



NFF News

IN THIS ISSUE

- NFF AGM Report
- New Chair of Seafish
- Food Hygiene rating Scheme
- Minimum Wage
- Project Inshore
- The Apprentice
- SSPO News
- Cardiff Harbour Festival
- Scottish Salmon
- Quota Allocation Talks
- Common Fisheries Policy
- Norovirus
- Smoke Problems
- Ken's Column
- Diary Dates

Federation Presidency Moves to Wales

Jonathan Adams unanimously elected NFF President



New Chair of Seafish

Elaine Hayes was appointed Chair of the Board of Seafish on 1st January 2013

The announcement by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs was made with the agreement of the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Environment in Scotland, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern



Ireland and the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food Fisheries and European programmes in Wales. Elaine Hayes will oversee the strategic direction of Seafish for three years.

Elaine is also the Chair of the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. She is a member of the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and an expert advisor to the Torbay Harbour Authority.

She began her career in the water industry before moving to the not-for-profit sector where she took senior management roles with the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. She has held a range of appointments including a Governor at Ridgeway School, serving on the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Advisory Committee and being a member of the Environment Agency's Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committees for the south east and south west. Elaine has a degree in Animal Physiology and a Masters in Aquatic Resource Management.

Suzanne Lyons 1956-2012

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Suzanne Ellen Lyons (Sue Lyons).

Former joint-secretary of the London Fish and Poultry Retailers Association and a great supporter of the Federation's Conferences, Banquets and Craft Championships. A service in celebration of her life 24th July 1956 - 28th December 2012 was held at South Essex Crematorium, Corbets Tey on 14th January 2013. She will be greatly missed.



NFF Presidency Moves to Wales continued...

At the Annual General Meeting held on 4th February 2013 in London, Jonathan Adams was unanimously elected President. Jonathan Adams takes on the mantle from Gary Hooper who has been a very proactive President, networking with organisations on such issues as training, marketing and legislation and through his enthusiasm for the British Fish Craft Championships he has expressed his passion for fishmongering.

Gary successfully modernised the Federation's website and has included regular industry related tweets. During his term of office, Gary represented the Federation at the Lord Mayor of London Show, the Billingsgate Market Harvest of the Sea services, the Centenary Service of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen at St. Pauls Cathedral, Poulterers' Company Michaelmas luncheons and has most recently become a member of the Billingsgate Ward Club.

The Federation's own 80th Anniversary celebrations were masterminded by Gary and the Federation extends grateful thanks to him for his tireless work in furthering the interests of the Federation during the past 3 years. Gary's wife Caroline has been a tremendous supporter during his term of office and is also thanked for her enthusiastic dedication. Gary will continue his good work for the Federation by taking on the role of Chief Organiser for the British Fish Craft Championships®, continuing to manage the website and represent the Federation on such matters as training, marketing and legislation. Our incoming President, Jonathan Adams, is a hands on Managing Director of E Ashton Fishmongers, Cardiff, he continues to do their buying and selling and catering contracts. He is a member and keen supporter of the Fish Industry Golf Society (FIGS) and owns two race horses one of which is jointly owned with a Grimsby fish wholesaler. Since their move to Cardiff, Jonathan has been the Chief organiser of the British Fish Craft Championships® but will relinquish this in his year of Presidency.



Andrew Kenny of Cross of York, was voted Vice President. Andrew has been in the retail fish trade all his life and has in recent years taken over the day to day running of the business from his father John, a Past President of the Federation. Andrew has been on the Federation's Council for a number of years and has enthusiastically supported conferences, banquets and Craft Championships.

Pictured: Giles Shaw, Company Secretary and Honorary Treasurer

Other news from the 80th Annual General Meeting held at Fishmongers Hall, London on Monday 4th February 2013.

Giles Shaw was re-elected Company Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and members of the Council were also re-elected with two new faces being welcomed to the meeting. Richard Home and Iain Campbell. Members approved the audited accounts and the Report of the Council for the year ended 30th September 2012. Copies distributed with this issue of NFF News. The AGM was followed by a meeting of the Council and the election of the Executive and Finance Committee.

