

Aquaculture Advisory Council
July 19, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Ms. Monique Purcell (Sec. Douglas Fisher), Mr. Joseph Cimino (Comm. Catherine McCabe), Mr. Joseph Constance (Sec. Tahesha Way), Ms. Virginia Wheatley (Comm. of Health), Dr. Daphne Munroe (Dr. Dave Bushek), Mr. Mike De Luca (Dr. Robert Goodman), Dr. Douglas Zemeckis, Ms. Lisa Calvo, Mr. John Maxwell, Ms. Betsy Haskin, Dr. Amanda Wenczel

Members Absent: Mr. Barney Hollinger, Mr. George Saridakis, Mr. Maury Sheets

Public in Attendance: Brick Wenzel, Jeff Normant (NDEP), Ned Gain, Bob Schuster (NJDEP), Tony Ni, Matt Williams, Jenny Tomko (NJDEP), Russ Babb (NJDEP)

Ms. Purcell called the meeting to order; a quorum was present.

Motion to approve April 05, 2019 minutes made by L. Calvo, second by J. Cimino. All in favor; motion carried.

Public Comment: [none]

Aquaculture Red Knot Stakeholder Committee Update: (B. Haskin)

B. Haskin- Focusing on summer research and planning science meeting for September. Science meeting will be open to public (or a portion of the meeting). The Stakeholder Committee (SC) will meet in October to discuss potential changes to Conservation Measures (SC only), followed by a meeting of the SC and Agency Workgroup in November to present proposed changes.

Growers are specifically looking for the following potential Conservation Measure changes:

- More time in a day for being active on the flats (3 hours before and 3 hours after low tide, instead of current 2hrs before/after).
- Allowing movement of gear up to April 30th instead of April 15th
- Changing rack array for more room between racks
- Allowing gear in north in sloughs, if untended
- Changing rack height

No changes brought forward from the Conservation Community.

Matt Williams- Facilitator for the September meeting is secure but waiting to hear on an October meeting. Jenny Tomko- Marine Fisheries Administration funding the facilitator.

2019 Red Knot Season recap:

L. Calvo- Season was bad. Still waiting on lease agreement, storage space, grant agreement. Moved in three weeks, and still adjusting.

B. Haskin- We survived, it was *okay*. Lisa had the worst of it, but we are all still struggling with the time limitations each day.

M. Purcell- It's really helpful for us to hear feedback. I know you (growers) just fight through these challenges, but we need to know about how these (conservation) measures impact you.

L. Calvo- In the last minutes of AAC, requested numbers of red knots from State aerial surveys at the SC science meeting. How will this happen? B. Haskin- we have requested this. And we are requesting early. D. Munroe- maybe add the specific years being requested.

Aquaculture Development Plan: (L. Calvo & M. De Luca)

M. De Luca- Outline of Plan Update has been further refined. In discussions, most of the focus has been on regulatory system and potential recommendations. To that end, we are meeting Sept. 11th with Land Use and Tidelands to discuss some of these items.

Also had some discussions with South Jersey legislators, that we may be seeking their assistance with implementing some recommendations. M. Purcell- Please keep us in the loop with the potential legislators, because, as you know, some legislation gets passed without critical thought to what we really need. J. Maxwell- I find it very concerning that a Committee from this group would meet with legislators. M. De Luca- We are providing recommendations that may lead to legislation, not drafting the legislation. L. Calvo- Also keep in mind that this Committee was charged with developing recommendations that may lead to legislative changes, and it was a chance meeting to update legislative representatives with our current process.

L. Calvo- A survey was sent out to the shellfish industry to obtain their thoughts on needs moving forward. [See survey summary for more details].

Councilmember Comments:

B. Haskin- The NJ Dept. of Health requirement that we hold shellfish overnight would be good to revisit. Bob Schuster's team found that *Vibrio* spp. can grow even during cold storage. Matt Gregg- Same day shipping would be a big economic benefit.

D. Munroe- Summer work on horseshoe crabs found similar conclusions as last year, which is good for aquaculture. Several proposals out to Sea Grant and ASMFC but waiting to hear back. B. Haskin- Our oysters seem to be suffering in the summer heat. Maybe in genetics and breeding we need to start looking at heat tolerance. It would also be useful to research on biofouling. D. Munroe- Lisa & I have written numerous proposals on that topic but have yet to be funded. D. Zemeckis- We have a current biofouling study with George Mathis and his clam farm to examine anti-biofouling coating on clam screens.

M. De Luca- 1) One seawater tank at the AIC failed. In the process of fixing. Operations are still continuing and production has exceeded expectations. 2) Senator Wicker reintroduced (federal) Aquaculture Bill. J. Cimino- ASMFC State Directors meeting first week of August, and that bill (Sen. Wicker) will be presented at the meeting by NOAA.

J. Constance- Business Action Center is pushing for additional Small Business Funding. Labor Department is enhancing some of those programs.

V. Wheatley- *Vibrio*...10 total case (confirmed or suspected) where NJ product may be implicated but eight are multisource (meaning shellfish from multiple states was served). Only two confirmed (NJ) cases, both in Delaware Bay. In one of those two cases, the dealer investigation showed everything was appropriate, the restaurant in DC had multiple violations including temperature control. Also, this year, letter/call to each dealer implicated in a case is provided within days of the case being identified. No *Vibrio vulnificus* cases.

D. Zemeckis- 1) Developing a series of factsheets on aquaponics due to recent interest throughout the state. 2) Coastal Stewardship Course (commonly known as Shellfish Gardner Course) is ongoing- educates volunteers with ReClam the Bay. Some prospective growers enroll to gain ecology knowledge & basic farm practices.

