

RAMBLINGS NASAC NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Coordinators,

NOVEMBER 2009

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As I worked on a detail of the 2008 Aquaculture Grant Program today, I found myself referring back to presentations and hallway conversations that happened at the NASAC annual meeting in Denver. I really, really appreciate Scott Leach and the Colorado Dept. of Agric. for hosting us and Schering-Plough Animal Health for sponsoring the meeting. I've also been glad we followed Scott's advice and were there in July. Based on the recent weather reports, we may have been there one of the few months they weren't shoveling snow in the places we toured.

Since the annual meeting, we have been busy on a number of items. Here is a quick summary:

We reviewed and commented on the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan. Overall, it looks like a good guidance document. Congratulations to Dr. Jill Rolland and Dr. Gary Egrie with USDA for their hard work. Later in the newsletter, you can learn more about the Plan and see the comments Debra submitted. Thanks to everyone who took time to comment. The APHIS regulatory affairs group is now reviewing all comments that were submitted. We'll keep you posted when we hear more.

Oyster harvest is on the radar now as we follow the recent FDA regulation change and the response by the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. Both groups want to reduce the incidence of problems caused by *Vibrio vulnificus* but are not in agreement as to how it should be done. It is definitely a hot issue and one for all coastal states to watch. Both sides of the issue can be read at <http://www.issc.org/>. Thanks to Sean Bowen from Massachusetts for making me aware of it.

We continue to be involved with the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force through our very capable representative, Paul Zajicek. There is no doubt aquatic invaders have changed the regulatory face of our industry. Paul just attended the ANSTF meeting and has an excellent summary later in the newsletter. Great Lake coordinators need to pay attention to the Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Strategy.

During the NASAC meeting, we met Dr. Chris Weible and Saba Siddiki from the University of Colorado Denver. They proposed a study of the

aquaculture industry and Debra and I have since helped them refine it. Some of you will receive a phone call from them as they work to gather information on the industry in your state. Following that, all of us will have the opportunity to participate in a short web-based survey. Please do what you can to help them. I think it is a study that really has potential to help NASAC as well as the industry.

Speaking of the meeting, it was great to have three people join us for their first NASAC meeting: Sean Bowen with the Massachusetts Dept. of Agric. Resources, Sarah Jorgensen with the South Dakota Dept. of Agric., and Laura Wise with the Arkansas Dept. of Agric.. They as well as new contacts for Delaware and Minnesota have been added to the coordinator list on the NASAC site at <http://nasac.net/>. Dr. John Ewart is with the Delaware Aquaculture Resource Center at the University of Delaware and David Weinand is with the Minnesota Dept. of Agric. Thank you all for your willingness to be a point of contact for your state.

If you are planning to go to Aquaculture America in San Diego, March 1-5, please let Joe Myers know (609) 984-2502 or joseph.myers@ag.state.nj.us. Debra and I will likely not be able to attend but Joe has agreed to head up a short meeting which will allow coordinators to touch base mid-year. It was a good experience the first time we set aside some time to meet during Aquaculture America 2008 and I hope it works to do it again.

I concluded my note in the last newsletter saying, "I'm glad to be able to say I had little to do with planning (the Colorado meeting)". It looks like that will not be the case for next year's meeting. We will be joining the US Trout Farmers Assoc. and meeting in Branson, Missouri September 9-11, 2010. As far as I know, it will be a first for NASAC to have a joint meeting and I am looking for good things. If it goes well, we may do something similar in the future; however, Robins Buck is planning to host NASAC in Virginia in May 2011. I am definitely looking forward to that.

Remember that NASAC is working on issues concerning aquaculture throughout the year, not just during the annual meeting. If there is anything we can do to help, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the Board members.

Bart Hawcroft

LYNNE CANTER, Editor
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VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Debra Sloan
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From the mountains of WNC ...

The National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) provides a good template to develop federal and state programs. It is a voluntary program whose mission is to protect wild and cultured fisheries. Where do we go from here?

If you have not read the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan please do. The URL is:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/aquaculture/downloads/naahp.pdf

I strongly encourage you to take a look at the comments submitted to APHIS at:
<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0096>

I reviewed all of the comments APHIS received and follows are my findings:

1. There are two areas being addressed, aquatic animal health management for public and private aquaculture as well as setting/raising standards to meet international trade requirements. These will have to be addressed concurrently.
2. There is overwhelming support for developing an Advisory Committee.
3. State Veterinarians and their organizations weighed in, this is a positive step for US aquatic animal health.
4. The wildlife agencies and their organization expressed concern over states jurisdiction and the lack of coordination among states for creating aquatic animal health regulations. A national database of state fish health regulations needs to be created and maintained.
5. The need for adequate funding is paramount and if funds for this Plan and the programs are not sourced and secured it is very unlikely that the goals of the Plan will be achieved. The responsibility for securing funding should be shared among all of the stakeholders across the board.