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Progress Update

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have reported that they are close to full local authority uptake of FHRS their work on promoting the use of the scheme is getting into full swing.

A UK-wide programme will begin in February of consumer communication activity to promote the use of both the FHRS and the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) in Scotland. The campaign will be live in time for Valentine's Day and will aim to challenge consumers' assumption that they can judge hygiene standards of food outlets by appearance alone. A variety of media will be used including national and local press, outdoor advertising (Wales and Scotland only), online advertising and mobile phone technology. The FSA will also be engaging with relevant partners to help promote the ratings and will be making a range of assets available to them and to local authorities to enable them to participate in the campaign and beyond.

Information is now available to the public at www.food.gov.uk/ratings for over 369,000 food businesses in the three countries – an estimated 73% of those within scope of the FHRS. An Applications Programme Interface (API) provides open access to the published information. The data will be particularly useful to app developers and to food businesses with multiple outlets for assessing performance across their chain. Details and guidance can be found at <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/open-data/en-GB>. The API is being further developed so that the numerical scores that underlie FHRS ratings – these scores indicate how hygienically the food is handled, the condition of the structure of the premises, and how the business manages what it does to make sure food is safe to eat – are also provided.

Bill in Wales and Impact of legislation in England and Northern Ireland

The Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Bill was debated by the National Assembly for Wales on 22nd January. The Assembly voted unanimously in support and the Bill was passed. Royal assent is expected by early March and the Act is expected to come into force late this year.

The FHRS will be nation-wide in Northern Ireland very shortly so the FSA is now assessing the impact of mandatory display of ratings at food outlets in Northern Ireland. Views and comments are being sought by means of a public consultation.

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s10424/Committee%20stage%201%20Report.pdf>

The FSA Board will assess the impact of introducing parallel legislation for the mandatory display of FHRS ratings in England and Northern Ireland once the roll-out of the scheme is complete. In England there will be an assessment of the impact that legislation might have and the FSA will work closely with stakeholders on this.

Related to this work in the three countries, the FSA have commissioned repeat research to establish the proportion of businesses displaying their ratings under the current voluntary scheme. The field work for this is underway and the findings reported in April.

Minimum Wage

from 1st October 2012

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is a minimum amount per hour that most workers in the UK are entitled to be paid.

Current NMW rates

- £6.19** the main rate for workers aged 21 and over
- £4.98** the 18-20 rate
- £3.68** the 16-17 rate for workers above school leaving age but under 18
- £2.65** the apprentice rate, for apprentices under 19 or 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

Those of compulsory school age are not entitled to NMW. Some other employment rights are also different.

More information is available at
www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/TheNationalMinimumWage



Federation Member Offer

RECEIVE 10% DISCOUNT on Fishing News

The only weekly fishing newspaper covering the UK and Ireland.

Including the latest news, vessel profiles and legislative changes and also covering ports and fish prices information plus much more.

For further information or to receive a subscription at a 10% discount please call +44207 0295709 quoting Fishmongers.

Are you passionate about cooking great food?

Do you have a friend or partner who shares your enthusiasm for entertaining and cooking up a storm in the kitchen?

Boundless Productions, the production company behind The Apprentice, is on the hunt for the best amateur cooking couples from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. If selected, each amateur cooking team will be asked to showcase their cooking and entertaining skills in front of some of the country's top professional chefs.

We are looking for REAL homemade food, cooked by REAL people with REAL passion. Whether you're siblings, work colleagues, life-long friends or romantically involved we're looking for couples who share a history and the ability to serve up some exceptional food.

If you think you and your cooking partner has what it takes to represent your region in the UK and Ireland's ultimate cooking test we'd love to hear from you.

Jake on 0207 861 8215 or
jake.smith@boundlessproductions.tv

Project Inshore

The inshore waters around our English coast are some of the most fertile in the world. However, a major stumbling block to getting them classified as sustainable to date has been the cost of assessing them.

