



# IFA Aquaculture September 2014



WWW.IFA.IE

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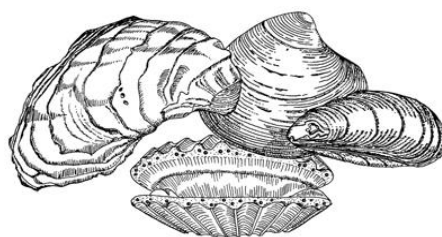
## ISA members Meet in Dublin - October 16th

Irish Shellfish Association members will meet in Dublin on October 16 for their annual conference and there's a lot for oyster and mussel producers to discuss in advance of the busy Christmas sales season.

When a sector's success is often beyond the control of individual growers and in the hands of government, buyers, state agencies, local authorities etc., a strong representative body like the ISA and its parent, IFA, is essential.

The industry has gone through major changes in structure, markets and regulation over the past few years. The stress and frustration caused by **licensing delays** have discouraged planning and investment in the business, due to the lack of commitment by successive governments. ISA members today are far from satisfied with progress but at least they are finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel on licensing.

Large multi-user bays such as Bantry, Cromane and Roaringwater have gone through the process. Renewals in Donegal, Clew, Kenmare and Galway and Dungarvan bays will soon see



dozens more ISA members and thousands of tonnes of product being regularised within the licensing net. ISA must ensure that members do not face the same unnecessary bureaucracy in 10 short years at the next renewals.

Minister Coveney and IFA President Eddie Downey are on the conference guest list as well as all agencies who interact with industry on a daily basis.

Changes to the biotoxin regime and market prospects in Europe and further afield in Asia, will be discussed and many growers will be looking to the ISA for leadership on a campaign at home and in the EU against proposed new rules to

penalise growers for human **Noroviruses** that local authorities and the EPA allow into inshore waters.

Proposals to bring in crude PCR testing and setting draconian low targets will devastate the Irish fresh export trade and ruin the entire industry. The ISA is leading the charge against these proposals and highlighting the issue wherever possible. Support is being sought from our agencies at home, from MEPs and from other member states to block these dangerous moves.

The new **EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund** is a hot topic with the potential for grant aid for most of the industry open after many years of being frozen out due to licensing. What this 40% aid will be spent on and priority areas for investment are items which will be keenly debated now as the open consultation on our next Operational Programme will be getting in full swing during the Dublin Conference.

**ISA Conference - See details at Aquaculture on [www.IFA.ie](http://www.IFA.ie)**

Looking forward to seeing all shellfish producers on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October. Important contacts: ISA/IFA Aquaculture 01-4260362, Red Cow Moran's Hotel 01-4593650 (Shonagh or Ana)



**Connemara Salmon Boost**  
**Congratulations to ISPG and Marine Harvest (Liam Roche and Pat Connors pictured) on signing a deal worth €20 million to process fish produced by MHI at Connemara sites in the local and long-established processing plant. This was a huge boost to the community in South Connemara which badly needed good news on the jobs front. Over 1,000 people signed a petition supporting fish farm jobs in the area and 3,000 viewed, liked or commented on the story when it appeared on the "Irish Aquaculture" Facebook page. The publicly announced deal was a huge vote of support for the 40 year old south Connemara aquaculture sector.**

**Freshwater Farmers for Galway**  
 Supported by IFA Aquaculture, BIM are holding a special workshop on freshwater production (smolts, trout etc.) in the Marine Institute HQ on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The event will cover topics such as water regulation, water quality, fish health and welfare, organic certification, water management and R&D.

Contact Geoff Robinson at BIM for more information and registration.

## Irish Farmed Fish Top the Class - yet again!

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) have

produced their annual report on residues in all food products in

Ireland. Once again, the industry sailed through the audit with flying colours from random samples across the

spectrum in farmed fish (at all stages of production).

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*This is the eighth year in a row (since the system was set up) that the Irish aquaculture industry had 100% compliance.*

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This is the eighth year in a row that Irish aquaculture had 100% compliance, proving that Irish farmed fish are residue free and completely safe, healthy and nutritious. Fish compare well with other food products of Irish origin. In 2013, a total of 19869 samples were taken from all 8 food producing species, as well as from milk, eggs and honey. The overall level of positives across all substances was 46, or 0.23%. The comparable positive levels respectively for 2011 and 2012 were 0.20% (40/20501) and 0.21% (44/20,580).

