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au).