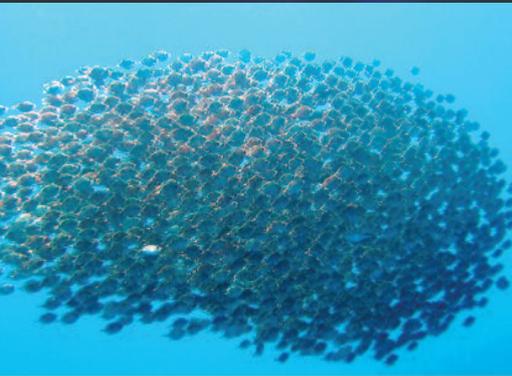




news



Boarfish: KFO To Study Science Behind New Fishery

The KFO has embarked on a new scientific study of boarfish. Dr Edward Farrell has been contracted by the KFO to work on the project. Edward has just completed his PhD in fisheries biology in University College Dublin and has already started work.

Boarfish (*Capros aper*) are small laterally compressed fish (see pictures) which grow to a maximum total length of approx. 16cm. They are red/orange in colour and sometimes have a strong banding pattern on their sides. They have distinctive dorsal and anal spines and the body is also covered with rough scales. They are distributed from Norway to Senegal, including the Mediterranean, Azores, Canaries and Madeira. They are a gregarious species and form dense shoals. They are primarily found along the shelf edge at 100-300m.

The development of a boarfish fishery over the past four years has been dramatic. In terms of volume of landings, it is fast becoming a significant Irish pelagic fishery. Since 2009, Danish boats have also participated. Initial reports for 2010 are that both the Irish and Danish boats are active in the fishery.

Almost nothing is known about boarfish biology, and it is one of the most poorly studied species of fish. In 2007, in response to the expansion of the fishery, the Marine Institute proposed that age estimates of the fish were urgently required. Trinity College Dublin conducted this first ever study. Results suggest that the species may be slow growing and has an age range not unlike what might be found in an unexploited stock of horse mackerel or argentine.

It is well known how different the histories of horse mackerel and argentine have been, since they were first targeted in the 1980s. Horse mackerel has proved to be a large, productive stock that supports an international fishery, with scientific advice for a Western TAC of 180,000t in 2010. On the other hand argentine appear to have declined in abundance since the mid 1980s, as older age groups were removed from the fishery. There has been little evidence of stock recovery, and it is of little economic importance to the Irish fleet.

Why are argentine and horse mackerel different? The answer lies in how many surviving offspring the fish produce, how fast they grow and their natural death (mortality) rate. We know very little about these factors for boarfish.

The study to be carried out by Dr Farrell over the next 12-14 months will be co-ordinated by the Marine Institute. It aims to determine the reproductive cycle of the species, work out how many eggs are produced per year and to continue work on age and growth. A detailed review of existing knowledge, including unpublished data and archives, is being conducted.

In the absence of a management plan for this fishery, the KFO considers it vitally important to collect information upon which rational management measures can be based.

This project is another milestone in continued partnership between the fishing industry and scientists. This important initiative by the KFO demonstrates the potential importance of this fishery for Irish vessels. As the debate about how to manage this resource intensifies, it will be important to show that Ireland has been proactive in learning about this resource. Most importantly, it is hoped that this study will underpin the sustainable harvesting and the development of a management plan for this resource well into the future.



"Making Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Operational" A Major Research Project

Fisheries science is changing rapidly and must now deal with a major new EU law called the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). This new directive will have a profound effect on the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and on future fishing opportunities. The MSFD states that EU seas must reach "Good Environmental Status" (i.e. be in a healthy state) by 2020. A range of issues including marine litter levels, the range and health of animals in the seas and the state of sensitive habitats, will all be assessed to see what kind of state the seas around Europe are in. This exercise will include fish stocks, and building them up again, while exploiting them sustainably will be a key part of the MSFD. This directive will have implications for the industry. So what are we doing about it?

A major EU research project is looking at the MSFD and how it will impact fisheries. The project will specifically try to develop management plans (with strong stakeholder input) that seek to look at the options for attaining Good Environmental Status (GES). These management plans known as Fisheries Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) will be developed to further the ecosystem approach to fisheries management and will assist managers to consider the ecological (e.g. fish stock state), social (e.g. employment levels), and economic (e.g. profitability) implications of their decisions in relation to the MSFD.