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), with support from the Marine Institute (MI), is responsible for residue controls on farmed finfish under the national residue-monitoring plan. In 2013, in excess of 651 tests and a total of 1494 measurements were carried out on 137 samples of farmed finfish for a range of residues.

**The message is clear: buy Irish!**



## IFA briefs EU Watchdog

The Food And Veterinary Office (FVO) is one of the most powerful agencies within the EU and is regarded as the "Internal Affairs" division, overseeing the performance of agencies at national level on controls and regulation of EU laws on food and animal health.

The FVO has become very familiar with the Irish shellfish industry over the past decade, producing many reports on ways to improve and expand our system and developing a working relationship with the SFPA, Marine Institute, FSAI and BIM in the process.

In 2014 the FVO decided to have a good look at finfish aquaculture for the first time across seven member states, beginning in Ireland, where the FVO is based (in Co. Meath). IFA Aquaculture and FEAP briefed the organisation on general issues in European and Irish salmon and trout farming over a day early on in the year.

A full two-week mission is being carried out in September with the full logistical and policy support of IFA Aquaculture and the regular agencies involved in legislation on everything from fish health to residues, fish movements, imports, certification and standards, veterinary controls, etc. IFA Aquaculture is also formally briefing the auditors at a special meeting where the FVO will learn about a range of topics including the industry views on why Ireland is so far behind other EU countries in terms of development of its industry.

IFA members in sea and freshwater sites as well as private vets and agency officials also gave up significant time to working with the FVO during their investigations. We now all look forward to the organisation's report which should have significant bearing over EU legislation going into the future.

## Noro-Virus limit a huge mistake

- Irish industry finished if new proposal succeeds  
ISA backs EU Coalition against draft EU rule

As previously highlighted in this newsletter (July-August 2014), the proposals to impose a crude limit for Noroviruses are gathering steam within Europe with no visible protest reaction from Irish authorities against this potentially catastrophic decision.

The ISA was deeply disappointed with the revelation at the August Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee (MSSC) meeting that the FSAI supported a limit on viruses in principle at the present moment.

*The Industry has been constructive, consistent and clear for many years: solve the cause of the problem – pollution – instead of penalising the victims – shellfish farmers*

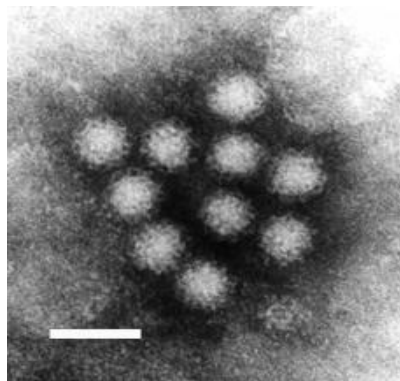
ISA has proposed real-time management and voluntary closures as well as ways to improve the current microbiological sampling regime. ISA has invested huge amounts of time and resources into working as closely as possible with the SFPA and FSAI on the classification system. ISA publishes an annual league table of performance of local authorities in an effort to get them to accept their responsibilities when it comes to polluting shellfish areas.

For the Irish Government to take the easy option of making growers take

on 100% of the responsibility and risk for the wrongdoing of state authorities is completely unacceptable. Agreeing to any limit on Norovirus under the current system of analysis by PCR which picks up dead viruses and fragments is also unacceptable. Industry sees the change of direction by our own state agencies as a blatant U-turn aimed at avoiding dealing with the real problem. Neither does it reflect the position of the European Food Safety Agency which states that the only way to protect consumers is to deal with the pollution problem at source.

ISA is involved in organising an important meeting in Brussels on September 29<sup>th</sup> to which MEPs and Commission officials will be invited. Growers from the UK, Scotland, France, Italy, Spain, Holland and Denmark will also be in attendance.

The aim of this EU-wide event which is totally at the initiative of the industry organisations is to explain the straightforward facts and negative impacts of pursuing this route and turn the tide against the proposed regulation.



