



2014 CLASSIFICATION / LEAGUE TABLES INSIDE ... NOROVIRUS ...

IFA Aquaculture Jul / Aug 2014

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SHELLFISH SPECIAL

IFA CAMPAIGN BREAKS LICENCE LOGJAM

IFA's campaign to fix the aquaculture licencing system is finally bearing fruit with licences rolling out in multi-user bays and now **mid-2016** set as the target to complete all Appropriate Assessments.

Fighting every inch of a campaign lasting many years at every event, in every media statement, at every meeting and at every opportunity, IFA has been single-minded in its determination to break through the licencing bottlenecks impacting on every single member. The organisation highlighted the contradictions and hurdles inherent in the government's disjointed approach. IFA strongly criticised the Department for adding to problems by refusing waiting applicants grant aid, highlighting this unilateral policy in Brussels as unjust and discriminatory. Official government targets were produced that the Department nor the Minister could not possibly deliver while the licencing system dragged on. IFA went to Brussels, NGOs, other Departments and agencies to find the real story behind the delays involving days and weeks of unsung hard voluntary work by chairmen and committees of the association. As IFA's 2014 report "Removing Barriers" pointed out, bottlenecks were created by inertia at the heart of the systems and a lack of expertise and understanding of industry values and needs.

Having these facts clearly argued by IFA led to tense meetings and an inability by Minister Coveney to even meet with the industry formally to explain the situation. The IFA's single-minded campaign is not over yet – our policy is to ensure licences are prioritised for all who deserve them - large and small.

The Marine Institute has given IFA a commitment to deadlines as has the NPWS. The European Commission is eager to see the EMFF money spent on aquaculture. Credit and investment will finally be possible to raise and at least a medium term future for companies and families will be achievable.

Commitments to IFA

Progress on licensing has been welcomed by IFA. Given that the Department's work is linked to the speed at which the Marine Institute and NPWS deliver on Appropriate Assessments (AAs) and Conservation Objectives (COs). IFA met recently with both agencies and can report:

NPWS have completed 84 COs to date with a target of 100% completion by end 2014.

The MI have delivered seven AAs involving 360 licences – Irish Sea, Castlemaine/Cromane, Roaringwater Bay, Lough Swilly, Donegal Bay, Outer Bantry Bay, Dungarvan.

A full risk assessment in relation to fishing on the west coast had been completed by the MI which can be used as a generic part of any AA for the region.

AAs will be carried out before the end of summer 2014 in Galway Bay, Kenmare and Valentia (140 licences)

The next tranche of bays with ornithological aspects (SPAs) to be carried out will be Wexford, Trábreaga, Drumcliffe, Shannon/Fergus, Ballycotton, Tralee. Kilkieran will also be carried out in the third quarter.

All AAs will be completed by mid-2016

Disappointing water quality results in 2014

The annual review of shellfish waters classification is a major part of ISA's work on behalf of individuals and groups of members around the coast. Each year the Association works with the SFPA, MI, FSAI and BIM to assess, investigate and make crucial decisions on classification which can have potentially very severe or beneficial impacts on producers incomes. With each year new challenges are presented and 2014 is no different. ISA has learned that in years where classification was not under threat e.coli spikes in some bays were ignored which subsequently became very important when they were still included in the assessments three years after they occurred. Equally the long standing advice of keeping in close contact with your local fishery officer has never been more well-grounded with producers and SFPA staff collaborating in investigating spikes as well as persistent run offs and illegal discharges.

What was most surprising during the 2014 review was the reduction in quality in bays which had waste water treatment plants built nearby in the last decade. The reasons for this are complex but boil down to ageing equipment, training and management of each plant by the local authority. As the annual league table is produced and sent out to all county councils, ISA will highlight these issues and also bring them to the attention of the licencing authority, the EPA.

League Tables Page 2

Shellfish Classification League tables 2014 and 2013

2014								
County Council	Total Classified Areas	Class A 2014	Class A Seasonal 2014	Class B 2014	Class C 2014	Points	Points diff 2013/14	Weighted Points
Clare	11	6	1	4	0	28	-1	0.85
Galway	21	9	3	9	0	51	-1	0.81
Mayo	21	10	4	6	0	50	-3	0.79
Cork	27	9	1	16	1	58	6	0.72
Louth	8	5	1	1	1	16	-1	0.67
Sligo	7	0	0	7	0	14	0	0.67
Waterford	4	0	0	4	0	8	-2	0.67
Limerick	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	0.67
Donegal	20	2	2	15	1	37	1	0.62
Kerry	9	2	0	6	1	15	-4	0.56
Wexford	7	2	0	4	1	11	0	0.52

2013								
County Council	Total Classified Areas	Class A 2013	Class A Seasonal 2013	Class B 2013	Class C 2013	Points	Points diff 2012/13	Weighted Points
Clare	11	7	1	3	0	29	3	0.88
Mayo	21	11	3	7	0	53	0	0.84
Galway	22	8	4	10	0	52	1	0.79
Cork	23	9	0	14	1	52	2	0.75
Louth	8	6	0	1	1	17	-4	0.71
Kerry	9	1	1	7	0	19	2	0.70
Donegal	18	3	2	13	1	36	-6	0.67
Sligo	7	0	0	7	0	14	0	0.67
Waterford	5	0	0	5	0	10	2	0.67
Limerick	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	0.67
Wexford	7	2	0	4	1	11	-2	0.52

New battle looming on norovirus?

