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IFA Aquaculture

Summer 2015

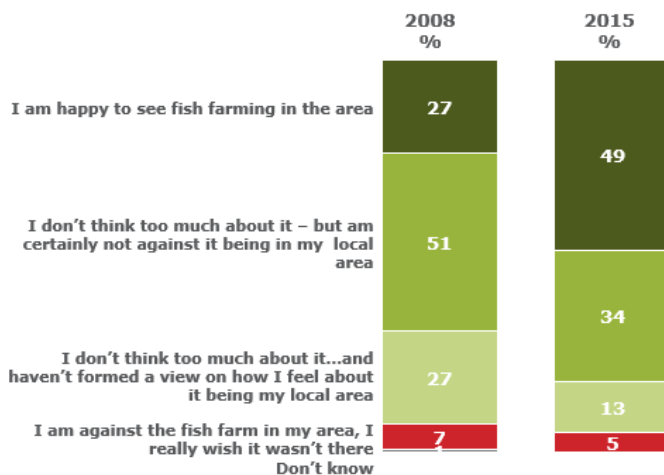
IFA Aquaculture



IN THIS ISSUE: RECIRC IN IRELAND?

83% of Locals Back Aquaculture – IFA Survey

Attitudes to local fish farms are considerably more positive than was the case in 2008.
 Base: All with home or holiday home with fish farm nearby



The largest survey of public opinion on aquaculture ever carried out in Ireland has found a sharp rise in public support for the industry.

IFA Aquaculture commissioned Behaviour & Attitudes to carry out face to face interviews with over 1,000 people at 63 sample points during May and June 2015 on questions ranging from their opinion on farms to sources of information.

This detailed study will help the industry to target its communication strategies and messages to the wider public.

Key messages from the report include:

No difference in attitudes between shellfish and finfish farms (79% of people happy to see either developed in their locality or near their holiday home) Ensuring fish stocks (69%), providing jobs (41%) and supporting local communities (25%) were top reasons for supporting development of the sector.

People living near existing farms cited jobs (59%), ensuring fish stocks (27%) and providing a healthy food (22%) as the main reasons for supporting it.

For those who did not want to see the development nearby, the main reason was they didn't understand it (31%), concern about water pollution (24%) worry about fish welfare (19%) fish quality (18%) and that there was "nothing in it for me" (17%).

Compared to a similar survey in 2008 by BIM, there is a significant shift in the public concerns with jobs jumping from 31% to 59% as a reason to build a farm nearby. Cheaper fish went from 3% to 14%, helping coastal communities went from zero to 8% and ensuring fish stocks jumped from 14% to 27%. This reveals greater consumer awareness of issues in seafood and the impact of both austerity and the economic crash.

Commenting on the survey, IFA Aquaculture said that the media, politicians and the industry itself should let the implications fully sink in. "This is not an opportunity for self-congratulation. We must never forget that the most important work is always at ground level with local communities especially where new development is concerned. The survey clearly shows what could be achievable if there was a decent licencing system in place."

IFA gives evidence at Joint Oireachtas Committee

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on the marine asked IFA Aquaculture for its views on the national Strategy for Aquaculture. At the meeting, Executive Richie Flynn, asked TDs and Senators to remain focused on the most important aspects of the plan. "With a sudden rush of official reports and consultations on seafood and aquaculture in recent weeks, it is unsurprising that there is some confusion about the role of each document. The information overload is being felt by industry too.

The 300 active producers of oysters, mussels, salmon, clams and trout only want to hear about a clear plan to deal with the single biggest issue – Licencing. The total failure by successive governments to simply do their job and has been hurting development, corroding confidence, ruining markets and stifling investment.

All the industry asks is that the Irish State provides a clear, modern, transparent, working licence system.

The Joint Committee has had a number of submissions from IFA Aquaculture over the years and has been supportive of a common-sense approach to solving this problem. But in the face of systematic inertia it appears that even a cross party committee toting out for small businesses in every coastal county cannot get the right people to roll up their sleeves and tackle an administrative issue.

The Committee is once again showing leadership in preparing a submission on the National Strategic Plan. IFA urges the Committee to be focused and not distracted by irrelevancies.

