

IFA Aquaculture

Summer 2020

IFA Aquaculture



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ISSUE: 2/2020

Support needed for Irish Aquaculture

Irish aquaculture is experiencing a severe and unexpected impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic with market closures and disturbances having an unprecedented level of disruption. The negative impacts of this situation are potentially devastating for the Irish aquaculture industry and already visible just a few weeks after the crisis began, with impediments to carrying out normal production activity, with a drastic reduction in demand from the markets, with difficulties in receiving supplies and for distributing finalised products as well as increasing transport costs particularly for airfreight.

IFA Aquaculture lobbied at EU level for amendments to rules for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which now have been introduced, and allows for support measures to be implemented for aquaculture producers.

These measures allow for redirecting of available EMFF funds allowing for financial compensation to be granted to aquaculture

farmers and processing enterprises for the temporary suspension and the reduction of production and sales, or for the additional storage costs, occurred between 1 February and 31 December 2020, as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak.

IFA Aquaculture is continuing to work with DAFM regarding the adoption of these urgent, powerful and extraordinary measures in order to prevent the COVID-19 emergency from having irreversible negative impacts on the normal operation of Irish aquaculture. In light of current challenges for the sector, there are great opportunities ahead for the aquaculture industry.

Aquaculture has proven itself, multiple times over the years, to be a very resilient industry – the Covid-19 crisis is forcing us all to find new ways to adapt to the implications of a changing world and the Irish Aquaculture sector is once again adapting to the continued challenges it faces.

Food production has never been more important and the current Covid-19 crisis has shown the value of sustainable food production systems. There is now a significant opportunity for aquaculture in light of the increasing global demand for seafood, more sustainable food sources, and carbon efficient food production.

These growing demands along with the recently announced 'EU Green Deal' & 'Farm to Fork Strategy', provide a real opportunity for the aquaculture sector to position itself as part of the solution to these growing demands and acknowledging the role Aquaculture has to play in sustainable food production and the Covid-19 recovery plan. The Commission has announced that it will *adopt initiatives to ensure sustainability of seafood and consumer access to a low carbon footprint protein source* - Aquaculture is already well positioned in this regard.

BIM/IFA Aquaculture Oyster Workshop 2020

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) in association with IFA Aquaculture, hosted Oyster Workshop at a very well attended two-day event Carlingford, Co Louth on the 13th-14th February 2020.

The workshop was opened by BIM's chief executive, Jim O'Toole who acknowledged the quality oyster production the Irish oyster sector is renowned for, the produce of which was sampled at an evening reception kindly sponsored by Kian & Mary Louet-Fessier, Carlingford Oyster Co. Ltd.

The workshop featured a number of presentations on a range of topical interests to the Irish oyster sector.

The morning session included a series of 'flash' presentations from IFA Aquaculture & BIM highlighting initiatives which aim to

further promote sustainability, innovation and competitiveness in the Oyster sector as well as some of the more innovative approaches from industry to further develop their businesses.

The second part of the morning session saw results from the Bluefish Climate Change project, along with a presentation from Bord Bia highlighting the oyster promotional events in Europe throughout 2020. Food Safety Authority of Ireland also presented the possible implications of Brexit in terms of food safety regulations – which led to a robust discussion around the practicalities of the proposed possible systems.

The afternoon session was comprised mainly of topics such as water quality biosecurity, biotoxins and other environmental factors which significantly affect both oyster production and trade.

A panel discussion based on the days presentations and addressing questions

posed by workshop attendees, wrapped up the days proceedings.

Day 2 of the workshop involved site visits to Carlingford Oyster Co. Ltd., where Kian Louet-Fessier explained the innovative approaches he has developed on his farm. A short trip up the road to Cooley Oysters Ltd. Followed, where Donal Ferguson took attendees on a tour of his recently built packing and purification facility.

The two-day Oyster workshop took place against the backdrop of difficulties reaching the Asian market where Covid-19 impacts were affecting exports Irish oyster producers. Since, then Covid-19 has become a local issue in Ireland affecting exports to worldwide markets with oyster producers significantly affected with the loss of European markets which accounts for almost 80% of all Irish oyster exports.