Norwalk Virus – white bar = 50 nanometres (Wikipedia)

“Freshwater treatment is an animal welfare issue”

A few facts about treating Amoebic Gill Disease (AGD) with freshwater:

- All farmers have an obligation to care for their livestock
- AGD can happen anywhere in the sea, depending on temperature and rainfall
- AGD hurts fish gills and can lead to other health problems
- Immersion in freshwater for 2-3 hours is enough to kill AGD. It also has beneficial effects for sea lice and gill challenges generally.
- No medicines or chemicals are used. In fact even drinking water cannot be used because of the presence of chlorine and fluoride.
- This pollution free treatment is difficult and costly, needing large well-boats or bags to bathe fish.
- Treatments are undertaken to ensure the highest animal welfare standards are met.
- Freshwater treatment is usually only carried out 3-4 times during the warmest months of the year on Irish farms.
- There is no threat to the environment from using freshwater treatments

(Sources, BIM & ISGA Veterinary advisors and member stock managers)

# A glimpse of our potential?



The dockyard at the east coast port of Arklow was abuzz during the summer as a state of the art new 30m fish farming vessel was launched, designed specifically to cater for salmon farming. Upon handover, the Sally-Anne headed straight to home to... Scotland.

Well done to Arklow Marine and all the suppliers involved and best wishes to Scottish Sea Farms, but why is this essential piece of infrastructure heading north? The latest figures from the

### FEAP Finfish (Marine & freshwater) Production

Country	2004 (T)	2013 (T)
Norway	580,742	1,270,150
UK	164,843	166,741
France	51,296	40,205
Spain	56,331	55,694
Ireland	15,396	12,450
Faroes	37,518	76,480

Federation of European Aquaculture Producers [www.feap.info](http://www.feap.info) show why:

In 2013 Ireland produced 12,450 tonnes of finfish, Scotland's year ended with 166,741 t., making it one of the most significant industries in the country. New boats are rare in Ireland, particularly during the bureaucratic nightmare the industry has suffered. But there is a positive message here in that we have the experience and potential to put our

own service companies, boat-builders and technology manufacturers to work serving the Irish industry if and when we need them.

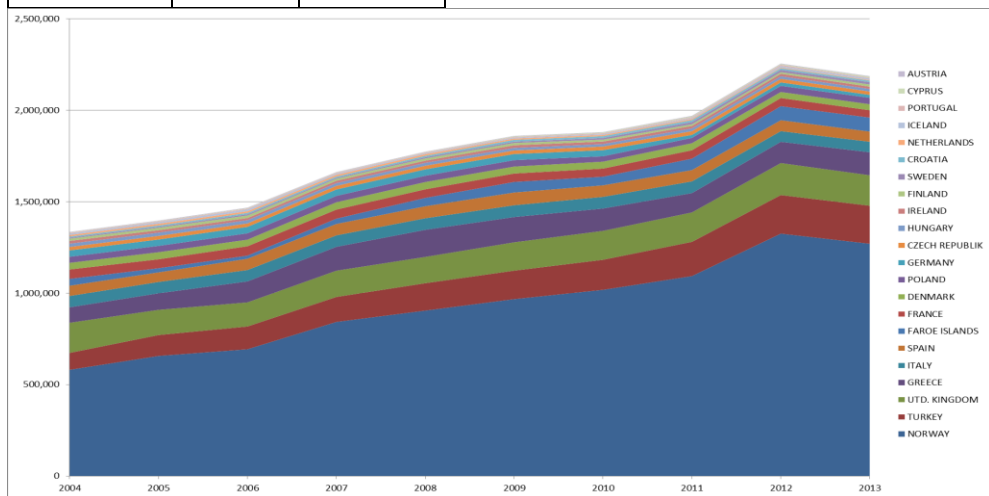
## Scottish Shellfish Growers Mull Independence Vote

The Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers meet as usual in Oban this autumn, this time in the wake of the Scottish independence referendum so doubtless there will be a lot to consider. ISA Executive, Richie Flynn, has been invited to speak on the future of shellfish growers' representation in Europe in advance of the setting up of the new EU-wide Aquaculture Advisory Council. Keep an eye out at [www.assg.org.uk](http://www.assg.org.uk) for more information.

## Time for Surfing:

The new IFA website has a dedicated section on Aquaculture and work of the Irish Shellfish Committee. Press releases articles, links and copies of our newsletters are all there. Just go to [www.ifa.ie](http://www.ifa.ie) and click on "aquaculture from the Sectors menu. Have a look at other parts of IFA too including membership, history and the Brussels office of the IFA.

**IN A SURPRISE MOVE, THE NEW MALTESE EU COMMISSIONER, MR KARMENU VELLA, WILL OVERSEE BOTH THE FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIOS.**



### FOR MORE INFORMATION



Home of The Irish Salmon Growers' Association,  
The Irish Shellfish Association  
Irish Representative:  
Federation of European Aquaculture Producers;  
European Mollusc Producers' Association;  
International Salmon Farmers' Association.

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