"We speak for the companies and individuals who have put their families' futures on the line, who have re-mortgaged their houses and put their kids through college on the back of aquaculture. We speak for the people who want to hand over their farms to the next generation who want to be able to set out new development plans. We speak for the entrepreneurs who want to stay in their communities instead of making hard decisions in the face of yet another demoralising and frustrating six years of kicking the can down the road.

It is time to have clear deadlines, achievable targets, it's time to change the emphasis in all these reports to focus on profitability rather than production targets. It's time to give our sales people and marketeers something to work with and allow us the

ability to produce scale and continuity of production which encourages quality and branding and helps to build home grown processing companies.

Confidence will only come into this industry with clear deadlines in the NSP – I would urge the committee to remember these two bullet points:

- Clear the licence backlog in six months
- Set a time limit of 30 weeks from receipt of application to determination

Simple, achievable yet incredibly valuable targets for 2,000 people and 300 businesses around the coast.

IFA Welcomes Aquaculture Licence Review in "FoodWise 2025"

The "FoodWise 2025" strategy published by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and the Minister for Agriculture Marine and Food Simon Coveney TD is the first time the



aquaculture industry has seen a firm written commitment to address the serious problems in the Irish aquaculture licencing system. The report takes a clear direction from IFA's "Removing barriers" report from 2014 in highlighting this issue.

The first Action Point on the Seafood Sector part of Foodwise 2025 reads "**Commission an independent review of the existing aquaculture licensing system involving all key stakeholders, to identify the current shortcomings and bottlenecks (legislative, resource and logistical), to report by early 2016 and implement necessary changes to the aquaculture licensing system as a matter of priority**"

The industry needs a short, sharp response with firm and measurable action. The independent review of licensing proposed in Foodwise is very welcome and should take a minimal amount of time given that the problems have been clear for many years and

IFA has proposed constructive measures to revitalise the entire regime.

Mr Flynn said, "Rapidly dealing with the backlog of applications, some waiting up to eight years for movement is the priority. We need to remove the bottlenecks and ensure resources are effectively applied. Reducing the red tape, imposing definitive deadlines and breaking the never ending cycle of unnecessary delays has to be tackled courageously."

IFA Aquaculture has warned against proposing new legislation to deal with the issue as an unnecessary distraction. "With hard work and commitment to the principles of the existing Act (1997 Fisheries (Amendment) Act) we can avoid a potentially endless road of legislation. Producers who are turning away valuable export customers cannot wait any longer for action."

IFA Aquaculture will hold the government to the timelines in "FoodWise 2025" and push for a definitive solution to this long standing

logjam. A sustainable, export driven and confident fish and shellfish farming sector is badly needed by coastal communities and islands. Together with the new National Strategy on Aquaculture and the Harvesting our Ocean Wealth report to be launched soon, we have all the tools to fix the systematic failure of the state to deliver a modern, customer-focused licence application process."

IFA first Irish industry group to meet Commissioner Vella

At a special meeting held by the European Commission at the food Expo in Milan, IFA Aquaculture had an opportunity to inform the new Fisheries Commissioner, Karmenu Vella, about the importance of the shellfish aquaculture industry.

Executive, Richie Flynn invited the Maltese commissioner to imagine the excitement and interest that would be generated if someone approached him with a new industry " that



Pictured at the Marine Institute, Galway at a briefing on Irish seafood issues with Minister Coveney and Commissioner Vella

was not only the very model of sustainability but could also be a major contributor to jobs and growth?

“What if they said this product was an early warning system for coastal pollution or it could feed and give shelter to hundreds of thousands of wild birds and animals? What if it was so adaptable that it could be produced on the shores of Bulgaria, to the beaches of Brittany? From Limford in Denmark to Thessalonika, from the Ria del Arousa to Galway Bay, from the Shetland Islands to golfo Taranto and that it combined the traditional skills in the local community of both fishing and farming?

“What if they said that this new idea pushed the boundaries of scientific research into mysterious plankton and currents? What if it was proven to improve the health of consumers through providing essential minerals, protein and vitamins as well as hugely important Omega 3? What if they said it could do all this but didn’t need to be given any food because it thrived all by itself on the ocean’s free bounty of plankton twice a day every day 365 days of the years? And what if they told you that this brand new thing automatically worked night and day to filter trillions of gallons of coastal water, improving quality and helping other species to survive?

