

Aquaculture Certification: DFO's Involvement and Perspective

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Presentation Outline

- ❖ The “New Environmentalism” and what it means for seafood
- ❖ Certification and Sustainability
- ❖ Sorting out roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Sustainable Aquaculture Program
- ❖ AMD Actions on Sustainability
- ❖ Other certification issues
- ❖ Questions



A “New Environmentalism” is shaping the context for seafood production

Awareness of environmental sustainability is increasingly mainstream, and will not reverse

- Effects of environmental change are obvious
- Information age is resulting in more aware and engaged public
 - individuals are more aware of the connection between their own consumption and the environment
 - this awareness is translating the new environmentalism into market decisions
- Strong public expectation for government and industry to act
 - corporate social responsibility movement continues to expand with increasing awareness of the “triple bottom line” (positive economic, social and environmental results)
 - the Canadian seafood industry and DFO are actively embracing the new environmentalism – the right thing to do and makes solid business sense





Making certification an important element of continued market access

- ❖ Seafood consumers & buyers are increasingly seeking assurance of
 - Environmentally sustainable production
 - Socially acceptable resource use
 - Adherence to stringent food-safety protocols
 - Farm-to-market traceability for all products
 - Independent verification of attributes beyond what would be certified by governments
 - Evidence of continuous improvement towards a goal
- ❖ Certification to credible, internationally recognized programs will facilitate market access



Why is certification necessary?

- ❖ In the past, governments and industry were slow to realize the importance of sustainability to buyers and consumers
- ❖ Questions re transparency of management systems, accuracy of statistics, validity of claims, etc.
- ❖ Scepticism from ENGOs over industry's management and commitment to sustainability
- ❖ Certification programs provide independent, third-party “proof” that a product conforms to specified requirements
- ❖ Requirements are expressed as “standards”





There are many certification programs for aquaculture

- World Wildlife Fund Aquaculture Dialogues (salmon, bivalves, trout – under development)
- Global Aquaculture Alliance (BAP standards for salmon, mussels – under development)
- GlobalGAP (primarily salmon)
- Certified Quality (salmon, trout, mussels, oysters)
- Friend of the Sea
- Aboriginal Certification of Environmental Sustainability

The Result? Great Confusion!





And also questions as to what constitutes “sustainability” – adding to the confusion

- ❖ Some programs focus on the environmental element
- ❖ Others emphasize food safety
- ❖ The FAO is developing Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification that attempt to clarify four areas:
 - Food safety/quality
 - Environment
 - Animal welfare
 - Social justice
- ❖ But there is no agreement on these elements either.





Sorting it out: Industry's role

- ❖ In aquaculture, individual operators make the decision to undertake certification (unlike the capture fishery)
- ❖ Individual operators take responsibility for providing all information and documentation, and for remediating conditions following certification (also unlike the capture fishery)
- ❖ With so much confusion and no clear direction from buyers, most producers are taking a “wait and see” approach
- ❖ Buyers are also waiting to see



Sorting it out: Government's responsibilities

- ❖ The seafood sustainability movement to date has focussed primarily on markets – partly because of perceived government inaction –
 - Government policy, legislation, enforcement have not been perceived as drivers for change
 - Governments have been slow to act, reluctant to engage, and resistant to change
- ❖ DFO's Sustainable Aquaculture Program offers an opportunity to change the channel.



DFO's Sustainable Aquaculture Program

The Government of Canada announced a \$70 million investment over five years in Budget 2008. This funding will create the conditions for the Canadian aquaculture industry to succeed and grow in an economic and environmentally sustainable manner.



“Creating the conditions” for certification

For certification specifically, our goal is to “create the conditions” where every aquaculture operation in Canada either is, or could be certified against an internationally recognized program by the end of the five years of our program.





A lot goes into “creating conditions”

- ❖ All the elements of the Sustainable Aquaculture Program contribute to creating the conditions under which Canadian aquaculture companies could become certified --
 - Regulatory reform to harmonize and streamline all the government requirements
 - Innovation funding through AIMAP to catalyze technological improvements
 - Certification funding through AIMAP for benchmarking
 - Funding for science research & development
 - Work on a national protocol for traceability
 - Development of a mechanism for sustainability reporting
 - Information management and functional databases for statistical reporting
 - NASAPI – to provide future direction for sustainable development



And all are critical to certification

- ❖ For an example of what a standard would entail, go to <http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/globalmarkets/aquaculture/aquaculturedialogues.html> to see draft standards
- ❖ Canada's strong regulatory framework will help producers meet requirements





Specific AMD actions on certification

- ❖ Developing relationships with ENGO groups, especially those involved in aquaculture standard development
- ❖ Participating in the WWF Aquaculture Dialogues (primarily for salmon and bivalve standards)
- ❖ Hosting and participating in workshops and conferences (Aqua Nor, Sustainability Summit, etc.)
- ❖ Conducting outreach activities to educate buyers on government tools for sustainability
- ❖ Working with the FAO on development of Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification
- ❖ Facilitating industry adoption through education (e.g., activities funded through AIMAP)





Why isn't the government developing "Canadian" standards?

❖ Several reasons –

- Buyers determine the standards they want their suppliers to meet
- Governments should be regulators, not involved in business decisions around certification
- Standards have to be promoted
- Entering the standards "race" would add to confusion



There is one exception

- ❖ DFO is working with industry to develop a national standard for organic aquaculture – necessary to
 - reduce consumer confusion
 - protect consumers against deceptive and misleading labelling practices through a uniform approach to organic product certification and labelling.
 - facilitate international market access and the development of equivalency agreements
- ❖ Draft standard almost complete but requires ratification by the Canadian General Standards Board process
- ❖ Expect standard to be complete and ready for use by March 2011.





What it will include

- ❖ Production system standards are being established for finfish and shellfish.
- ❖ Standards will be set for
 - Species and Origins
 - Reproduction
 - Feed and Feeding
 - Health and Welfare
 - Cultivation Conditions
 - Stock Identification
 - Harvesting
 - Transporting Live Fish
 - Slaughtering
 - Processing
 - Storage





Other certification requirements: Traceability

- ❖ Traceability or chain of custody protects certified product through the value chain
- ❖ CSSP mandates traceability through shellfish tagging program
- ❖ Nothing mandatory for finfish
- ❖ Important for many reasons
- ❖ A variety of electronic systems available
- ❖ A standard for finfish traceability just emerging from ISO





Other certification requirements: Reporting & Outreach

- ❖ Reporting demonstrates consistency and progress
 - Global Reporting Initiative is the internationally accepted reporting framework
 - AMD's work on developing sustainability report
- ❖ Outreach – another important component
 - At shows (Boston, ESE, Aqua Nor, etc.)
 - At conferences (Seafood Summit, GOAL, etc.)
 - With incoming buyers for advocacy & education
 - At in-market briefings
 - Through various communications initiatives
 - With other governments



Thank you!

Questions?

