

Shellfish Classification and Monitoring Industry Forum

Monday 02nd October 2017 – 10:30 – 14:00
FSS Pilgrim House

Attendees:	For FSS: E MacDonald (Chair), J Howie, L Robertson, J Campins, C Thomson, S McDougall, K Kazimierczak, A Mills (minutes) For Industry (wild catch) M MacCorquodale, F Gault, M Morrison, Aquaculture Processing and Distribution sector: S Cameron For aquaculture sector: N Lake, M Tait, R Henderson, For Scottish Government: J Gibbons
By Invitation:	L Murray
Apologies:	D Attwood, K Pottinger

1. Welcome and Introductions

Elspeth MacDonald (EM) welcomed the attendees to the first Shellfish Classification and Monitoring industry Forum (SCMIF) and encouraged all to introduce themselves explaining their position in the industry and within FSS.

Attendees from Industry included; Ruth Henderson from Seafood Shetland, Stephen Cameron and Michael Tait from Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group, Nick Lake from Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, Malcolm Morrison and Foster Gault from Scottish Fisherman's Federation, Michael MacCorquodale from Coastal Diving Ltd, and from Scottish Government, Jeff Gibbons Head of Aquaculture Unit.

Food Standards Scotland attendees included Elspeth MacDonald Deputy Chief Executive, Jennifer Howie Senior Policy Advisor, Caroline Thomson Operations Manager, Kasia Kazimierczak Senior Scientific Advisor, Sandy McDougall Operational Delivery Branch Head, Lynn Robertson Operational Delivery and Josep Campins Policy Advisor.

NL also suggested it was good practice that papers should be issued within two weeks of the meeting in order to provide sufficient opportunity to prepare and also that the draft minute was circulated on a similar timescale.

2. Draft terms of Reference/Membership

Draft Terms of Reference were circulated and considerable discussion followed regarding whether or not all bivalve mollusc industry sectors (ie including scallops) should be included; whether or not the group should split along aquaculture and wild fishery sectors and whether public gathering should be within scope. Nick Lake (NL) advised that there is no mention of Food Safety in the draft Terms or Reference and suggested that as this is the main priority it should be added.

Stephen Cameron (SC) also suggested that reputational risk to the industry should be considered.

ACTION – all: Comments on the ToR were invited at the meeting and then followed by correspondence.

NL also specified that papers should be issued within two weeks of the meeting in order to provide sufficient opportunity to prepare.

3. Consultation Responses and Draft Work Plan

Jennifer Howie (JH) thanked attendees for detailed and constructive responses to the consultations issued by FSS earlier in the year. Following consultation the FSS Board were presented with a proposed work plan which had been developed having taken on board the responses during consultation. In summary there would be no immediate changes pending the actions outlined on the work plan and any subsequent amendments required. Comments on these work areas were also invited.

Michael Tait (MT) suggested putting proposed timelines to industry as it was acknowledged that those in attendance and represented have a good pool of experience and knowledge which could be put towards specific streams of work. MT also advised that he is the shellfish representative in the Aquaculture Industry Leadership Group (AILG). ACTION – JH to circulate work plan with proposed dates for delivery.

It was also acknowledged that as the work plan agreed by the FSS board included several actions in relation to scallops that again this be considered in terms of the scope of the terms of reference. This point was noted and will be considered. Discussions took place around EU exit and EU control regulations, particularly in relation to scallops which indicated that considerable resources within FSS will be required to deal with the process of EU exit that may affect some of the anticipated work areas.

A discussion on sharing of industry data took place, and if such data were to be shared what ground rules would be established for its use. It was suggested by FSS that whilst there may be difficulties associated with data capture this was an area worthy of further exploration and should be considered as an additional action within the work plan – ACTION: FSS to suggest amendment to work plan and circulate.

4. CREW Sanitary Survey and Classification Review

Kasia Kazimierczak (KK) advised that the full sanitary survey programme has been suspended pending a review of the approach by Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW). The project started at the end of July and it is anticipated that the work will complete by March/April 2018. EM suggested that in terms of the next meeting of the Forum, it would be sensible to schedule that after a report from this

work is made available in Spring next year. SM clarified that this meant sanitary surveys would not recommence until April 2019 at the earliest.

FSS and SEPA have both commissioned this project and both have specific objectives – essentially to explore improved interdepartmental working, whilst ensuring that statutory obligations are met.