“What if they told you this industry could created 1.1 billion euro every year in income in coastal areas in the EU or that it could give employment to 37,000 people directly and 50,000 indirectly?

Commissioner, I give you the humble shellfish: 50% of the EU’s aquaculture output and 650,000 tonnes of exciting, interesting

and valuable food on our marine doorstep. Oysters, Mussels, Clams, Razorfish, Cockles, Scallops. This is the product they would have to invent if it hadn’t already evolved – the perfect harvest for a sustainable future of our coastal areas.

Under the new EMFF – member states should recognise and implement what the Council, Commission and Parliament has committed its policies and funds to develop – jobs and growth from all aquaculture. Member states should take a sense of pride and redouble their efforts to support this sector.

Official and public attitudes need to change if bivalves are to get their share of coastal areas to continue to grow. There also needs to be an acknowledgement in practical terms of our contribution to the economy, the

environment and a source of healthy food and endless ways to enjoy the natural flavour of a truly local product and a model for economic, social and environmental sustainability in Europe.

Report recommends freshwater recirc systems

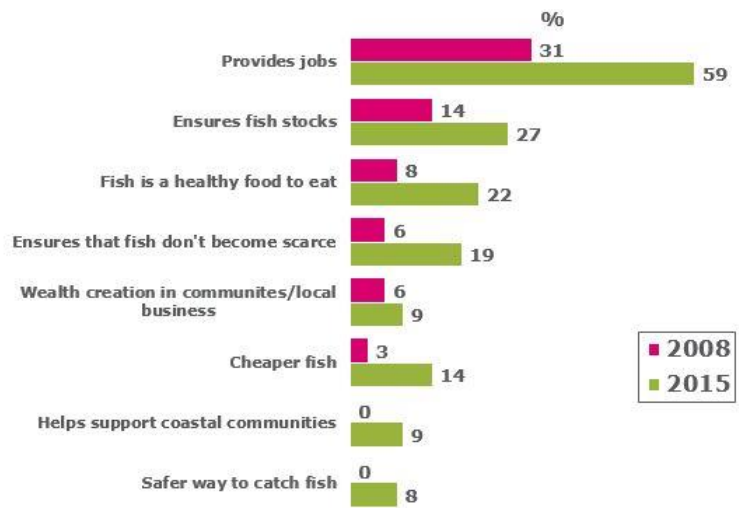
IFA Aquaculture asked world expert in recirculation systems, Ivar Warrer Hansen – to make an objective assessment of the potential for full grow out of salmon in RAS system in Ireland. What he found was reported to salmon farmers and sent to the Department and agencies in June.

The report clearly states that RAS is a proven technology with a valuable role to play in the freshwater part of the life cycle of the salmon. The Irish industry can avail of significant overall efficiencies by using RAS to increase smolt size/weight at transfer to sea. This will enhance productivity with a faster turnover of stock, reduced disease risk (including parasites such as sea lice) and improve overall efficiency of marine site use.

The report noted that two pilot-scale and one commercial unit have managed to place on the consumer market approximately 1,000 tonnes of salmon over the last few years but this could increase as more small units are brought into production in various countries (The overall global production of salmon from conventional marine sites is (RAS cont’d) approx. 2 million tonnes per annum). Operational costs, **exclusive of depreciation and finance**, can compare with sea site production. Capital costs are too high, however, and make it difficult to be competitive, especially during periods where

Reasons for acceptance of possible fish farm in area driven by a significant lift in thinking about job creation.

Base: All positive reaction to fish farm being located nearby



production costs rise above market prices. This together with the problem of early maturing males will dictate that it will still be some time before there is enough evidence to support a move towards an economically

sustainable salmon production in land based systems under Irish conditions. From an investment point of view it would be difficult to attract the substantial private finances required, given the advantages of

conventional systems, distance to market, scale of current operations and recent scientific work which gives confidence in the sustainability of sea-rearing and the environment.

Shellfish Classification review held in July

The annual review of shellfish classifications took place in July. Hopes were high that the dry spring and summer of 2014 would have had a beneficial impact on results but the reality was that when rain did fall the failure of storm drains was again apparent in many small towns and villages. There were also concerns expressed that holiday home owners in a few areas were objecting to sewage treatment plants irrespective of the impact this would have on local marine life.