Many species simply do not have a scientific assessment which means it is difficult to classify them as being sustainable and therefore knowing what level of exploitation is acceptable. Without that assessment it is difficult for many outlets to be able to take the products and label them as sustainable. Project Inshore aims to rectify that situation.

Project Inshore is an ambitious new initiative led by Seafish, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Shellfish Association of Great Britain which was officially launched on 8th June 2012 coinciding with World Oceans Day. The UK Fisheries Minister, Richard Benyon noted at the time that Project Inshore "...should help to ensure that our inshore fleet can continue to flourish, that fish stocks are managed sustainably and our marine environment is given the protection it needs". This project will carry out MSC pre-assessments for an extensive range of fisheries around the English coast. The results of these assessments will form the basis for Strategic Sustainability Reviews for English Inshore fisheries to provide a road map to guide future management decisions.

The funding for the project comes from a diverse range of sources notably the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), the Sustainable Fisheries Fund and industry (Seafish, UK retailers and processors). Other partners in the project include the Marine Stewardship Council, Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) and Seaweb's Seafood Choices.

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (previously the Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee) piloted a multi species fishery methodology in 2010 with its 'Navigating the Future' Inshore Fisheries Sustainability Pilot (Dapling et al., 2010). Navigating the Future utilised the MSC pre-assessment criteria to evaluate the performance of 26 local inshore fisheries in their district. This pilot project was led by Tim Dapling, the Chief Officer of the Sussex IFCA and the findings were revealed at a launch at Fishmongers' Hall. Project Inshore proposes to carry this model forward on a nationwide scale for key commercial fisheries operating within the remaining IFCA districts. Stage 1 of the project, was to map out all of the inshore fisheries around our coast, looking at 57 different species and considering their commercial importance. This stage of the project is now complete and the report has now been published.

The Apprentice

A real asset to any small business

An apprentice can be a real asset to a small business such as a fishmonger or wholesale fishmerchant. Apprenticeships can provide a once in a lifetime opportunity to a young person to get trained, get a qualification and get started on a worthwhile career. Not only that, but apprentices have been shown to be real assets to businesses, bringing with them enthusiasm, dedication and loyalty.

In the words of one employer, "Our apprentices are enthusiastic and hard working, and they are making a real difference across the business". Justine Fosh of the National Skills Academy at a recent employer debate on food industry apprenticeships said that the number of apprentices in the food industry has trebled in the last 18 months.

So why aren't more fishmongers taking on a young apprentice and investing in their future?

- Perhaps it's because they don't know about the funding available to contribute to the cost of training?
- Perhaps they are unaware of the additional one off Apprenticeship Grant worth £1500 per apprentice to small businesses?
- Perhaps they don't realise that there's a fish and shellfish apprenticeship tailor-made for fishmongers?

Perhaps it's all of these or maybe it's the fear that if they train a young person they will leave them for another employer. Well that fear may well be untrue as studies have shown clearly that well trained staff are much less likely to leave, and young people on apprenticeship programmes are far more likely to be loyal to their employer long after they have completed their apprenticeship.

With an intermediate fish and shellfish apprenticeship available now, and an advanced apprentice available in a few months, there's never been a better time to help your business and to give a helping hand to the next generation by offering a young person an apprenticeship said Lee Cooper of Seafish. Seafish and the Seafood Training Academy are in partnership with Billingsgate Seafood Training School, and other providers throughout the UK to help and support employers who are interested in taking on an apprentice. They are ready to advise, guide and assist interested employers and potential apprentices in the processing, mongering and food service sectors of the seafood industry.

If you want to find out more then email academy@seafish.co.uk or call Lee Cooper on 01482 486482





Apprenticeship Programme for London and the South East

Billingsgate Seafood Training School in collaboration with Seafish would like to establish a fishmongering apprenticeship programme based at the school, and covering London and the South East.