The project is called Making the European Fisheries Ecosystem Plan Operational (MEFEPO) and is funded by the EU under the 7th Framework Programme. There are eight countries in the collaborative project; UK (co-ordinator University Liverpool), Portugal, Netherlands, France, Ireland (The Marine Institute), Norway, Denmark and Spain. The project commenced in September 2008 and will finish in August 2011.

The core concept of MEFEPO project is to deliver FEPs for three regional seas: North Western Waters, South Western Waters and the North Sea. MEFEPO will focus on how to make the EU fisheries management system responsive to the MSFD and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, at a regional level.

The US were first to develop Fisheries Ecosystem Plans (FEPs). They were used to further the development of the ecosystem approach in fisheries management and to assist managers consider the ecological, social and economic implications of their management decisions. MEFEPO will build on the US experience and will use social and political

Continued from page 1.

“Making Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management Operational”

sciences, marine ecology, fisheries science and mathematical modelling to identify the effects of various fisheries management decisions on the ecosystem and their acceptability to a broad range of marine stakeholders including fishers, fish processors, managers, policy makers, scientists and environmentalists.

MEFEPO will develop new linkages between the disparate groups of stakeholders, and the collection of a considerable body of ecological, fisheries, social and economic research which has been developed in recent years will be an important part of the project.

MEFEPO comprises a group of ecologists, economists, management experts and fisheries scientists which is trying to make ecosystem-based fisheries management work in Europe.

As part of its work programme, the MEFEPO project has produced an Atlas of North Western Waters. This Atlas gives an account of the oceanography, climate conditions, plankton changes, animal distributions (birds, whales, dolphins, fish), and spawning areas in NWW. It is like a school Atlas of the NWW and gives everyone an insight into what is going on (see below.) It will be available shortly on the Marine Institute website.

MEFEPO work will continue over the next 18 months and a major stakeholder conference will be held in Dublin in October 2010 to look at how fisheries can input to achieving GES by 2020. The KFO considers that this project will set the scene for the ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the future, and with our colleagues in FIF we will continue to be actively involved.



General schematic of surface currents of the North East Atlantic

The Council adopted a new control document at its meeting in Luxemburg on 19 October last with an implementation date for most of the new measures from 1 January 2010. This is a major document with 124 articles that amends and repeals existing control regulations. There are a significant number of changes, some of which are minor but others will affect members. Some of the main changes are outlined in brief below:

Vessel Monitoring System (Article 9)

All vessels over 12 meters length overall must have a Vessel Monitoring System installed. This shall apply to vessels of 12 meters or more and up to 15 meters from 1 January 2012.

A Member State may exempt vessels up to 15 meters overall from this if they operate exclusively within the territorial seas of the Member State or if they never spend more than 24 hours at sea.

Automatic Identification System (Article 10)

Vessels exceeding 15 meters length overall shall be fitted with an Automatic Identification System.

This shall apply from:

- a) 31 May 2014 for vessels of 15 meters length overall or more and up to 18 meters;
- b) 31 May 2013 for vessels of 18 meters length overall or more and up to 24 meters; and
- c) 31 May 2012 for vessels of 24 metres length overall or more and up to 45 meters.

When Automatic Identification System data becomes available it may be used by the Member State to cross-check with other available data.

Electronic logbook (Article 15)

Vessels of 12 meters length overall or more shall record and send their catch details by electronic means, to the competent authority of the flag Member State, at least once a day or at the request of the competent authorities.

This articles comes into effect from:

- a) 1 January 2012 for vessels of 12 meters length overall and up to 15 meters length overall;
- b) 1 July 2011 for vessels of 15 meters length overall and up to 24 meters length overall; and
- c) 1 January 2010 to Community fishing vessels of 24 meters length overall or more.

A Member State may exempt vessels up to 15 meters overall from this if they operate exclusively within the territorial seas of the Member State or if they never spend more than 24 hours at sea.