Once again, the ISA is the ONLY organization that has taken an interest in pursuing the pollution issue despite the plethora of NGOs and local groups purporting to want to "save" bays. Our work has succeeded in a general improvement in water quality right around the coast and this is important for nature and doubly so for the reputation of our

bivalve shellfish like oysters, mussels, scallops and clams.

The 2015 review of the last three years' data highlighted potential problems in 14 areas including Mulroy (Mussels), Belacragher (Mussels), Blacksod (Oysters), Rosslaher (Oysters), Clifden Ardbear (Mussels), Kilkieran (Oysters), Mweeloon (oysters), Aughinis (Oysters), Tralee Bay (Native Oysters), Kilmackilloogue (Mussels), Castletownbere (mussels), Waterford Harbour, Balagan (oysters) & Greenore (oysters). As we go to print not every issue has been resolved and the final list has not been published on the SFPA website.

IFA Aquaculture Executive, Richie Flynn who co-ordinated the ISA response to the

SFPA proposals said, this is a professional process now and that is to be welcomed. It highlights the need for producers to keep

in very close contact with their local Sea Fisheries Officers / Shellfish Managers at local level. During the coming 12 months, make sure that spikes are reported and followed up. Investigate unusual sources of pollution and work with the SFPA to document and highlight the issues. This will be of immense assistance when the review takes place in 2016.

Salmon Bites

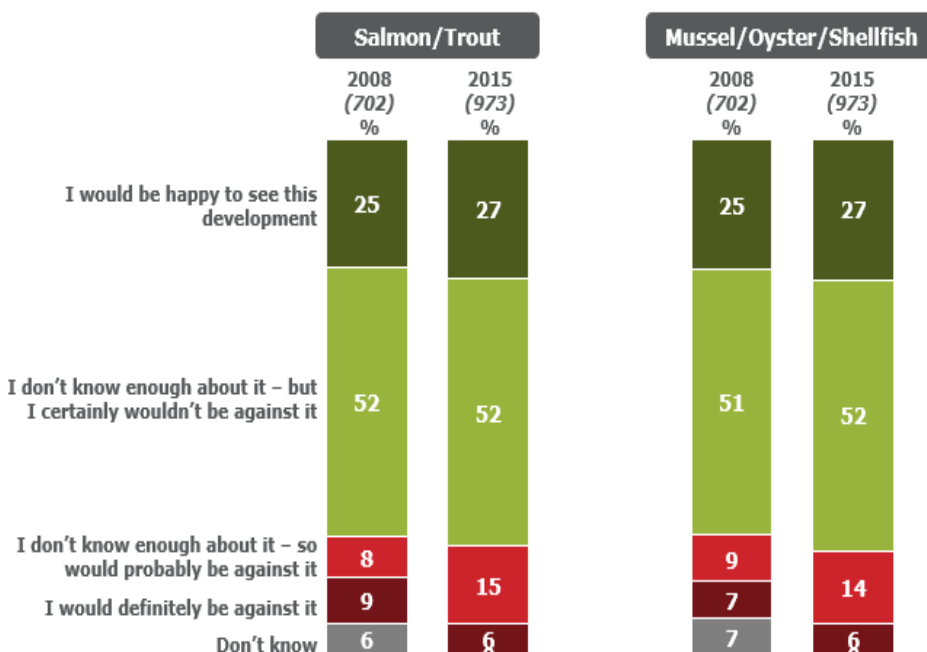
The Faroes has the same population as county Carlow and produces 70,000 tonnes of salmon.

The entire Irish salmon industry could fit into Lough Ramor, Co. Cavan

We produce in one year the equivalent of 2 days of Norwegian production. Why not a fortnight's worth?

Attitudes to possible establishment of fish farm locally are generally not strongly negative and in line with 2008

Base: All with home or holiday home with no fish farm within 10km



FOR MORE INFORMATION

IFA Aquaculture

Home of

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The Irish Shellfish Association

Irish Representative:

Federation of European Aquaculture Producers;
European Mollusc Producers' Association;
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