



NEWSLETTER

Aboriginal Aquaculture Association

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“Growing Opportunities for Aquaculture”

Aquaculture development is poised for growth in BC

Over the past few months there have been a number of developments that will result in increased opportunities and support for aquaculture development not only in British Columbia but for all of Canada.

In July the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans released their report on Aquaculture supporting growth of the sector. In November the mandate of the new Federal government and the new Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard was released. In December the B.C. Provincial Government Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Plan committed to a goal of increasing aquaculture production. This is all positive news for those wanting to get involved or expand their Aboriginal aquaculture operations.

After extensive research, including public meetings, site visits and fact-finding missions, the Standing Senate Committee report supports growth of the aquaculture sector in Canada and the aquaculture industry's goal of doubling production over the next decade.

The Committee made recommendations under five main themes; legislative and regulatory framework; healthy aquaculture fish; healthy and productive ecosystems; research and development and; social licence and public reporting.

Richard Harry the AAA President addressed the committee and highlighted the positive examples of successful Aboriginal aquaculture development. He stressed the need to work together to build an Aboriginal aquaculture sector and to get past the political and polarizing positions on aquaculture and find some balance in this issue. In their recommendations, the Committee recognized that aquaculture is an important economic driver for many rural and coastal Aboriginal communities.

The mandate of the new Minister for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, released in November 2015, includes support for sustainable aquaculture and working with Indigenous peoples to better co-manage Canada's oceans and to restore funding for science and use science based decision-making. As well the Prime Minister has stated his intention for a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples

based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

In December 2015, B.C. Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick released the BC Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Plan. The plan includes increasing aquaculture production by 14%, which will help to achieve the goal of increasing BC agrifood sector revenues to \$15 billion by 2020. The strategy also includes "Buy Local" promotions and strategies to remove inter-provincial trade barriers. Aquaculture is part of the BC Provincial government plan to diversify the provincial economy.

The full report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans can be found at:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/412/POFO/RMS/12jul15/Report-e.htm>

The BC Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Plan can be found at:

www.gov.bc.ca/agri/down/bc_agrifoods_strategy.pdf

Shellfish Aquaculture Management Advisory Committee Meeting Held in Courtenay

Fisheries and Oceans Canada hosted a Shellfish Aquaculture Management Advisory Committees (AMAC) meeting on November 17, 2015. The main focus of the meeting was to provide information on current DFO science and research projects and to provide a general update on a variety of DFO processes.

Research is currently underway to determine the carrying capacity of Baynes Sound. DFO scientist Terri Sutherland provided an overview of the work that is being done. The results to date show that there is a high level of chlorophyll and sediment flux within Bayne's Sound. This indicates that the area is highly

productive with strong water movement. The next step in the research is to examine more closely the carrying capacity in order to get an accurate picture of how much shellfish production is possible.

Diana Trager, Director Aquaculture Management outlined what is involved in setting DFO research priorities. Currently many of DFO's shellfish research priorities align with those of the shellfish industry. At the top of the priority list is research on ocean acidification followed by cadmium levels within shellfish products. BC has naturally high background levels of cadmium that often exceed the amounts allowed by the EU and Hong Kong. Further research is needed to examine this issue more closely in order to demonstrate that this is a naturally occurring phenomenon. It is hoped this work will help to not only open new markets for BC shellfish products but to maintain the EU and Hong Kong markets.

An update was given on the work plan for long-term sustainability for the Canadian Shellfish Sustainability Program (CSSP). There is no new funding available for the program and the plan is under review to identify program delivery options, other federal departments including Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Environment and DFO are involved in this process. More information about the program options will become available over the next few months.

Meanwhile, the CSSP mapping program is expected to be online soon that will show shellfish harvest closures in real time on an interactive map. The map will also include farm locations. It will operate on a basic red-green system where red indicates a closed area and green indicates areas open for harvest. When the map goes on line the AAA will post a link on the AAA website.

The B.C. Shellfish Grower's reported on the effect Vibrio closures had on the shellfish market this past summer. Environmental conditions created a 'perfect storm' for high levels of Vibrio and as a result, there was a health closure on the sale of raw oysters in the lower mainland. Vibrio is a species of toxin-producing bacteria that are found naturally in water, fish and shellfish. Vibrio is usually transferred to people when they eat food or drink beverages that are contaminated. Producers who sell to the local market faced heavy financial losses due to the closure this summer. Efforts are currently being made to address Vibrio as the industry needs to get a greater understanding of Vibrio and how to mitigate its impact on producers and consumers.

The AAA was invited to present an overview of the current work of the Association, including the work under the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative (AACI), providing interested Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs in B.C. and Canada's North with technical & business expertise and support.

The AAA has been developing a foundation of information as a resource for First Nations and their aquaculture development initiatives. Information learned from the Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada RIAS report was shared including opportunities in BC for shellfish development, the projected growth potential for the sector and the current barriers to Aboriginal shellfish aquaculture development, access to capital and lack of a workable Integrated Geoduck Management Framework. A good discussion of the ongoing challenges and issues resulted.

For further information on the AMAC meetings and full meeting minutes, check the DFO website at: <http://www.pac.dfompo.gc.ca/consultation/aquaculture/index-eng.html>.

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New Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

The AAA would like to congratulate the Honourable Hunter Tootoo, who has been appointed as Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Minister Tootoo was born in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut and is off Inuk descent. He has been involved in politics since 1999. In his mandate letter, Minister Tootoo has been tasked with many objectives, including: restoring annual federal funding and making science based decisions. Two objectives that are of particular importance to the AAA and its clients are "support(ing) responsible and sustainable aquaculture industries" and "work(ing) with the provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders to better co-manage our three oceans."

The AAA looks forward to working with Minister Tootoo and the Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard in increasing Aboriginal participation in aquaculture development.



The Honourable Hunter Tootoo

James Walkus Receives Accolade

Congratulations to James Walkus the recipient of the Individual Achievement Award presented at the 7th Annual BC Aboriginal Business awards. His daughter and grand-daughter accepted the award on his behalf at the Gala event held in Vancouver.

A member of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, Mr. Walkus has worked hard to create economic development for three reserve communities on northern Vancouver Island. His fishing company, James Walkus Fishing Company, is a family owned operation that employs more than 100 people.

Last year Mr. Walkus introduced a new boat the "Amarissa Joye" into his fleet to service the salmon farming industry. This state of the art vessel has double the capacity and the latest in fish hauling technology. Mr. Walkus has recently commissioned a sister vessel to the "Amarissa Joye".

K'omoks First Nation Cooperation Agreement

Congratulations to the K'omoks First Nation which recently signed a cooperation Agreement with Marine Harvest Canada taking the first steps in development of a mutually beneficial arrangement in support of further business and community development. The agreement will help guide discussions in areas of mutual interest including training, employment and business development. The agreement also includes an updated sales agreement for Salish Sea Foods, a recently acquired K'omoks Nation business.



Chief Robert Everson (R) of K'omoks First Nation pictured with Vincent Erenst of Marine Harvest Canada. Photo courtesy of Marine Harvest Canada.

Aboriginal Aquaculture Association

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