Certification of engine power (Article 40)

Member States shall be responsible for certifying engine power and issuing engine certificates to vessels whose engine power of the propulsion exceeds 120 kilowatts (Kw), except vessels using exclusively static gear, dredge gear, auxiliary vessels and vessels used exclusively in aquaculture.

A new propulsion engine, a replacement propulsion engine and a propulsion engine that has been technically modified on fishing vessels, shall be officially certified by the Member States' authorities for not being capable of developing more maximum continuous engine power than stated in the engine certificate. Such an approval shall only be issued if the engine is not capable of developing more than the stated maximum continuous engine power. This provision shall apply for fishing vessels subject to a fishing effort regime from 1 January 2012. For other fishing vessels they shall apply from 1 January 2013.

There is a specific Commission statement on the certification of engine power as outlined in the next column. This statement is very important for existing installed engines and change of ownership.

Commission statement-Certification of engine power

“The control regulation introduces in a systematic way the certification of engines that are new, replaced or technically modified. The Commission is aware that this needs a common approach in all Member States on account of its legal, administrative and economic implications. For such a certification system to be applied, the adoption of the detailed rules in accordance with the procedure foreseen in Article 111 (article 119 in the finally adopted text) of the proposal will be necessary. By way of consequence, such rules will only be applicable to such engines that are renewed, replaced or technically modified after the entry into force of these detailed rules. Such detailed rules will not affect the status of engines installed in a fishing vessel in cases of changes of ownership provided that the engine is not renewed, replaced or technically modified in conjunction with that transfer of ownership or thereafter.”

Real-time closure by Member States (Article 53)

When an official trigger catch level has been observed, the coastal Member State shall decide the real-time closure of the area concerned without delay. Specific provisions are laid down which the Member state must comply with.

Weighing of fishery products (Article 60)

A Member State shall ensure that all fishery products are weighed on systems approved by the competent authorities unless it has adopted a sampling plan approved by the Commission and based on the methodology adopted by the Commission. The weighing already applies for pelagic species and will apply to all other fishery products from 1 January 2011.

Point system for serious infringements (Article 92)

In addition to administrative or criminal sanctions as a means to ensure compliance with the rules, a penalty point system shall apply for serious infringements. The detailed rules for the application of the points system and the number of points to apply have yet to be decided. The regulation however does specify the timeframe for temporary or permanent suspension of a fishing licence as shown below:

For the first offence, the holder of the fishing licence is assigned the number of points as set out in the detailed rules. When the maximum permitted number of points is reached the fishing licence is suspended for two months. The period shall be four months for a second offence, eight months for the third offence, one year for the fourth offence and the fishing licence is permanently withdrawn on the fifth occasion. The points are transferred if there is a change of ownership and points have a three-year life span, provided no serious offence is committed in this timeframe. A penalty point system shall also apply to the skipper (master) of the vessel.

Consumer Information Leaflet Launched on Brown Crab

At the request of KFO, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is launching a consumer information leaflet on brown crab. This is designed to make the consumer aware of health and hygiene issues when they source crab and is full of useful information regarding minimum size, storage conditions, etc. As crab fishermen know, many consumers are unsure of how crab should be handled, so this leaflet should help address this information gap and increase sales. Look out for it in your local shops. This is a welcome initiative on behalf of SFPA.

Possible Solutions to Technical Measures East of the French Line in Area VIa

In 2009, BIM undertook a series of trials to investigate the effects of new gear regulations introduced into Area VIa, east of the so-called "French Line" in 2009. These trials assessed the impact of the 120mm codend and 120mm Square Mesh Panels (vessels >15m), and 110mm codend and 110mm Square Mesh Panels (vessels < 15m) introduced under these regulations and possible alternative gear options. This work was carried out on the Greencastle vessels "Catherine-R", owned by Cara Rawdon, "Green Isle" owned by Michael Cavanagh and "Paul Stephen" owned by Gerry Gill, and looked at a variety of different combinations of 100mm, 110mm and 120mm codends with large mesh SMPs placed in differing positions.

The trials on the "Catherine-R" showed that the regulation gears are very selective with very few undersize fish of any species retained in the codend. However, losses of marketable haddock, whiting, hake and particularly megrim were estimated as being very high. This was further confirmed by the trials on the "Green Isle" that showed reductions in catch value of up to 40 per cent with the 120mm+120mm smp tested against a 100mm+120mm smp and 110mm+120mm smp. The overall conclusion from these trials was that the 120mm+120mm smp gear is uneconomic for Irish vessels working in VIa, and without a change in codend mesh size the fisheries in this area are effectively closed.