I wrote the comments for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Dr. David Marshall, our State Veterinarian, endorsed them and made the submission to APHIS. This is a very positive step for our state.

I wanted to share NCDA's letter with you. I took a very general approach because I see that there is a great deal of work that has to be done on the state and federal, public and private levels *before* an implementation strategy for the NAAHP can be reached.

October 16, 2009

Docket No. APHIS-2008-0096
Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8
4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

Dear Sir/Madam:

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan. This work is a good beginning for developing a comprehensive strategy for health management and protection of the cultured and wild aquatic animals of the US. Development and implementation of the Plan will prove challenging since this segment of agriculture, aquaculture, is very diverse and more complex than any other type of livestock that APHIS oversees. Both the public and private sectors of aquaculture will have to actively and equally participate to achieve the mission of the NAAHP.

We submit the following observations and recommendations:

Establishing and consistently funding a National Advisory Committee for Aquatic Animal Health (NACAAH) is critical and needs to include an array of stakeholders. When considering the creation of this committee the first thing that has to be recognized is that US aquaculture, public and private, covers many species of aquatic animals that are cultured in a numerous types of production systems, different climate zones and diverse watersheds. Each is equally important and input is needed for sound resource management and protection. Therefore, the NACAAHP may want to consider forming regional subcommittees to address specific needs or actions at the local level. Those subcommittees could report the findings to the NACAAHP for consideration and possible action. This would provide equal involvement of stakeholders throughout the US and potentially foster greater success for achieving the NAAHP mission.

One of the greatest challenges this Plan faces is that its scope includes both cultured and wild aquatic animals. That poses a challenge and thus underscores the necessity of state wildlife agencies and private fisheries working together to manage the aquatic animals and

water resources. This could be a part of the subcommittee work and it is an essential key to create an open and highly active communication network with sound management as its focus. If clear lines of communication are not developed on both the regional and national level the likelihood of the NAAHP being effective is marginal. The creation and continued funding of the NACAAH is the linchpin of the NAAHP's success and our ability to protect and preserve our natural resources and aquatic animals.

One aspect of the NAAHP mission is to:

→ Facilitate the legal movement of all aquatic animals, their eggs, and products in interstate and international commerce;

Currently the states do not have standardized state aquatic animal health regulations which make interstate movement of live aquatic animals difficult and very expensive. Creation and maintenance of a database for all state regulations and contact persons for aquatic animal health is a necessary resource for public and private commerce. The competent authority of each state should provide regulations or information stating *specifically* what is required to transport live aquatic animals into or through the state. Often these records are difficult to find. The regional subcommittees could assist in developing and maintaining their part of a national database of state aquatic animal health regulations.

Specific health screening for importation of live aquatic animals into the US needs to be rigorous to adequately protect our water resources and aquatic animals. Performing a risk assessment of the aquatic animals that are currently being imported should be considered. Measures must be taken to ramp up the US's aquatic animal health programs to protect the wild and farm raised fish. Additionally, better health management programs would enhance active international commerce.

Research, surveillance, diagnosis and prevention of aquatic animal disease and the spread of pathogens is the central core of the NAAHP's mission but to fully realize its mission consistent funding is required on the federal, state and local levels. Research funding is required to further understand the impacts and implications of diseases. Diagnostic capabilities are very limited and more certified laboratories are needed to have the capacity to meet the growing demand for diagnostic services. Great discussions have taken place regarding surveillance and how this can be done efficiently, accurately, and cost effectively. To better understand and manage the fisheries resources, surveillance must be included in the process. APHIS has the ability to perform these tasks and with the aid of the states good data could be gathered, especially for the pathogen of concern today, VHS. A network of certified labs for diagnostics must be supported and funded. Currently there are too few labs to perform the testing and the costs are a burden to small aqua-farmers. The cost of testing has to be addressed if we are going to protect the family aquaculture enterprises. Prevention of diseases through good farm/facility management practices is imperative and it begins with good husbandry. Producers should be taught best aquatic animal health management practices on the state and local levels. Funding to support this training is vital.

