

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Seafood Industry Forum

16 October 2018

The NSW Seafood Industry Forum held a meeting in Sydney on Tuesday, 16 October 2018. Specific issues considered by the Forum at its meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

NSW Seafood Industry Forum members:

Tricia Beatty, Professional Fishermen's Association Inc
Mark Boulter, Seafood Importers' Association of Australasia Inc.
Olivia Churchill, De Costi Seafoods/Tassal Group Ltd
Ross Fidden, Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative Ltd
Robert McCormack, NSW Aquaculture Association Inc.
Erik Poole, Sydney Fish Market Pty Ltd
Kerry Strangas, Master Fish Merchants Association

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety:

David Cusack (Chair), Manager Food Standards & Programs
Mark Mackie, Acting Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance
Matthew Campbell, Acting Manager Audit Systems & Verification
Jeffrey Go, Veterinary Officer, Aquatic Biosecurity
Geneveive Bonello, Manager Stakeholder Engagement & Communications

Apologies:

Sarah Britton, NSW Chief Veterinary Officer & Group Director Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI
Helen Chen, Snr Project Officer, Mission & Delegation, International Engagement, NSW DPI
Bruce Christie, Deputy Director General Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI
Anthony Mercer, De Costi Seafoods/Tassal Group Ltd
Craig Shadbolt, Manager Food Incident Response & Complaints, NSW DPI
Emily Staniforth, Director Customer Service & Engagement, NSW DPI
Lisa Szabo, Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority, NSW DPI
Melissa Walker, Team Leader, Aquatic Biosecurity Policy & Programs, NSW DPI

Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors. Issues raised included:

- Industry members continued to express concern with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources led National Carp Control Plan. NSW Aquaculture committed to providing SIF members with its submission to this process.
- Update on various research and traceability projects going on in the live seafood sector
- Updates on new imported food control orders from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) on imported seafood for Carbon Monoxide and Biosecurity control orders on battered, breaded and crumbed prawns.
- Discussion on opportunities for NSW DPI involvement with OceanWatch training programs for fishermen.
- Concerns in the seafood processing sector around increased focus on environmental sustainability requirements being placed on the industry.

- Concerns on the threat to the aquaculture industry from on-line purchases of exotic crayfish and live seafood.

Food Safety Compliance Report

Members noted a report on seafood industry compliance activities between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2018. During this period 341 audits and 368 inspections were conducted with 13 failed audits and 25 failed inspections. The compliance rate for the seafood industry for the period was 95%, which is an increase in 5% over the last two years. It was noted that the detail requested previously by members around inspection of fishing vessels was included in this report, indicating that there was a high compliance rate of 97% recorded for the 769 licensed fishing vessels during the 2017-18 financial year.

The top three audit items with higher observed levels of critical issues during the reporting period continue to be within process control (34%), analytical testing (23%) and food safety program (15%). Enforcement actions during the year under review included 17 Improvement Notices, nine Penalty Notices, three warning letters and two seizures from an unlicensed facility. The Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team is very satisfied with the high compliance rate recorded for the seafood industry sector.

Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Regulatory Priorities

An information paper was tabled giving detail around the critical core functions and regulatory priorities of the NSW DPI's Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team during the 2018-19 period. An explanation was also provided of the Compliance team's broader biosecurity, animal welfare and food safety mandate under its revised structure in which there is now collaboration across the Department on projects, investigations and field work.

WSSV update

Members received an extensive update on a proposal by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to undertake surveillance for white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) in uncooked polychaete bait worms from Moreton Bay. A ban has been in place as a precautionary measure for movement of worms originating in this area to other areas including NSW. Should the proposed surveillance demonstrate freedom from WSSV in the Moreton Bay polychaete worm populations, the data will be used to inform a review of the risk assessment and for consideration of exemptions to allow recommencement of trade in recreational bait worm species from the restricted area. The sampling strategy will take place around November 2018 and March 2019. It was noted that the Professional Fishermen's Association is still highly concerned about this issue.

White Spot Disease – Queensland situation update

An update was tabled following completion of the first stage of the NSW national proof of freedom surveillance for white spot syndrome virus, which found no evidence of WSSV in any NSW prawn fishery. NSW will continue its extensive advisory campaigns to key stakeholders of the formal restrictions in place for movement of product from the Queensland affected area. The need for communications to target recreational fishers in the Gold Coast and NSW borders with these messages around the Christmas and New Year period was also noted.

Biosecurity advice 2018/10 – Breaded, Battered and Crumbed Prawns

Forum members noted a paper tabled for information on new import conditions implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) for breaded, battered and crumbed prawns imported for human consumption. These conditions include the requirement for these products to undergo a par-cooking step during the processing to ensure the bread, batter or crumb coatings are baked onto the product, so that it remains

attached to the prawn whether thawed or frozen. Further detail on specifications is available through the DAWR website.

Draft NSW Disease Response Plan: Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis

A draft *NSW Disease Response Plan for Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG)* developed by the NSW DPI Aquatic Biosecurity unit to provide a framework for responding to suspect detections of AVG in NSW was tabled for information. Comments were requested from members by 31 October 2018.

PFAS update

Members noted an update on PFAS developments, particularly in terms of the FSANZ response to recent updates on the USA's approach to PFAS. The Food Authority will investigate the possible provision of further advice on this issue to the Professional Fishermen's Association for distribution to its members, specifically clarifying the issues around the US data to ensure there is no misinterpretation.

Update of Food Safety Schemes manual

A paper was tabled advising that the NSW Food Authority's Food Safety Schemes Manual has recently been reviewed to ensure that all requirements of *Food Regulation 2015* are included and to modernise the format for easier reading. The proposed update to the Seafood Food Safety Scheme will include some very minor changes in testing requirements for non-treated, non-reticulated water and technical amendments to sampling procedures.

Communications update – Monash/DPI project

An update was received on a joint communications project the NSW DPI is conducting with Monash University to understand the social behaviours of the recreational fishing community and drivers for change in terms of their knowledge and actions around aquatic biosecurity. Preliminary findings showed that a high level of saltwater fishers wash their fishing gear and equipment when leaving waterways. Further analysis of the findings is continuing and will be passed on to the Forum when available.

Biosecurity update

In the biosecurity arena, white spot continues to be an issue of interest to the Forum and will stay on the agenda for the foreseeable future. The other issue of concern previously mentioned during industry updates regards the trade of imported live crayfish and ornamentals that is continuing to occur through Australia Post and the biosecurity risks from their potential release into the environment. The risk to biosecurity of live trade through Australia Post and private couriers with less than 10 kg packages was an issue also raised at a recent DAWR Biosecurity Roundtable. Members were advised that the NSW DPI is looking at a project to target non-compliance for on-line purchasing of live product.

Imported Food Notice concerning border controls for carbon monoxide treatment of tuna and barramundi

Members received a brief update on a DAWR Imported Food Notice (IFN 12-18) on *Border controls for carbon monoxide treatment of tuna and barramundi* issued on 20 July 2018 and updated on 27 September 2018. The purpose is to inform importers about border controls for the inspection and analysis of carbon monoxide (CO) treatment of fresh, chilled or frozen tuna and barramundi filets, portions and cutlets. The new controls will commence on 1 November 2018. Further information on this is available on the Imported Food Notices section on the DAWR website.

The date for the next meeting of the NSW Seafood Industry Forum in 2019 is to be advised.