A further set of trials were completed in December 2009 on the "Paul Stephen" testing different positions of the 120mm smp from 6-9m, 9-12m and 12-15m (regulation position) ahead of the codend. These trials were carried out on the Cape grounds inside the closed area and reasonable quantities of cod were caught. The results showed no real difference for cod, with few escaping through the 120mm panel regardless of position. For whiting there was a definite improvement in escapement as the panel was moved closer to the codend.

So what is the way forward? Firstly it is important to understand that Ireland is largely on its own in looking for concessions on mesh sizes. The Scottish industry has already been given a derogation for their prawn fisheries by using a grid or a square mesh panel and by and large most of their

whitefish fleet would accept 120mm (it is already regulation in the North Sea), if haddock was removed from the catch composition regulations. This is a possibility, given that discussions on a long-term management plan for haddock are well advanced. This puts Ireland at a disadvantage.

Are there options for using "cod friendly gears?" Given the mixed nature of the fisheries in VIa, any proven cod friendly gears developed are only of limited value. Grids are only really an option for prawn fisheries, while the much-heralded "Eliminator" trawl will catch haddock, but not much else. New gears could be looked at but this will take time and has no guarantee of success.

Could a smaller codend mesh size be proposed? The results of the BIM trials do show that it is possible to use alternative gear options with similar selectivity for haddock and whiting as the 120mm+120mm smp, but for cod even the current regulation gear is unselective. If, however, it can be demonstrated clearly and unequivocally that in certain areas cod catches are and have been historically low and therefore a reduction in the mesh size will have no impact on cod stocks then possibly there is a case to be made. This is strengthened by the fact that the Cape closure off Greencastle will deliver significant reductions in cod mortality. There must, though, be an acceptance that any gear change put forward must be realistic, in terms of the current regulations, deliver significant improvements in haddock and whiting selectivity, and confined to specific definable areas within VIa. Ultimately this will mean losses of commercial catches of these species, as well as losses of smaller grade megrim and hake, but at least it would maintain some sort of a fishery.

Another option, which the KFO is actively pursuing, is the Commission's declaration given at the December Fisheries Council which agreed to consider requests for modifying these measures in the first half of 2010. The Commission has informally indicated that they consider that the technical measures do cause a problem for the megrim fishery and are prepared to examine some alternative mesh sizes provided they do not reduce the selectivity on cod, haddock and whiting.

International Industry Price Initiative Planned for Brown Crab

The Irish brown crab industry, together with its counterparts in the United Kingdom and France, has embarked on a remarkable initiative to counteract the recent downward spiral in prices and demand. Following an initial meeting in Edinburgh last year, at the invitation of the KFO crab sector, the vivier crab fishermen have continued to press for rational management of their fishery and were pleased to accept an invitation from the Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marine (CNP MEM) – the French national Fisheries Committee – in January this year, to develop a strategy to reverse the negative trends of the past two years.

In recent years there has been a steady decline in returns to the crab fishing sector for a variety of reasons: an over-supply of product; the global recession, which has diminished consumer spending power; the ready availability of cheap and convenient seafood products from non-EU countries; virtually non-existent generic promotion of brown crab, and a less than efficient route to market. Many of these factors are outside the influence of the industry, but over-supply of product is one area where the fisherman can have some impact. The French crab fishery has been in existence for many years and an effective management regime has been in place for generations which prevents over-supply and over-exploitation of the resource. Unfortunately, this is not the case in either Ireland or the UK. At the Paris meeting this was explained to our French colleagues and it was proposed that, in the absence of a suitable regulatory framework, the fishermen themselves would explore the possibility of a voluntary control of landings, particularly during the months of May to August.

