



main news

TACs & Quotas 2001

The Commission proposals for TACs and quotas for 2001 were issued at the end of November. These proposals showed massive reductions in the demersal stocks. Of the 29 demersal stocks which Ireland has an interest, the Commission proposed to drastically reduce 25 of these stocks, e.g. Hake VI&VII -74%, Cod VI -56%, Cod VII b-k -62%, Megrim VII -38%, Haddock VII -66%, Monkfish VI -25% and Nephrops VII -20%. On top of these massive reductions the Commission also proposed for the first time to fix TACs and quotas for deepwater species such as Black Scabbardfish, Argentines, Alfonsinos, Tusk, Roundnose Grenadier, Orange Roughy, Blue Ling, Ling and Red Seabream.

The KFO questioned the basis for these proposals and liaised very closely with Minister Frank Fahey and his officials both before and during the Fisheries Council on the 14/15 of December, to try to stop these proposals being agreed.

Prior to the Fisheries Council the EU / Norway negotiations were concluded with a satisfactory outcome for Ireland. As a result the Irish Mackerel quota was increased by 1,750 tonnes with no increase in the share of the Mackerel stock to Norway. A large reduction of 31,360 tonnes of Blue Whiting given to Norway in the waters off the West of Ireland was agreed. This reduction gives an increase of 5,000 tonnes in the Irish quota. The Saithe quota in area VI was increased by 2000 tonnes, providing a welcome increase of 25 tonnes in the small Irish quota.

After lengthy negotiations the EU Fisheries Ministers agreed a compromise package in the early hours of Friday morning the 15th of December. The KFO welcomed the package and congratulated the Minister and his officials on a successful outcome from an Irish viewpoint. The KFO had three objectives which the Minister and his officials attained during the negotiations. These related to preventing TACs and quotas on deepwater species, providing for stock recovery programmes and significantly reducing the cuts which were not scientifically justified. The proposal for deepwater species were scuttled, immediate stock recovery programmes have been agreed for Cod VI and Hake VI/VII and the massive reductions in demersal species were significantly reduced (see insert for full set of Irish quotas). In addition, a good deal was negotiated on Northern Albacore Tuna giving Ireland a quota of 3,158 tonnes for 2001 (11% of EU TAC) and providing for fifty vessels.

The outcome of both EU/Norway negotiations and the Fisheries Council were satisfactory from an Irish viewpoint and should enable the industry to operate in 2001 without significant financial loss. Of paramount importance in 2001 are the stock recovery programmes, in particular technical conservation measures and closed areas. The KFO intends to vigorously pursue these with its members in 2001.



Log onto <http://www.kfo.ie> to view the new homepage of the KFO website, which is pictured above.

Other news

New Look For KFO

The KFO has introduced a new corporate identity and image that represents a sea change for the organisation. The dynamic new identity is designed to further strengthen the KFO's position as Ireland's leading fishermen's organisation and firmly communicate its progressive agenda. It will be featured on all KFO materials in order to build a strong brand that is immediately recognisable.

The navy and green coloured logo comprises a symbolic fish that depicts the three categories of fishing that the KFO represents – pelagic, demersal and shellfish/inshore – and incorporates a wave.

The KFO is also developing a website to provide on-line information to members and other key audiences of the organisation. It is located at <http://www.kfo.ie> and will be fully operational in early 2001. The website will be a powerful marketing tool for the KFO given the geographical spread of members and other interested parties.



News in short

Thanks to KFO Directors

The current Board of Directors consists of Martin Howley Chairman, Kevin Mc Closkey Vice Chairman, Eamonn Mc Hugh, Cathal Boyle, Hugh Mc Bride, Michael Callaghan, Teddy O' Shea, John O' Donnell and Charles Boyle.

On behalf of the members we extend our thanks to the Directors for their dedication to the KFO throughout the year. The Directors regularly and voluntarily give up their time to attend meetings, and for this we are very thankful.