If there is sufficient interest from employers then they will set up a programme of training and support for up to 10 apprentices in 2013. The apprenticeship programme would be carefully tailored to the needs of employers and apprentices alike and would take full advantage of the expertise and facilities available in the Seafood School.

So if you are a fishmonger or fishmerchant and are interested in taking on an apprentice (and this can include an existing employee) then please get in touch with Adam Whittle at the School on **020 7517 3548** or email info@seafoodtraining.org



Harnessing the Power of Apprenticeships

The Seafood Training Academy, led by Seafish, witnessed a thought-provoking debate at the House of Lords on Wednesday 30th January, under the theme of "Harnessing Apprenticeships in the Food Industry."

The food industry, which has continued to grow during the recession, has the potential to play a big part in helping young people find employment. Contrary to this, the industry has much to develop in this area in comparison to many other sectors.

The debate, attended by more than 50 people from the food manufacturing industry and hosted by the Lord Laird of Artigarvan, focused on some of the barriers that can prevent employers offering young people the opportunities within which to develop a worthwhile career and contribute to the success of their employer.

Within the onshore fish and shellfish sectors, apprenticeship schemes are not yet consistently available across the UK and there is more that needs to be done to overcome this. This is not a unique issue in the seafood industry, other food industry sectors facing the same challenges.

During the debate, which was sponsored by the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink (NSA), we heard from a number of employers, including those from the seafood industry who have active and successful apprenticeship programmes underway.

Lee Cooper of Seafish, who represented the Seafood Training Academy, said after the event: "This was a thought provoking debate. Perhaps the most encouraging statement was Lord Laird's assurance that MPs and Peers alike would not only be keenly interested in the food industry and the massive potential we have to employ young people and give them worthwhile careers, but also be interested in visiting local employers to see this in action."

Lord Laird told his audience: "You have a lot of capital as an industry. It is up to you to use this and reach out to your local MPs and other influencers to tell them about you and difference you make to the local and national economic landscape."

Seafish and the Seafood Training Academy have worked hard over the past two years to develop apprenticeship schemes to benefit both employers and young people. Seafish have developed an interactive tool aimed at helping employers match job roles in the fish and shellfish apprenticeship framework.

Seafish would like to hear from you

Lee Cooper from Seafish would like to hear from any seafood employer anywhere in the UK that is already involved in delivering apprenticeships.

The apprenticeships can be in any part of the business from intake through to accounts as Seafish simply wants to see how many employers are already active in supporting apprentices. If you have one or more apprentices within your business then please email L_Cooper@seafish.co.uk and let him know how many apprentices you have and in what areas of the business they work. If you want Seafish to assist you with information and guidance then be sure to include your contact details.

Are you thinking of a career in fish and shellfish?

Are you interested in a career as a Fishmerchant or fishmonger? Fancy owning your own business one day or being a key member of an old and established firm?

One way of achieving this is a fish and shellfish apprenticeship which would allow you to specialise in seafood processing, smoking, fishmongering etc. You could start with an intermediate apprenticeship and then progress onto the advanced apprenticeship programme. Apprenticeships are open both to new and existing employees in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

If you are interested then have a look on the Seafood Academy website or contact Seafish at: academy@seafish.co.uk



Cardiff Harbour Festival

and British Fishcraft Championships 2013

Make sure that you have the date in your diary for the British Fish Craft Championships® 2013 which are to be held at the Cardiff Harbour Festival, Cardiff Bay on the August Bank holiday weekend. 24th – 26th August.

See the next issue of NFF News for further details.



SSPO News

Salmon Exports to the Far East

The Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation has reported Record Salmon Exports to the Far East. According to new official figures there has been a 1,172% leap in three years since 2010. Exports of salmon to the Far East have increased from 682 tonnes in 2010 to 8,675 tonnes in the first ten months of 2012.