If US aquaculture is going to continue to enjoy a slow but steady growth, the citizens of the US need to invest in protecting the fisheries of our nation. It will take a well coordinated effort to obtain and manage the financial resources required to adopt the NAAHP on the federal, state, and local levels. This will be the charge of the NACAAH to secure sufficient funding to fully develop, implement and sustain the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan. In these times of lean budget it becomes more imperative to carefully choose what is funded and providing the money to protect one of our national treasures, our fisheries, is very important to our generation and those to come.

NCDA&CS supports the concept of the NAAHP and looks forward to participating with USDA APHIS as this Plan is implemented. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Marshall, NCDA&CS, State Veterinarian

cc: Dr. Tom Ray
Debra Sloan, NCDA&CS - Aquaculture
Matt Parker, NCDA&CS - Aquaculture
Ron Fish, NCDA&CS
Kyle Briggs, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

If any of you want to talk about the NAAHP or have comments, please feel free to contact me.

Debra

AQUACULTURE NEWS

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National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP)

The comment period for the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) closed October 20 and I would like to thank everyone who submitted comments concerning it. Several states submitted comments of their own and several of you were very helpful in the submission of comments on behalf of NASAC. Our comments are below and all the comments are posted online at <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#docketDetail?R=APHIS-2008-0096>. Overall, I thought the Plan was well done and I appreciate the efforts of the three agencies (NOAA, APHIS, and USFWS) in assembling it. I've read nothing but favorable comments about the National Advisory Committee for Aquatic Animal Health that was proposed in the Plan. Please remain involved as that Committee is formed and regulations are developed. In another article in this newsletter you can read Debra's thoughts on that. Here are our comments on the NAAHP:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the draft National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP) for the United States. The Plan does well establishing the need to better protect and serve farmed and wild aquatic animals. We are in favor of several proposals in the Plan, most specifically:

1. The creation of an advisory committee that can act as a sounding board and support the Federal agencies in the implementation of the NAAHP. This is a critical component.
2. Increased surveillance to credibly define the status of diseases for our international trading partners. It may also help in protecting wild aquatic animals and assist researchers in their understanding of certain diseases including their range.

We offer to the National Aquatic Animal Health Task Force several suggestions for improving the Plan:

1. In addition to the proposed creation of databases to manage 1) surveillance information and 2) researcher interests and research projects, we strongly recommend the creation of a database containing state, tribal, and territorial aquatic animal health regulations along with program contacts.
2. In section 2.2, current roles, responsibilities, and legal authorities, the roles of Federal partners should be explained further. There is no mention of 1) US Fish and Wildlife Service overseeing nine fish health centers and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership; 2) US Geological Survey's Leetown Science Center and Western Fisheries Research Center; 3) US Department of Agriculture Agriculture Research Service laboratories operating in Alabama, Arkansas, and Maryland; or 4) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrations' Ecotoxicology and Environmental Fish Health Program.
3. The table in section 3.4 demonstrates there are a number of pathogens that have bearing on aquaculture; however, we would recommend further information be included. For instance, what animals are affected by the listed "Program Aquatic Animal Pathogen" (PAAP) would be helpful. Also, a discussion of the reasoning behind why some pathogens are recommended for inclusion as PAAPs while others are not.
4. We would encourage you to include the five Regional Aquaculture Centers in the outreach and educational efforts of chapters 8 and 9. These Centers funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, formerly CSREES, do an excellent job producing workshops as well as factsheets on a variety of aquaculture topics.
5. Consider adding an implementation table for the action items that are identified within the plan. It would be good to clarify who (Task Force, Federal agencies, states, etc.) will address the requirements.

Thank you for your efforts on the Plan and the opportunity to comment. Please don't hesitate to contact us if there are any questions on our suggestions.

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Governor Kaine Announces New Regulation to Protect Seaside Waters for Aquaculture Operations - Regulation will reduce shellfish condemnations on the Eastern Shore -

WILLIS WHARF - Governor Timothy M. Kaine today announced a new regulation to reduce shellfish condemnations on the Eastern Shore by protecting clam and oyster production in seaside waters. The regulation ensures that the best wastewater disposal methods are evaluated, resulting in the least environmental impact. Growth and changing land uses on the Eastern Shore have increased the frequency and amount of wastewater discharged from businesses and localities that can pollute seaside waters.

