

NSW Shellfish Committee

Wednesday 22nd February 2023

Summary of meeting outcomes

Announcement of Spat Support Officer

NSW Farmers Association have announced the appointment of Mr. Todd Graham as the Spat Support Officer. Todd will be working closely with industry hatcheries and the Sydney Rock Oyster breeding program to facilitate access to spat and pertinent information related to juvenile shellfish. The role will also deliver spat handling workshops and field days to share information about oyster family line genetics. Todd will be employed through to December 2024 via NSW Farmers Association funding and under the 2022 Primary Industries Early Needs Recovery Program.

Establishment of an Agri-Tourism sub-committee

Agri-tourism including farm tours, food trails and boutique industry specific stores have become increasingly popular throughout many agricultural sectors with legislation recently implemented to allow for activities within rural zonings. This work did not include the oyster sector that take up lease area on a range of zonings including industrial and environmental protection. The committee acknowledges the positive aspects of agri-tourism and has established a sub-working group including shellfish industry members, Dept. Lands, NSW DPI and NSW Planning. Crown Lands are preparing an advisory document on currently permitted activities on their leases/licenced land.

NSW Aquaculture Lease Bond – Appropriate use

In 2001 aquaculture lease security arrangements in the form of a lease bond were implemented to ensure that industry shared responsibility for future lease management and maintenance concerns. Money in the lease security trust account may only be used to recover the debt for cleaning up a lease where the leaseholder fails to do so. At a previous Shellfish Committee meeting there was discussion about industry establishing a fund to support businesses impact by oyster disease/mortality events. While arrangements exist for natural disasters there are no commonwealth/state deeds to support other events such as QX or recent Pacific Oyster losses in Port Stephens.

Handover of remote sensing network

The NSW Oyster transformation project has been running since 2017 across 15 estuaries with the aim to collect data to facilitate a reduction in closures and, through modelling understand the links between water quality and environmental factors as well as oyster growth, mortality and improvements in harvest area management plans. 13 real time temperature and salinity sensors were purchased as part of the funding with others being funded by councils and local land services. A transition and hand over to industry is due to commence in March 2023 with the full project ending in March 2024. Industry is to assume responsibility for continued operation, maintenance and data hosting fee (total est. \$2800 p.a.) should they wish to continue utilising a salinity only management plan.

Local Shellfish Program Levy Structure

Current structure of local shellfish program funding found in clause 156 of the Food Regulation 2015 outlines the costs of local programs are divided equally between licence holders regardless of size, profit or lease area. The Food Regulation 2015 is due to be repealed and industry will be canvassed during the local program annual general meetings with options to amend this fee structure.

Dates for 2023 NSW Shellfish Committee Meetings

- 24 May 2023 (in person meeting)
- 9 August 2023
- 8 November 2023

Industry members with matters to raise are to be made aware that they should consult the Shellfish Committee industry representatives to raise the item on their behalf, contact details can be found

[here](#). If items are raised after the deadlines above, they will be held over until the following meeting. If industry members wish to attend the meeting as an observer, an expression of interest can be sent to food.nswsp@dpi.nsw.gov.au