At the same meeting, the three countries proposed a pan-European market promotion to increase the consumption of crab. Nicolas Ranniger, on behalf of Bord Bia, has undertaken to liaise with his counterparts in France Agrimer and Seafish to initiate a joint Ireland-France-UK marketing promotion to increase the consumption of brown crab Europe-wide. Work has already begun on this project and, with the expected support of DG MARE, will hopefully boost sales of crab throughout the French retail sector in coming months and, eventually, further afield. From previous, low-profile efforts in this area, Bord Bia is aware that significant improvements can be made to sales levels when consumers are exposed to information and demonstrations on how to handle whole crab.

A significant number of the Irish and UK vivier crab fishermen, merchants, vivier transporters, processors and Producer Organisation representatives met in Edinburgh in early February to update their colleagues on the proposals

which had emerged at the Paris meeting. The French system of fishery management was explained but this is not an option for the UK and Ireland in the foreseeable future. The delegates considered two options to bring about the required reduction in landings as discussed in Paris:

1. an across-the-board reduction of landings by 25 per cent relative to each vessel's landing for the same week in 2009;
2. a "quota" per week based on LOA which would span 14 metre vessels with a weekly allowance of 8.25 tonnes to over-25 metre vessels with an allowance of 12 tonnes.

Option one appeared to be the most effective and equitable method but would only be feasible if the vessel owners could be sure of receiving an acceptable minimum price throughout those months when the landing reduction would be implemented.

A further meeting took place in Paris on 18 March to report on the outcome of the consultation with the wider Irish and UK industry in Edinburgh. The proposal to reduce landings by 25 per cent in return for a guaranteed minimum price was presented and, by and large, accepted as a reasonable strategy to maintain and ultimately improve economic viability for the crab fleets of the three countries. It was pointed out that the success of this plan was entirely dependant on the complete co-operation of all sectors of the industry: fishing vessels, buyers, vivier transporters and the merchant network in France. A further meeting is to be arranged with the French buyers to ensure their support but feedback to date is positive. The Irish and UK fishing sectors will liaise with their own merchants at national level.

This effort to stabilise landings/prices must take the needs of the processing industry into account. While landing excess crab to processing plants cannot be allowed to create a loophole, it is accepted that the price paid by the processor cannot compete with live prices and this group must consult with processors to ensure they get the supply they need at a viable price.

It is hoped these innovative strategies being proposed will bring about an improvement for all those involved in the brown crab fishery but it is vital that real management is put in place by the national administrations at the earliest possible opportunity. The crab fishing industry has shown it is prepared to undertake the very onerous task of international self-regulation but some relatively simple steps on the part of the national administrations would make this undertaking infinitely more achievable.

Ireland Submits Response to the European Commission's Green Paper on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

In February 2010 Ireland's response to the European Commission's Green Paper on Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was launched. This comprehensive set of proposals was compiled under the guidance of Dr Noel Cawley who had been appointed by Minister Tony Killeen TD to co-ordinate the response process. Dr Cawley carried out this task very thoroughly using extensive consultation meetings with stakeholders around the coast, an invitation to all parties to make submissions, and a Seminar organised by the Federation of Irish Fishermen (FIF). The FIF had also submitted a very detailed response expressing the views of its member Producer Organisations.

From the outset Ireland states its opposition to the introduction of any structures which would promote the sale of fishing opportunities and quotas at an international level, for example, ITQs. Ireland appreciates the need to address the problem of discards but points out that a generalised ban is not practical and calls for more data and research with a more focused approach to the various aspects of the discard problem. The establishment of a Code of Practice run on a voluntary basis and tailored to individual areas which would encourage responsible fishing, environmental management systems, quality enhancement and participation in data collection could naturally evolve to an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management which would go a long way to eliminating many sustainability problems, including discards.

Ireland acknowledges the commitment made by the EU to the principle of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) but reasons this would be unattainable as proposed by the Green Paper. MSY must be managed on a rational basis over an appropriate time-frame in tandem with the necessary socio-economic adjustments. Achieving MSY, and many other fishery management issues, is dependant on sound, accurate and accessible biological and socio-economic data.

