



IFA Aquaculture is comprised of representatives from all sectors of the Irish aquaculture industry, this includes all stakeholders that farm fish, shellfish, seaweeds and for other novel species that may be cultured around the coastline of Ireland.

IFA Aquaculture focuses on providing strong industry representation nationally and internationally, supporting the improvement and development of the Irish aquaculture industry and promoting positive aspects of Irish aquaculture.

- Based on 'BIM Business of Seafood 2019' – Aquaculture production in 2019 was worth **€172m**; with Finfish production worth **€112m** and Shellfish production worth **€60m**.
- 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. An assessment of annual turnover for Irish Aquaculture (based on 2019 figure vs extrapolated 2020 figures) has shown a predicted **58% reduction of annual turnover for Irish aquaculture**.
- The announcement of the **Covid-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme worth €1.5m** was made by Minister Charlie McConalogue at IFA Aquaculture's AGM in October 2020. The announcement came almost 6 months after the EU Commission amended regulations to allow Member States to redirect available EMFF funds in response to the Covid-19 crisis, further meaningful State support will be needed to assist the sector in navigating the challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit.
- The **implementation of the 'Aquaculture licensing review recommendations'** continues to be a key policy for IFA Aquaculture, seeking a clear commitment from the incoming Minister with regard to an implementation plan that prioritises and gives clear timelines for each of the recommendations outlined in the review.
- In broad terms the objectives of the draft **National Marine Planning Framework**, address a number of recommendations outlined in the recent 'Review of the Aquaculture Licensing Process', where the report concluded that the aquaculture licensing system was in 'urgent need of reform'. However, IFA Aquaculture notes that Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine is not referenced in regard to the 'Marine Planning and Development Management Bill' and it would appear that proposed legislative framework currently does not apply to the aquaculture sector.
- The '**Strategic Guidelines for Sustainable EU Aquaculture**' have been drafted by DG MARE. These updated guidelines aim to inform Member States as they update National Strategic Plans for Sustainable Aquaculture, which are currently being drafted by BIM and DAFM.

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- Aquaculture provides for one of the most carbon efficient sources of protein, when there is an increasing demand globally for sustainable sources of protein.
- Consideration must be given to the role of the aquaculture industry as a carbon efficient source of sustainable protein. Aquaculture also contributes to the control of nitrogen/phosphorous removal shellfish are filter feeders which aids to reduce eutrophication of waters.
- 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*', 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 '*Farm to Fork Strategy*' addresses the challenges of sustainable food systems and recognises the links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet. We appreciate the relevant role that this strategy places on aquaculture.