

Aquainnova shellfish aquaculture workshop in Bordeaux

Shellfish farmers prioritise environmental compatibility and product safety

“The Future of European Shellfish Aquaculture” held in Bordeaux on 15-16 February was the last in the series of thematic Aquainnova workshops. It targeted shellfish farmers and aquaculture associations, government representatives, research institutions, research funding agencies and other stakeholders in the sector.

Organised with the help of a professional facilitator, the event gave participants an opportunity to express their views over a day and a half of intense work, where the emphasis was on discussion and consensus building. Over 50 participants from nine EU countries including a large delegation from the French shellfish industry provided their inputs towards the development of a Vision for European Aquaculture in 2030, in support of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). The outputs of the stakeholders’ consultation will be used by the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATIP) to help it respond to the challenges facing European aquaculture.

The French shellfish farmers clearly showed their interest in the debate. Some common points with other aquaculture groups were identified, but some specific particularities of the sector were also pointed out. I found this exercise very interesting and I look forward to the outcomes of the workshop, said Dr René Robert, project manager at IFREMER (French Research Institute of Exploration of the Sea),

adding that he was more confident in the future of the sector because researchers and other stakeholders had succeeded in exchanging views positively.

Environmental sustainability and continued safety

Participants reported that European shellfish aquaculture production is set to double over the next 20 years. Total European production mirrors the trend seen in global aquaculture of increasing production driven by population growth, and rising demand and output from developed and developing countries, including currently unexploited areas e.g. North Africa. The extended open session highlighted outstanding issues facing the sector and identified the top three priorities as: integration with the environment; environmental sustainability through application of new technologies and knowledge; and ensuring the continued safety of all products.

Building on the outputs of the dialogue the representative from the Danish Shellfish Centre submitted an interesting idea. This was to include an additional thematic



At the final Aquainnova thematic workshop, the future of European shellfish aquaculture, participants ranked environmental sustainability and continued product safety as top priorities among the issues facing the sector.

area “Goods and services provided to the ecosystem” which would use aquaculture to provide goods and services to coastal ecosystems throughout Europe and thereby contribute to achieving environmental goals. By doing so, aquaculture activities can create new types of industry in close collaboration with environmental management.

“The debates were very interesting, especially for us Italians, who, unfortunately, are reluctant to attend such meetings and to share the experiences of other countries.

The workshop has allowed me to have a more complete picture regarding the issues of shellfish farming in Europe, including those not directly related to the Italian shellfish industry. I believe that such initiatives should be repeated, even in other projects, involving, if possible, a greater number of breeders and suppliers of technologies, given that there are not many opportunities for comparison between the various people who are involved in shellfish production” said Dr Giuseppe Prioli, M.A.R.E. (Scientific Research and

Technical Assistance for Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Environment).

From social acceptance to social demand

Among the conclusions from the meeting were that shellfish aquaculture will not only be socially acceptable, but socially demanded. Future generations will see the need for natural, sustainable and safe shellfish products. Some new species may be farmed based on an increase in hatchery-produced spat as well as diversification, not only in species, but also in activities and related skills. Future farmed animals will need to strike a balance

to suit both market demand and the environment. Genetically modified or sterile animals will not be major traits in the future in the shellfish sector. Technology and systems will trend towards integrated multifunctional farms, of which some will be in deeper water. More knowledge on species interactions (ecological) and technological developments (harvesting, logistics) would support this.

A useful and enjoyable workshop

“This was a salutary experience to show shellfish aquaculture that it has to see itself as part of

aquaculture as a whole when thinking of European Union representation. There still remain the unique attributes of shellfish aquaculture and I welcomed the opportunity to argue for a higher priority to be given to the ecosystem services shellfish aquaculture can provide for the environment. I would also like to say that the delicious hospitality provided in Bordeaux made a useful workshop into something altogether much more enjoyable” thinks Dr Janet H Brown, editor, *The Grower*, newsletter for the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers.

The Vision and SRIA will be finalised during a meeting in Dublin

on 20th – 22nd March, where the facilitators and chairs of each Thematic Area will review and integrate the combined results from the regional workshops on Cold Water Marine, Freshwater, Mediterranean and Shellfish Aquaculture. Once the priorities are in place EATIP will design a plan of action or roadmap, to illustrate how to achieve the goals as identified in the Vision document and ensure that any future research leads to real innovation in the field.

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ComFish project kicks-off

Learning whether scientific results are properly communicated

During a meeting organised at the beginning of February in Munich by the Institute for Communication and Media Research, Ludwig Maximilians University, the project coordinator, ComFish officially took off.

ComFish is the acronym for “Strengthening the impact of fisheries related research through dissemination, communication and technology transfer”, a 1.1 million € EU-FP7 funded project (DG Research & Innovation) which will last 36 months. The aim of the project is to identify important fisheries topics with long term impacts, and ascertain whether scientific results have been properly communicated to fisheries stakeholders. If yes, why and how was this done? If not, then the question must be answered which communication needs must be addressed. What

are the related challenges, needed actions and possible solutions? One key aspect is to show how research can address and explain fisheries related challenges.

Five stakeholder events to identify regional priorities

ComFish will identify regional priority issues and address associated communication impasses at five Regional Participatory Stakeholder Events (RPSEs). The key stakeholders are: environmentalists, media, policy/decision makers, education. Next, ComFish will use the



Participants at the ComFish kick-off meeting, from left to right, Miguel Bernal, Spanish Institute of Oceanography; Heidi Bohle, Visions Unlimited Medien, Germany; Alex Olsen, BSRAC, Denmark; Anca Sfetcovici, Eurofish, Denmark; Jesper Kobberø, ASECO, Denmark; Charlotte Jagot, European Commission; Ireneusz Wójcik, National Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Poland; Vesselina Mihneva, Institute of Fishing Resources, Bulgaria; Paul Pechan, Institute for Communication and Media Research, Ludwig Maximilians University, Germany; Giovanni Salerno, IREPA, Italy; Carlos Aldereguia, LDRAC, Spain; Knut Korsbrekke, Institute of Marine Research, Norway; Gert de Vries, ProBio, The Netherlands.