Ireland believes that Relative Stability and its attendant TAC and Quotas, whilst imperfect, must remain the primary community mechanism to manage fish stocks. Ireland has never been satisfied that the share of fish stocks it receives truly reflects its coastal potential but feels there is scope to make appropriate adjustments – better management and planning - to remedy this. More importantly, management of the quota must remain the responsibility of the Member State where there can be no opportunity for private ownership. Effort control has a role to play in management plans within the TAC and Quota system but should not be considered as a management tool *per se*. Not alone should the role of Relative Stability be affirmed in a reformed CFP, but the Hague Preferences, which acknowledge Ireland's right to develop its fisheries, should be given permanent automatic entitlement.

The Irish reply to the Green Paper recommends extending the existing 6/12 mile limits to 10/20 as part of an integrated coastal management plan. This would include protection of the inshore fleet and stocks, recreational activities and other forms of maritime commerce. The Biologically Sensitive Area must be maintained in the interests of protecting important nursery areas.

A review of the current organisation of the market is called for by Ireland with Producer Organisations having a substantially stronger role in all aspects of fishery management, quality improvement, to ultimately maximising returns to fishermen.

Editorial

by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



The Cabinet reshuffle has seen the deserved promotion of Tony Killeen to a full ministerial position as Minister of Defence. In his term as Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food with special responsibility for fisheries and forestry he has proactively engaged with the industry at every opportunity to try firstly to understand the issues and secondly to resolve the numerous pressing issues in the sector. In my opinion his best achievement was the declarations he single handedly obtained at the Fisheries Council last December on the future outcome of the EU/Norwegian negotiations. He now passes on the mantle to Sean Connick who, based on our initial meeting this week, seems to be equally enthusiastic and committed to developing the industry. Over the coming months he will have a steep learning curve on the key pressing issues. It is hoped that his enthusiasm and commitment will be the catalyst to deliver on some of these.

The EU/Norway negotiations finally concluded with agreement on Tuesday evening 26 January. The agreement reached is reasonably good for Ireland, with us achieving 80-90 per cent of our objectives. This ten years agreement will put a stable system in place for the management of mackerel and is a major step in stopping the chaos that happened during 2009 when Iceland, Norway and Faroes set totally unjustified autonomous quotas. If this was left unchecked it is almost certain the mackerel stock would collapse within a couple of years with the obvious huge negative consequences for the Irish pelagic fleet. EU and Norway combined have about 90 per cent of the mackerel TAC and it is now incumbent on both these parties to get Faroes and Iceland to sign up to a four-parties agreement. The first in what is likely to be a series of four-parties meetings took place in Alesund from 15-18 March with very little progress. The next meeting is scheduled for 19-20 May in Iceland. The scheduled international tri-annual mackerel egg survey has commenced with the ICES widely distributed working group considering the results in early September. The implications for the 2011 TAC will not be known until October. I anticipate a positive outcome from the survey however I am concerned that the unjustified autonomous quotas may negate any increase in the TAC. In fact a reduction may transpire.

The Irish brown crab industry, together with its counterparts in the United Kingdom and France, has embarked on a remarkable initiative to counteract the recent downward spiral in prices. This involves a 25 per cent reduction in supply coupled with a pan-European market promotion to increase the consumption of crab (see article page three). The EU Commission has continually advocated for pan-European market promotion as the only way to qualify for market promotion EU funding. This pan-European market promotion is ideally suited to such funding and it is hoped that the Commission will honour their commitment.

Prices, particularly for whitefish and shellfish, continue to remain at a low level. We continue to highlight this in numerous fora both nationally and at EU level. The level of imports, such as pangasius, is having a huge affect on prices on the EU market, as is the major problem with the labelling of thawed fish sold as fresh and the inadequacy of the COM regulation. The Commission and the Spanish Presidency have planned a major workshop on markets and prices on 14-15 April which will afford an opportunity to explore a number of different avenues to address the price reduction. The crab pan-European market promotion outlined above, if fully implemented, may serve as a useful template for other species in promoting EU production.

The KFO has embarked on a scientific study of boarfish with the contracting of Dr Edward Farrell to carry the necessary scientific work. Very little is known about boarfish and in light of development of the fishery by the RSW pelagic vessels, the KFO considered it was necessary to have the relevant biological information. Such information is central to devising rational management arrangements that will ensure the long-term sustainable future for this fishery. This is a new developing fishery, which has the potential to become a significant economic Irish fishery. Investment in the science at an early stage is paramount to that development.