New Vessels

A number of vessels have already come into the fleet under the whitefish renewal scheme. We take this opportunity to express our congratulations and best wishes to all those fishermen who took up this initiative particularly KFO members: Declan and Jim Doogan, MFV Westbound; Pat and Sean Conneely, MFV Mark Amay; Denis Carbury, MFV Celtic Quest; Hugh McBride, MFV Heather Jane; Peter McBride, MFV Peadar Elaine; Brendan McGrath, MFV Avro Warrior; Patrick O'Malley, MFV An Capal Ban; Adrian McCleneghan, MFV Northern Celt; Eugene Hannigan, MFV Niamh Eoghan; Patrick McCleneghan, MFV Foyle Warrior; Adrian Boyle, MFV Girl Denise; and Richard Murphy, MFV The Three Brothers.

Kellybegs New Pier

On the 16th July 1999 Dr. Michael Woods TD the then Minister of the Marine and Natural Resources announced the new pier development for Killybegs at the cost of £20m. A lot of water has flowed in and out of the harbour since that announcement without any apparent sign of progress. Nevertheless the latest news from the Department of Marine is that while costs have increased to £35m the project has now got the green light and will be submitted for planning prior to Christmas. Hopefully we will all be around to see the project completed in 2002 or 2003. In the meantime the KFO will keep the pressure on to ensure that there is no slippage on commitments to develop Killybegs harbour for the years ahead. We will keep you informed of any further developments.

The Fuel Crisis

Under EU rules, fishermen cannot be given a direct subsidy to sustain their fishing activities. However the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources has made £4m available to help alleviate the rising cost of fuel.

To avail of this, fishermen must attend incentivised training modules on enhancing the quality and value of fish landed by Irish vessels. Further modules will take place after Christmas in best safety practice and techniques. A new grant scheme will be available to assist vessel owners to introduce fuel efficiency measures on their boats.

North West Pelagic Group

The North West Pelagic Group was set up in May 2000 by Minister for the Marine Frank Fahey, T.D. The objective he set for the Group was to maximise, through enhanced industry co-ordination and partnership, the integrated development of, and economic returns from, the North West Pelagic Industry. The Group was chaired by Padraic White and consisted of representatives from the IFPO, KFO, DFMA, IFPEA, MFC and Ministerial nominees. The Group had the support of a Technical Group consisting of BIM, MI, DoMNR and Enterprise Ireland.

The Group met on six occasions and completed an agreed report, which was forwarded to the Minister at the beginning of November. The report covers five key building blocks, namely stock assessment requirements, control and enforcement, establishing a first sales organisation, devolving local fisheries management responsibility, and developing the potential of the processing sector. The Group is looking forward to meeting the Minister on Wednesday 20th December and anticipates a positive response to the above issues.

Ireland submits report on Common Fisheries Policy

The National Strategy Review Group on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) recently published the Group's full report. It sets out the views of the Irish fishing industry on issues that should be incorporated into the new CFP when it is revised in 2002. The report comes at a very timely juncture to influence the European Commissions' green-paper on the CFP which is due to be published in the new year. The report covers 12 central areas, highlighting three key themes:

- (1) promoting the sustainability of fish stocks, through improved fishing methods to allow juvenile fish to escape, improved control and enforcement, and reducing fishing effort within the Irish Box;
- (2) providing for the socio-economic importance of the fishing industry in dependent coastal areas, so that they can adequately utilise the fish resources adjacent to them;
- (3) greater involvement by the fishing industry in scientific assessment, conservation, enforcement and environmental management.

The Group will continue in existence under the Chairmanship of Padraic White until the review is complete and will embark on a major lobbying exercise of the report in the New Year.

A full copy of the report is available from the BIM website at <http://www.bim.ie>

● New Era for Marketing Fish

On 1st January 2001, the new EU marketing regulation No. 104/2000 comes into effect, replacing regulation No. 3759/92. It brings with it changes for fishermen and producer organisations, particularly in the way they operate. The KFO will work diligently to limit the impact of this regulation on its members.