At the end of 2013, the FSAI produced a risk management report on norovirus in Oysters which recommended a limit of 200 viral copies per gramme (cpg) for oysters being placed on the market. Subsequent discussions at EU level in the European Food Safety Authority have occurred and a draft regulation produced to reflect a limit being placed on product. Consultation with industry has been severely limited by the fact that all but one meeting of the MSSC have been postponed in 2014 so far. Meanwhile, the FSA in the UK has begun unilaterally implementing the 200 cpg limit and

the oyster sector there is concerned it will be wiped out by the relentless push towards a limit. The last time a limit was set (bacteriophage) ISA and other EU producers through EMPA waged a high level campaign to get the test abandoned as scientifically unsafe.

The ISA has expressed serious reservations wherever it can about the latest moves to introduce a norovirus limit. The association is opposed to setting a limit for a man-made food safety issue at the point of sale because:

1. It shifts responsibility for ensuring the safety of waters from those who are actually responsible (local authorities) to innocent parties (shellfish producers)
2. The science behind the PCR technique has been shown time

and again to be unsafe, including dead viruses and fragments in the final count.

3. The limit picked will not be subject to a regulatory impact statement and is likely to be at the bottom limit of detection thereby giving an effective presence/absence qualitative test result.
4. It is an unnecessary imposition because no proper risk analysis has been carried out which puts the very low incidence of norovirus poisoning caused by shellfish consumption in the context of other foods or forms of spreading the disease.

The battle now moves to Brussels where, along with the SAGB, ISA will meet with European Officials and new MEPs to discuss the issue and argue the industry's case against this potentially disastrous development.

Oyster reps meet with the MI

ISA Chairman Jerry Gallagher and the oyster industry representatives on the National Committee, Shay Harty and Ed Gallagher, met with Fiona Geoghegan and Deborah Cheslett of the Fish Health Unit of the Marine Institute recently to discuss the *V. aesturianus* issue.

Vibrio aesturianus is a marine bacterium and not a listed disease, so the MI has no legal basis for preventing movements of stock and the full distribution of the bacterium in Ireland is unknown. ISA agreed that preventing movements from areas where the bacterium has been identified does not seem reasonable. ISA and the MI agreed that a document providing growers with advice regarding best practice would be produced in consultation with BIM and mailshot to *C. gigas* growers on guidelines for best site practice.

V. aesturianus at a glance

- It was first described in the USA in 1983 in seawater, oysters, clams and crabs and has been detected in France for the first time in 2001 in association with mortality in adult *C. gigas* and since this time during oyster mortality episodes.
- Between 2001 and 2011 it was detected in 10-20% of mortality cases in France generally in adult oysters.
- Since 2011, the frequency of detection in France has increased from 29% in 2011, to 60% in 2012, reaching 77% in 2013. In 2013 it was also frequently detected in oyster spat
- It is usually detected when mortality rates are below 30% and the mortality is described as more progressive rather than the sudden mortality typically observed in cases of OsHV-1 μ Var infection.
- Farmers report that the mortality appears to last a long time.
- Can be detected all year round
- AGE: All age classes affected but adults seem to be worse affected especially in summer

- ORIGIN: Wild spat more affected than hatchery (No difference with ploidy)
- Hatchery adults worse than wild (Triploid worst affected.)
- Juvenile: no affect from origin
- DETECTION PERIOD: Preferentially affected in summer, but adults more in summer, juveniles more in colder conditions. Temperature of 19degrees appears to be it's preferred temp.
- DETECTED in all production areas in France
- No preference for a particular type of site
- Affected species: Only *C. gigas* appear to be affected
- Why the increase in detections? Possibly due to
 - emergence of a new strain or genotype which is more virulent
 - a reduced tolerance to *V. aesturianus* as a result of prior exposure to OsHV-1 μ Var.

The reports from France and the reliance on French stock by the Irish industry led to an increase in testing for *V. aesturianus* in Ireland in late 2012 and 2013. In late 2012 it was identified in oysters submitted from 2/5 sites where adult or half grown mortality had occurred. In 2013, any samples for which mortality reports did not fit with the classical pattern expected for OsHV-1 μ Var were subjected to testing for *V. aesturianus*. Several sites tested positive in 2013 but the pathology expected which had only newly been described by IFREMER appeared to be absent in all oysters which were tested in 2013. As a result, at the end of 2013 it was still unclear what the situation was with regard to the disease in Ireland. Further longitudinal studies will continue to be carried out on Irish sites as well as a review of historical data. ISA and the MI will continue to keep in regular contact on the issue.