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Better use of labelling techniques and access by non-EU products to the market are areas where Ireland calls for significant investigation. Application of existing rules needs to be enforced more rigorously to provide a level playing field for European fishermen and processors.

Structural assistance for the seafood industry has been an important element of the CFP since its inception and has been executed through various funding mechanisms over the years. Ireland believes that this support must be kept available and when the current European Fisheries Fund runs its course must be replaced with a funding instrument which is designed to deliver sustainability for the fishing industry.

In the case of Ireland, a disproportionate amount of available funding must be spent on Data Collection and Control and Enforcement due to its geographical location. Such issues must be taken into consideration with specific funding allocated to such activities.

Regionalisation and increased industry responsibility were key issues for consideration in the 2009 Green Paper. Ireland sees a major role for the Regional Advisory Councils in a future CFP and calls for their mandate to be re-assessed to enable a more effective role. Ireland draws attention to recent industry-managed measures which have been extremely successful and feels this trend can be expanded with more responsibility given to Producer Organisations and similar associations to carry out such projects.

Industry participation can have a significant impact on developing a culture of compliance but Ireland calls for greater transparency and access to data among Member States. Ireland carries an inordinate burden in this area due to the number of fishing vessels from other Member States which fish in Ireland's economic zone, and finds the current lack of real-time information contributes to a perception by Irish fishermen that there is not a level playing field in the application of the CFP.

At the outset of this CFP Green Paper Review the FIF held extensive consultations among its own members. All consultations centred around three precepts:

- clear objectives which integrate ecological, economic and social principles;
- simple, clear and effective rules; and
- active involvement of the industry.

This framework proved very effective in concentrating the discussions and ideas on the real issues. KFO, as the chairing organisation of the FIF during this process, found the format very valuable in providing a communication platform for its members. So it is gratifying to see that Ireland's official response as compiled by Dr Noel Cawley and his team have followed a similar theme, have obviously taken on board the FIF views and have presented them to the EU Commission in a coherent, simple and logical manner. This response from Ireland should be recognised as an important first step on the long road to hopefully developing a workable Common Fisheries Policy which is supported by the stakeholders and will deliver sustainable fisheries and fishing communities.

Important Dates April, May, June 2010

| DATE | MEETING | VENUE |
|-------------|--|---------------------|
| 8 April | NWWWRAC Focus Group Haddock Area VIA | Edinburgh |
| 8 April | EP Fisheries Committee Trade Aspects & Markets | Brussels |
| 12 April | Steering Group Cod Effort Management | Dublin |
| 13 April | Commission Future Funding on Fisheries | Brussels |
| 14&15 April | CMO Workshop | Madrid |
| 19&20 April | Four Parties Mackerel Meeting | Reykjavik (Iceland) |
| 19&20 April | Fisheries Council Meeting | Luxemburg |
| 21 April | Pelagic RAC Working Groups 1 & 11 and ExCom | Amsterdam |
| 22 April | Whitefish Quota Management Meeting | Dublin |
| 27 April | Extended Bureau of EAPO | Brugges |
| 28 April | Workshop CFP External Fisheries Policy | Brussels |
| 2&3 May | CFP Conference | La Coruna (Spain) |
| 7 May | NWWWRAC Executive Committee | Brussels |
| 18 May | Marine Institute & FIF Ecosystem Approach | Dublin |
| 19&20 May | Fisheries Council | Brussels |
| 28 May | KFO AGM | Killybegs |
| 1&3 May | ICES Advice Drafting Group | Copenhagen |
| 15 June | Pelagic RAC Working Groups 1 & 11 | Amsterdam |
| 22&23 June | Mini Symposium on Fisheries Data | Oranmore (Galway) |
| 25&26 June | Fish Ireland 2010 | Killybegs |
| 29&30 June | Fisheries Council | Luxemburg |
| 30 June | Bureau ACFA | Brussels |

Head Office: Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd.,
 Bruach na Mara, St. Catherine's Road, Killybegs, Co. Donegal.
 Tel: (074) 9731 089, (074) 9731 305, Fax: (074) 9731 577,
 Email: kfo@eircom.net Website: www.kfo.ie
 Dublin Office Tel: (01) 825 8846, Fax: (01) 825 8847