L. Calvo- USDA, Farm Service Agency, NAP insurance has elevated levels through the 2018 Farm Bill. If you buy-up you can receive more for a loss. Sign-up by Sept. 1st.

J. Maxwell- 1) Shellfish Council opposed (sent letter in response to) a recent Shellfish Gardening Bill (Cardinale). 2) The Marine Fisheries Council time has been consumed by Offshore Wind. 3) In the clam industry, we are facing a potential crisis because we cannot get seed. The growers here without a hatchery cannot find seed; it's sold at smaller size in the South. We are also seeing the clam industry aging here in NJ, with younger growers mainly focusing on oysters.

R. Babb- NJDEP met with Cardinale regarding the bill John mentioned. Our perspective from the meeting was for the Department and the legislator to work to develop a bill that allows opportunity and protects the industry.

Old Business:

SAWG: A. Wenczel- no major reports right now. R. Babb- we are aware that we need this process to be fully integrated with stakeholders. We will incorporate that once we have more to share than a list of items.

M. Purcell- Discussing stakeholdering, we need to determine when that's going to happen as well as how. One proposed idea is using the AAC as the forum for this discussion, limiting the number of meetings growers attend. We need to know growers' opinions. Ned Gaine- Attendance at these meetings is pathetic. I think the best way is a larger meeting, similar to the meeting in 2014. A diverse group of attendees with tremendous turn-out. M. Purcell- We either try to invigorate this body and have the Council be the advocate for Aquaculture; otherwise, what are we doing. I'm suggesting it's an extension of an AAC meeting, where growers are already here.

N. Gaine- there are others not on the Council that we would want at a Stakeholder meeting. We need the people in DEP that are on-the-ground working on Aquaculture and they are not here. It needs to be a forum where we can question those individuals. J. Cimino- if the stakeholder meeting was an extension of an AAC meeting, we would have all the DEP staff present.

R. Babb- there may be a set of ways to work with stakeholders where we work with smaller groups on specific items, and then larger groups when a product is farther along. Maybe the smaller groups are individuals selected from the AAC.

J. Maxwell- Looking at Councils, Shellfish Council has very limited scope and authority, the Marine Fisheries Council has a broad scope and greater authority, and this Council has no scope and no authority. We need to define this for the Council, or else, really what's the point.

M. Williams- What are the goals, where can we provide input? I'm confused as to how I'm supposed to provide input into anything. What's the point of being here, what is a grower's role?

M. Purcell- The point of today's meeting is information sharing from the various groups. We are also working to see how we can get growers involved in these items. M. De Luca- We have growers on the ADP Committee, so it's already happening where growers are involved in some of these processes. M. Purcell- Your industry has a Council to serve your industry. Many industries do not have a Council there to hear your concerns and are accessible. M. Williams- We need to make that better.

D. Zemeckis- The Council by-laws highlight that the Council is to advise the Dept of Ag as well as other Depts. It then lists regulatory & legislative priorities, marketing, and the ADP as Council roles. J. Maxwell- Marketing was a big item back when this started, and we haven't worked on that (recently) at all. M. Purcell- The budget for that was removed. We can work with our Division of Markets, but we are more limited in capacity. L. Calvo- Different age now with growers much more capable of doing marketing for their products.

USDA Ag Census 2017: A. Wenczel- Review of data from Ag Census and Census of Aquaculture. The value of the NJ shellfish (mollusks) has decreased in latest Census compared to first year of data in this review. Comparison to Maryland; Maryland has now taken over NJ for sales values. Final page is multistate comparison. J. Cimino- At the MidAtlantic Fishery Management Council in April, they presented a State of the Ecosystem, where they spoke to Aquaculture. They use state-reported data, and there is NO data for NJ. They compared VA, MD, and NJ with NJ as a flatline of no data. Obviously, there are other sources of data, but this is a surprise to not have anything reported.

Public Comment:

Tony Ni- 1) How do I certify the water I use to wash above seed size oysters? This is on the dock, and it's freshwater. Ned- any source of freshwater is fine, so long as you have your husbandry tag. 2) How to get approved food safety for export of oysters? [Lisa provided a name for Tony to contact] 3) Fred wants to grow glass eels, how can this happen? General consensus- not happening! It's prohibited. J. Cimino- Generally, if someone wanted to harvest and grow out eels in state waters, a full survey and assessment of the species and stock would be needed.

N. Gaine- 1) USDA Census data is actually pretty good when looking at the County-level data. Ocean County is within the top 100 in the country for aquaculture. Atlantic County is 121st in production. At the County-level there is an increase in value in some counties. 2) I also think most of what we see in value is in clams. We do not have clam representation on the Council.

Bill Avery is a proxy but not a member. Aquaculture Development must also have clam considerations included. 3) The Vibrio plan must come out earlier; it cannot come out a week before the season. There were not substantial changes this year, but if there are, we cannot accommodate within one week. [M. Gregg stressed this same topic later in the public comment] 4) ADP Update finished by 2020 is only 6 meetings. This needs to include public meetings with the Council and the public. 5) The State is pushing apprenticeships. Aquaculture should definitely be considered in this program. J. Constance- the industry is including in the program. I understand the need for training.

Brick Wenzel- On behalf of the Farm Bureau, thank the Secretary and NJDA for their support of the seafood industry.

Bob Schuster- CDC was close to declaring a national outbreak of Vibrios last year. The FDA and ISSC stopped that declaration, but FDA is also saying that not enough is being done. This year's ISSC may see more proposals for greater restrictions. B. Haskin- is anyone pushing at the restaurant level where many of these issues are really happening. B. Schuster- no, and this is where the state counterparts are fighting since more issues are in restaurants, but no restrictions/education has been proposed.

Meeting adjourned.