Aquaculture Europe 2020 will not take place this year – events rescheduled for both Cork and Madeira in 2021.

The European Aquaculture Society (EAS) Board of Directors have announced that the Aquaculture Europe 2020 event cannot go ahead as planned in Cork from September 29 to October 2 this year due to the Covid-19 situation. However, to maintain their commitment to the chosen locations, delegates, exhibitors and attendees, **EAS hopes to organise two events in 2021. AE2020 in Cork, Ireland from April 12-15 and AE2021 in Funchal, Madeira, Portugal 6 months later from October 5-8.**

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|  | <p>AE2020 Cork April 12-15, 2021 Abstract deadline: December 31 Early Bird registration deadline: February 15</p> |
|  | <p>AE2021 Madeira October 5-8, 2021 Abstract deadline: May 1 Early Bird registration deadline: July 15</p> |

Irish Aquaculture Accelerator Programme 2020

Recruitment is underway for this year's BIM/HATCH Aquaculture Accelerator programme. The two-week programme, managed by aquaculture accelerator HATCH and funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, is taking place in the RDI (Research, Development, Innovation) Hub in Killorglin, Co Kerry this October.

The BIM/HATCH Aquaculture Accelerator offers access to investors, fin-tech and other specialists, but this programme is specifically tailored to the aquaculture sector. This is the third such BIM/HATCH aquaculture accelerator to take place since 2018. Previous years' businesses have included innovative technologies in salmon cage manufacturing to online trading platforms for aquaculture products.

Ten start-up businesses from Ireland will have the opportunity to work directly with and receive mentorship from a global team of experts from aquaculture, fin-tech and marketing disciplines in October.

The programme seeks to develop early stage technology concepts & ideas from Ireland and enable participants to turn their projects into startups. Participating in this workshop will assist attendants in their commercial development & viability in seeking to grow and scale their business into a sustainable and profitable aquaculture company.

The BIM/HATCH aquaculture accelerator programme is taking place from the 5th until the 16th of October in the RDI Hub, Killorglin, Co Kerry. For further details on the programme and how to apply, please go to www.hatch.blue.

IFA Survey of Covid-19 impact on Irish Aquaculture

- IFA Aquaculture has been working with our members to assess their financial losses, market disruption, and impacts for the Irish Aquaculture sector as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.
- Based on responses received from IFA members, an assessment of annual turnover figures (based on 2019 figure vs extrapolated 2020 figures) has shown a predicted **58% reduction of annual turnover for Irish aquaculture**.
- An assessment of quarterly turnover of Q1 and Q2 of 2020 have shown a **reduction of 70-100% when compared for the same period last year**.
- Based on 'BIM Business of Seafood 2019' – Aquaculture production in 2019 was worth €172m; Finfish production worth €112m and Shellfish production worth €60m. Based on a predicted **58% reduction of annual turnover could see a loss of €100m**, with losses of €35m in shellfish sector in particular which has been significantly affected by market disruption due to Covid-19.
- IFA Aquaculture members were also surveyed regarding National Covid-19 supports available and what additional supports were required specific for the Aquaculture sector – Results of this Survey can viewed here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-CYJ7739N7/>
- 80% of IFA Aquaculture members who responded (59 respondents in total) have availed of National Covid-19 supports already, the majority of which (95% of respondents) have availed of the Wage Subsidy Scheme (63%) and/or Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (55%).
- Based on feedback received from IFA Aquaculture members and analysis of possible schemes/supports that could be made available to the sector, proposals have been sent to DAFM for discussion, include:
 - **Suspension of annual Aquaculture licence fees**
 - **Subsidized scheme for loss of sales/reduction in production** - 40% subsidy/single farm payment for reduced 2020 production and sales based on a 3-year average of verifiable annual production figures, compared with reduced production figure for 2020.
 - **Compensation for stock lost due to mortality losses/unsaleable stock** as a result of over stocked sites unable to sell due to lack of demand and no available markets. Mortality losses to be assessed based on epidemiology model where average mortality calculated per age class. Unsaleable stock losses to be assessed similar to 40% subsidy/single farm payment.
 - **Insurance costs** – State to subsidize insurance costs for one year.



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