The regulation stipulates that producer organisations are to become more involved in the marketing and management of their members catch, through catch plans and the implementation of an operational programme to better match the quality and quantity of the product landed to market requirements. Fishermen too, have to realise that attitudes are changing and a new approach is needed particularly in relation to fish quality and handling, and the way it is placed on the market. It is envisaged that this will result in the reduction of withdrawals and consequently the amount eligible has been reduced to 8 per cent of landings. Where withdrawals are necessary, the carry-over scheme would be the preferred option and the amount eligible here has increased some 18 per cent. The KFO hopes to make more use of the carry-over scheme in the future.

The KFO is confident that with the co-operation of members it can work within the parameters of this regulation to achieve a better return for its members through improved quality and better management of catches.

Budget 2001

In advance of Budget 2001, all the fishing organisations (IFPO, IFO, ISWPO and KFO) prepared a proposal detailing both budgetary and non-budgetary measures that need to be implemented in order to ensure a viable economic future for the fishing industry. Proposed budgetary measures included:

- (1) The introduction of a Marine Fishing Allowance of £8,000 to be granted by way of deduction from taxable income in each year to fishermen who meet certain criteria.
- (2) A reduction in the personal rate of taxation for fishermen to 12.5 per cent.
- (3) That Class A PRSI benefits be made available to all fishermen whether they be employed or self-employed at a reduced rate of three percent.

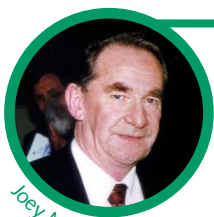
Despite extensive lobbying, none of the above were included in next years' Budget, however the KFO is firmly committed to pursuing these measures, until a satisfactory outcome is reached. Minister Fahey said that he will be continuing to pursue the case for special treatment on taxation and social insurance measures for fishermen, while working closely with fishermen and their representatives on all relevant fronts. Even though tax and social welfare measures were not included in the Budget, the Minister did succeed in securing significant funding for the sea fisheries sector, which is welcomed by the KFO.

Productive Sector Operational Programme

The National Plan 2000-2006 includes funding over seven years for the Productive Sector Operational Programme. The Productive Sector Operational Programme contains provision for funding Fisheries Development.

A total of £45m in national and EU support is earmarked for Fisheries Development covering three main areas: fleet development, supporting measures (e.g. quality initiatives and e-commerce) and decommissioning.

The KFO hopes that the Minister will announce the various schemes for grant aid early in the New Year.



Joey Murin

A Fond Farewell to Joey, Terri and George

Joey Murrin retired from the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation on the 1st October 2000. Joey has served the KFO and its members diligently for the past 22 years. If you dealt with Joey you would know him as being a hard man, a tough negotiator, maybe even awkward at times, but all in the line of duty and for the good of the KFO and its members, and indeed the fishing industry in general. Joey will take this as a compliment, and rightly so, as he did everything he could for the fishing industry. There was also a lighter side to Joey, which we at the KFO will remember him for. He was always good for a yarn and he had a way of winding people up just for a laugh and exiting before they could respond!



Terri Tully

While most of you knew about Joey retiring, you might not have known that Terri Tully the secretary for the KFO has also retired after 22 years. Terri was always friendly and courteous to those who contacted the KFO whether they were fishermen or clients of Irish Nationwide Building Society, which she also managed. This was very evident in the relationship she had with the other members of the staff who hold her in high esteem. Terri's ability to remember people was a great asset to the KFO, and organising meetings and functions was her speciality. She visits the office regularly and has told us that she is enjoying retirement immensely.



George Flaherty

George Flaherty the caretaker for Bruach na Mara for the past 22 years also retired last October. George married Veronica and settled in Killybegs where they had four children, Mary, Helen, George and Catherine. He has contributed, in no small way, to the success of the KFO by creating a good working environment at Bruach na Mara and in doing so, kept the good image of the KFO to the fore. Anyone who has visited Bruach na Mara over the years could not fail to see how well the grounds and premises were kept.