"Clams and oysters are vital to Virginia's economy and thriving environment," Governor Kaine said. "This new regulation protects the seaside waters that clams and oysters need to thrive. In addition, it will safeguard important shellfish habitat areas and the sustainability of Virginia's aquaculture industry by providing additional protection for these waters on the Eastern Shore."

The new regulation, developed by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and approved by the State Water Control Board, requires an analysis of alternatives for new or increased wastewater discharges that would result in a condemnation of the water for shellfish harvesting. A condemnation signifies that shellfish from the seaside waters are unfit for market because of the potential for bacterial contamination.

The analysis will determine whether the method for discharging wastewater prevents pollutants from entering the seaside waters, as well as whether the method is cost-effective for businesses and localities. This process will reduce shellfish condemnations on the Eastern Shore.

In 2008, aquaculture operations generated approximately \$40 million in revenue in the Commonwealth. The new regulation will enhance high quality waters that are especially well-suited for shellfish or aquaculture operations.

Clams and oysters help remove algae, nutrients, bacteria and other contaminants from the water. These waters are home to blue crabs and underwater grasses and support waterfowl and shorebirds. In addition, ecotourism depends on these healthy coastal resources that help sustain a seaside kayaking water trail and bird watching.

The regulation supports the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at DEQ, which strives to protect coastal resources and ensure the growth of sustainable industries such as shellfish farming and ecotourism that depend on high water quality.

Today's announcement comes as Governor Kaine continues to advance his "Renew Virginia" initiative-an effort to promote renewable energy, create green jobs, and encourage preservation of the environment. During his administration, Governor Kaine has incentivized the production of cleaner energy, surveyed the emissions of facilities previously grandfathered out of the Clean Air act, dedicated over a billion dollars to Chesapeake Bay cleanup, protected nearly 350,000 acres of open space, and led the effort to promote regional cooperation to combat climate change.

For more information on Renew Virginia, visit www.governor.virginia.gov.

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**Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
November 4-5, 2009, Silver Spring, Maryland**

There has been another turnover in agency representatives co-chairing the Task Force and the program managers at USFWS that oversee aquatic nuisance species (ANS) responsibilities. There have also been subtle changes in ANS policy and strategy. The policy change consists of asking each of the six regional panels (<http://www.anstaskforce.gov/panels.php>) for their funding needs which resulted in a range of requests and amounts. As examples, the Western and Mississippi Basin regional panels requested \$2.3 and \$2.5 million, respectively, while the Great Lakes Regional Panel and Gulf and South Atlantic regional panels requested \$.5 and \$1.0 million, respectively. Funds for state ANS management plans and the regional panels flow through USFWS and there was real interest expressed by the agency in utilizing this information to guide their budgeting process.

The subtle strategy change was a shift to a “plan” focus: state ANS management plans (<http://www.anstaskforce.gov/stateplans.php>) and national species management plans (<http://www.anstaskforce.gov/control.php>). Plans appear to be the favored mechanism to manage funds with the expectation that the *Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan for U.S. Western Waters* requested by Senator Diane Feinstein, approved by the Task Force during the meeting, will set the stage for increased Congressional and agency action. Currently, there are 32 state ANS plans, two interstate plans and four drafts in preparation for Task Force approval. The Obama Administration has funneled money to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (<http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/glri/>). Great Lake states aquaculture coordinators should pay attention to a plan, Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Strategy (<http://glrc.us/strategy.html>), created in 2005 that will be implemented using these funds. This plan is not aquaculture friendly.

Aquaculture Coordinators should become involved with their regional panels or state ANS management plans. Several state ANS plans are becoming outdated and revisions can be expected.

Upcoming events to keep an eye on or participate in:

Vector Management: A Prevention Solution workshop - December 2, 2009 in Baltimore, Maryland. The focus is on preventing ANS introduction via pathways and vectors (i.e., live seafood trade, aquaculture, water gardening, aquarium hobby, etc.). For registration and full details visit: <http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/vectorworkshop/>.

EPA is managing a rotenone treatment of six miles of the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal just below the electric carp barriers that is scheduled for the second week of December because of barrier maintenance. Expect a high level of media interest. Contact Sam Finney, Sam_Finney@fws.gov, for more information.

National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) – Jan. 10-14, 2010 in Washington DC. This is an expansion to an all taxa format of the successful Weed Awareness Week that is focused on raising Congressional and public awareness. Themes will be Climate Change, Energy (incl. biofuels), and the Green Economy. Events include a networking event that has attracted 27 organizations and a walk-on-the-hill. Visit <http://www.nisaw.org> for more information.