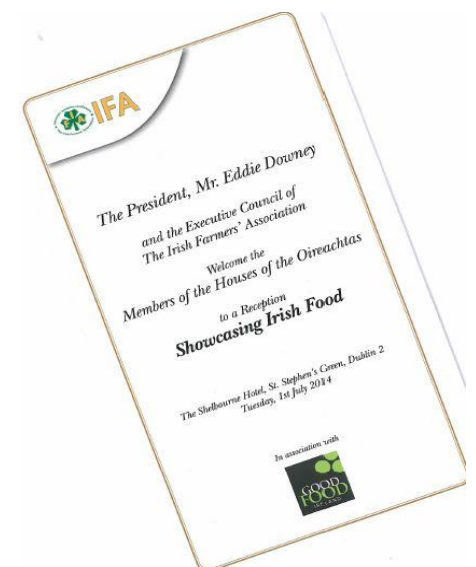
Congratulations to Carlingford

It may come as a shock to many in the industry that it is four decades since Peter Louet first founded Carlingford Oysters in the "hole in the ground" he

found on the southern shores of the lough. The sheds and shoreline that stand there now would have been the envy of any of the company's many restaurant customers for food and drink as scenes of celebration went on for three generations of the Louet-Feissers celebrated oyster growing, aquaculture with friends colleagues and family (and even a reality TV crew!) Congratulations to Kian, Mary, Peter and all the staff and here's to another 40 years in business.



Oireachtas dilemma - where to start?



IFA recently hosted a special showcase of the best of Irish-grown food for TDs and Senators in the Shelbourne Hotel ISA Chairman, Jerry Gallagher was on hand to represent shellfish growers and the Association had ensured bivalves were well represented among the 70 different gourmet beef, poultry, pork and dairy products. Mussels from Roaringwater and oysters from Sligo were showcased by Martin Shanahan of

Fishy Fishy in Kinsale and the Shelbourne's own Oyster Bar. Jellied oysters from north Connemara aroused everyone's curiosity but the delicacies produced by Delphi Lodge went down a treat with the politicians and farmers alike.

Wild Atlantic Way

The opportunities presented by the new Wild Atlantic Way are endless and ISA is encouraging BIM to get more involved in promoting the industry along the driving, walking and cycling route. One producer to take advantage of the massively successful initiative is Simon Kennedy who has been wooing tourists off their buses to partake in oysters, mussels, clams and smoked salmon on the stretch of road overlooking Killary Harbour all summer. Congratulations on the initiative and here's hoping many others will take the opportunity to offer tourists a taste of what they're looking (and what keeps the lights on during wintertime) all along the Atlantic coast.

SEA-based Public Consultation on EU funding

The lion's share of public consultation on the overall framework for Ireland's next Operational Programme will be decided when the public get a chance to comment on a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is a requirement for all major public funded schemes.

An SEA was also published for the outgoing European Fisheries Fund programme for Ireland. The next SEA will take the major points of EU policy towards marine development (Act Smart, Think Green, Create Growth) in combination with a range of national policies from Harvest 2020 to Climate Change and focus on the main headings of the EU regulations regarding spending money to achieve these objectives. For aquaculture, the EU priorities are to address:



Popular new shellfish "pop-up café" on the banks of Killary Harbour

- Expanding the raw material supply -
- Redress the lack of investment in research and development -
- Protect the marine environment and biodiversity
- Protect animal health and welfare; and public health -
- Come up with new ways to encourage high levels of skills in business, technical and environmental fields

The SEA with public comments and the government's responses will form part of the central basis of the national application for funding of €14.8 million in EU funds and the matching funding which the Minister must negotiate at home. Given the extremely long delays in getting any funding to industry while our competitors across the water have had unfettered access for years mean the industry in Ireland has fallen behind in terms of efficiencies and other technological areas. The nuts and bolts of the schemes which will be used to ensure an orderly set of investment tools will be decided ultimately at the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee level which is a group comprising the industry, NGOs, state agencies, the Department and the European Commission.

CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

<http://agriculture.gov.ie/fisheries/marine/agenciesprogrammesdivision/futureseafooddevelopmentinireland2014-2020/>

Looked at IFA.ie recently?

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 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.

YOUR ISA REPRESENTATIVE

Jerry Gallagher, (Chairman) New species
Shay Harty, Oysters (Sth)
Kevin Lydon, Rope Mussels (Nth)
Edward Gallagher, Oysters (Nth)
Finbarr Daly, Rope Mussels(Sth)
Arthur McCarthy, Bottom Mussels (Sth)
Jack Sullivan, New Species (abalone)
Finian O'Sullivan, Shellfish Safety

FOR MORE INFORMATION

IFA Aquaculture

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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