This led to discussions on whether or not SEPA should be invited to formally attend the forum on a regular basis. JH explained that the intention of the group was not to replicate the previous SG shellfish forum, and that FSS and SEPA already engage on the issue of classification outwith this group.

NL advised that SEPA should only be involved for certain issues as they are related to pollution and the environment while FSS is looking at it from a public health stance. It was agreed that attendance should be driven by agenda items in which case other organisations, including SEPA would be invited to attend as appropriate. It was proposed that SEPA be invited to attend the next Forum meeting to coincide with completion of the CREW review. ACTION: NL requested the CREW brief and KK agreed to circulate.

Linked to classification discussions NL raised concerns regarding Norovirus – stating that the risks associated with NoV can be more prevalent in food handling situations in contrast to specific shellfish production. KK provided an update on the EU baseline survey and on wider FSA proposals for surveillance across the food chain. The FSA has commissioned work in this area with reporting expected early in the new year. It was important that the timing of such reporting recognised implications for seasonal shellfish markets.

Discussion took place around real time monitoring for classification. Whilst FSS had raised the issue in consultation it was felt in response to that that we were some way off implementing any changes at this point – but further consideration would follow the outcome of both the CREW work and the harvesters' own results protocol. Ruth Henderson (RH) reiterated an offer to assist in developing a pilot in this area. JH confirmed that for classification generally we (FSS) did not envisage that we would be able to move away from some assessment (classification) of water bodies – i.e. environmental monitoring) so whilst we may be able to develop new approaches, potentially ones with more emphasis on harvester's results, some form of environmental monitoring of a water body would be required in future.

5. Arrangements for the Delivery of Shellfish Services

Caroline Thomson (CT) provided an update on the delivery of official controls through contracted services. The FSS Procurement Strategy began 18 months ago, although 6 months in to this it was recognised that for potential new suppliers, considerable additional resource and preparedness would be required. Discussions took place with government departments and commercial entities, and in so doing it became apparent that only Government departments (Scottish Government and Cefas) could potentially deliver this function. Further to discussions, Scottish

Government stood down from consideration which means that it is anticipated that Cefas will provide a fully managed service from 2018. Within that arrangement, some commercial tendering for contracts will still take place (e.g. for sampling, Phytoplankton monitoring as well as E. coli analysis for Shetland).

CT advised that this will be covered within an MOU for three years and then FSS will test the market again to see if there will be any commercial entities interested. If this is unsuccessful Cefas will undertake the responsibility for a further two years.

Reporting and turnaround times of the shellfish results will remain the same.

6. Industry Priorities/Discussion

Michael MacCorquodale (MM) raised issues in relation to E.coli reporting times from local authorities and actions following outwith results. It is not suitable that it can take up to a week to be notified of the result. MM is looking for processes in relation to outwith results to be standardised across Scotland. JH advised that this issue had been identified as an action in the proposed work plan and advised that they will be developing guidance on how LA's can deal with such issues so an overall protocol can be followed. CT added that results from FSS are reported within 1 hour of receipt from the laboratory and agreed to follow up the concern in relation to reporting times. CT also advised that people can ask to be included on the results mailing list if they wished to receive direct.

In general terms the industry were keen to engage with the work identified and to ensure that momentum was maintained. Classification is of particular concern – NL mentioned the system applied by the Netherlands and queried why such an approach couldn't apply in Scotland. FSS agreed to investigate this point further and report back (ACTION: FSS to consider classification systems in Netherlands).

7. AOB

EM advised that the Board will be discussing EU exit in November. FSS want to make sure that they have the right channels to engage with industry as positions become clearer.

JH advised that FSS intended to provide a dedicated mailbox for industry to ensure that any issues arising in relation to the forum are considered by the right people. ACTION – JH to confirm shellfish mail box.

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in April or May 2018. The scope of the group is likely to be amended re. the earlier discussion on Terms of Reference. NL advised that a working group may be required in between for discussion of consultations which would be required to deliver specific actions in the work plan.

JH requested comments back from attendees on the Terms of Reference. – ACTION - all

Discussion took place around EHO representatives being present at the Shellfish Forum as they are dealing with issues at the other end of the process. ACTION – FSS to consider.

Attendees were advised that minutes from the Board meeting in August will be circulated shortly after the meeting in November. ACTION – AM to circulate Board minutes from August once available.

The meeting closed at approximately 2pm.