International Symposium on Genetic Biocontrol of Invasive Fish – June 21-24, 2010, Minneapolis, MN. The focus is on technical prospects and risks associated with managing fish with genetic biocontrol strategies. A proceedings will be produced. Visit <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/ais/biocontrol> for more information.

The USFWS has proposed a management structure to implement the *Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass and Silver Carps in the United States* (http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Documents/Carps_Management_Plan.pdf). NASAC is in the mix and will be contacted with an invitation to join the effort.

The Task Force’s spring meeting is scheduled for the first week in May 2010 in Portland, Maine, to coincide with the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species (regional) Panel meeting (<http://www.northeastans.org/>).

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October 26, 2009

NAA Exhibits at ADA Conference

As part of an overall strategy to increase public awareness of the quality and wholesomeness of U.S. farm-raised seafood and help build markets, the National Aquaculture Association recently staffed a booth at the American Dietetic Association Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo in Denver. This was an ideal venue for NAA since most dietitians and other health professionals are aware of the dietary recommendations that advise Americans to eat at least two seafood meals per week to maintain good health. However, this group also had a number of specific questions about product safety, environmental impact, possible contaminants, and imported seafood.



Several of the conference speakers presented very positive data about the value of farmed seafood especially in terms of omega-3 fatty acids (these are the important nutrients that play a positive role in coronary heart disease prevention and provide a host of other health benefits), but were not equipped to address concerns generated as a result of negative media attention. Because NAA was there to answer questions, cite risk/benefit studies, explain the benefits of actual seafood consumption versus fish oil capsules, address feed concerns, speak to best management practices and environmental impact, talk about FDA's list of low mercury fish, many of which are farm-raised, and distribute copies of the "NAA Question and Answer" brochure, it allowed NAA staff to allay concerns and help attendees better understand and appreciate the U.S. aquaculture industry.

Participating in the Expo opened channels of communication between NAA and a very enthusiastic group of seafood advocates. It provided the opportunity to explain the many steps that the U.S. aquaculture industry takes to ensure product wholesomeness, maintain environmental integrity, and bring highly nutritious food to consumers. Talking to a wide range of users sparked ideas for a number of joint projects focused on human nutrition and farm-raised seafood.



Many of the over 12,000 conference attendees teach nutrition courses, write for trade magazines, and reach large consumer audiences through programs such as extension, military feeding operations, and the school lunch program. This magnifies the outreach of the effort. The trade show booth was busy throughout the three days of the show, lots of questions were answered, and alliances were built.

The NAA's participation at the American Dietetic Association conference, the 2009 Boston Seafood Show and the 2009 National Restaurant Association Conference and the printing of the NAA Question and Answer brochure were made possible by a grant from the United Soybean Board. These activities, along with Linda O'Dierno joining the NAA staff as Outreach Specialist, are the beginning of a very active campaign by the NAA to build public confidence and appreciation of U.S. farm-raised seafood



!!!! IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR NASAC DUES !!!!

Don't forget to pay your NASAC dues for the upcoming fiscal year. Membership in NASAC is important. The stronger our association is the louder our voice will be heard when testifying or commenting on aquaculture issues. Dues are good from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. A form for membership is included with this newsletter. If you have questions concerning dues contact Joseph Myers, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Fish and Seafood Development, PO Box 330, Trenton, NJ 08625, (609) 984-2502, (609) 633-7229 FAX, email joseph.myers@ag.state.nj.us



**NASAC WEBSITE
WWW.NASAC.NET**



THE NEWSLETTER IS A GREAT AVENUE FOR NETWORKING. LET'S HEAR FROM YOUR STATE ON ISSUES, MEETINGS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

DIRECTORY OF STATE AQUACULTURE COORDINATORS

As changes occur (**retirement, resignation, etc**) please send the new information to Lynne Canter, nasac@nasac.net

It is very important to keep your state's information current. Without the correct email or address your State will not receive the quarterly newsletter or important information disseminated concerning aquaculture issues. You can get an up to date copy of the Directory of State Aquaculture Coordinators from the NASAC website:

www.nasac.net

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STATE AQUACULTURE COORDINATORS
(NASAC)

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INVOICE/MEMBERSHIP FORM
DUES 2009/2010

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Please remit annual membership dues for **fiscal year July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010**. Please remit payment by the end of the first quarter, September 30, 2009. MAKE CHECKS payable to NASAC and remit to:

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