The Directors, members and staff wish to express their deepest gratitude to Joey, Terri and George for their contributions to the KFO and wish them good health and happiness on their retirement.

Editorial



by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



This newsletter is a new initiative by the KFO staff to keep its members informed of both national and EU developments on sea fisheries issues, and to highlight KFO responses and new initiatives which the organisation is undertaking. It is intended that the newsletter will be simple, informative and not too detailed, and will be issued three to four times a year.

Since I have taken over from Joey on the 1st of October, it has been an extremely busy time for the organisation with a number of major issues on the agenda such as: EU/Norway negotiations, fuel crisis, Finalisation of Common Fisheries Policy Report, The Training and Employment Task Force, The Budget Submission, TAC and Quota proposals for 2001 and Cod Recovery Programme for area VI. The KFO has and will continue to remain actively involved in these issues thus ensuring that the interests of its members are noted and taken on board in any decisions.

The KFO is going through a period of change at the moment. Some of these changes are highlighted in this newsletter, such as our new logo; a new computerisation network system, including the setting up of a KFO website; and the major changes which come into force on 1st January 2001 for Producers Organisations (POs) under the new EU marketing regulation, which requires POs to produce yearly management plans for certain stocks and reduces the quantities of fish which can be supported through the withdrawal system.

As I write this letter, Joey and I are heading out to Brussels for the annual TAC and quota negotiations. This year the Commission has proposed massive cuts in the whitefish species and for the first time are proposing that TACs and quotas be introduced for certain deepwater species. Should these cuts and TACs and quotas on deepwater species be agreed by the Fisheries Council they would have a massive negative impact on the viability of the Irish whitefish vessels. The KFO has already put down a marker for

Minister Frank Fahey that these proposals are unacceptable, and for the most part are not scientifically justified, and do not take account of other measures such as technical conservation measures and closed areas. Hopefully by the time you are reading this, a satisfactory outcome will have been agreed.

The Budget which was announced on the 6th of December was unsatisfactory from a fishing industry viewpoint as it did not include any of the proposals on taxation and social welfare issues, which all of the fishing organisations (IFPO, IFO, ISWPO and KFO) had lobbied extensively to be included. However this is not the end of the matter, and the KFO intends to continue to vigorously pursue the issue until a satisfactory outcome is reached.

You will see elsewhere in this newsletter an article on the retirement of Joey Murrin, Terri Tully and George Flaherty. I'm wishing all three a very happy retirement. I must pay a special tribute to Joey who has worked tirelessly and effectively over 22 years for the KFO members and has been a tremendous help and support to me over the last three months.

"Finally I hope you find this new initiative useful and informative and may I wish all our Directors, members and their families a happy Christmas and prosperous fishing new year.

I look forward to working closely with you in the New Year."



Members news

Vessel and Crew Insurance Deal for KFO Members

While looking at new services which the KFO could provide for members the issue of insurance for vessels and crews came to the fore. It is generally accepted that owners are paying over-the-odds for insurance on their vessels due to the lack of competition. With regard to this, the KFO met with MARSH Ireland Ltd., a major insurance company, which outlined in detail the vessel and personal insurance products they have on offer.

"It is important that fishermen look to the future and provide for a secure income for themselves and their families on retirement or during times of ill health."

Unfortunately, for one reason or another, most fishermen tend not to have personal insurance, or have provided for the future. The KFO, through a partnership with MARSH Ireland Ltd., hopes to address this by providing a service covering a range of products, such as life assurance, personal accident, permanent health cover and pensions. The KFO hopes to be in a position to provide the crews of KFO vessels incentives to avail of these services.

In relation to vessel insurance, MARSH Ireland Ltd. is confident that they can develop a package, which would meet the needs of the owners and provide cheaper insurance for their vessels. This arrangement would be of mutual benefit to the KFO and its members.