The Far East markets include China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Philippines and Hong Kong. China is now the main market in the Far East, just 20 months after an agreement was reached to permit direct exports of seafood from Scotland to the People's Republic. The Scottish Salmon industry identified the potential of the Chinese market, one of the world's largest seafood markets, in early 2010. Then an agreement between the Scottish and Chinese governments was signed in January 2011 which allowed seafood to be exported directly to China for the first time. Data from HM Revenue & Customs reveals that 8,675 tonnes of salmon were exported to the fast growing emerging markets in the first ten months of 2012, which is greater than the whole of the previous year (2011).

Exports to the world's second largest economy have now increased by 1,172 per cent in the three years since 2010. The value of the exports (fresh, frozen and smoked products) has increased from £28 million between January and October 2011 to more than £37 million for the same period in 2012. The new figures are revealed one month after representatives of the seafood industry attended the largest ever Scottish food and drink trade mission to Japan and China. During the visit an agreement was signed with the World Association of Chefs Societies to promote Scottish salmon and langoustines to its 10 million member chefs across 93 countries. Scott Landsburgh, Chief Executive, Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO), said: "The total exports to the region in the first ten months of last year exceeded the total for the whole of the previous year. Sales have increased more than twelve-fold in three years and our market share still only represents less than one per cent of the total current opportunity in the Far East. In the vast region even niches of niches are huge, so the rewards for finding the right opportunities can be phenomenal. With a rapid growth of middle classes looking for premium and healthy products, there remains plenty of scope for further market share expansion in this rapidly growing market."

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment Richard Lochhead said: "I'm delighted that once again exports of Scottish salmon to the Far East have increased during 2012. Our salmon is a healthy and highly sought after product, renowned for its flavour and texture, and I'm sure that its popularity can continue to grow."

"The vast majority of the Scottish salmon exported to the region is fresh salmon, underpinned by its increasing popularity for use in sushi-style foods, which further demonstrates that top chefs regard it as a premium and high quality product."

Anne MacColl, Chief Executive, Scottish Development International, said: "Our food and drink exports are at an all-time high and these latest figures show that Scotland's world class premium quality food and drinks are increasingly in demand across the globe."

"Scottish salmon is internationally regarded as being amongst the highest quality in the world, and is rapidly becoming the product of choice in the Far East. Growth opportunities in these fast growing markets are significant. We want to encourage companies to take advantage of this, and in doing so, deliver long-term sustainable growth for Scotland's economy."

Further export growth to the region is to be targeted later this year, as representatives from the salmon and langoustine sectors, Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, Scottish Quality Salmon, Scottish Development International and Scotland Food & Drink are to attend HOFEX 2013, the Far East's leading retail and food service event in Hong Kong (7 - 10 May 2013). 31,000 visitors from 85 countries are expected to attend.

Record export levels have helped the salmon industry to record two successive record years of capital investment, with £44.4 million and £47.6 million invested in 2010 and 2011. The vast majority of the £92 million capital investments have been made in the Highlands and Islands. The total investment over the last five years is £205.5 million.

Salmon is Scotland's largest food export. Seven of the top ten markets grew in volume in 2011, as fresh Scottish salmon was exported to 64 countries worldwide. The UK remains the single largest market for Scottish farmed salmon.

Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation (SSPO) at www.scottishsalmon.co.uk the trade organisation for 98% of the salmon farming industry.

Scottish Salmon Wins Over French President's Chef



The French President's chef has designed a Label Rouge Scottish Salmon dish for a prestigious national culinary competition in Paris.

Held at the French school of gastronomy, eleven young chefs from across France were asked to prepare and present a salmon dish, designed by Bernard Vaussion, which was fit for both the President of France and international guests to the head of state's official residence, Élysée Palace.

Organised by the Master Chefs of France, the trainee chefs were asked to prepare a ballotine of Label Rouge Scottish Salmon as they competed to be crowned Best Young Apprentice Chef.

Christian Têtedoie, President of the Master Chefs of France and having notably worked with the legendary French chefs Paul Bocuse and Georges Blanc, said: "The competition is a fantastic opportunity for young chefs to cook with top quality products and compete on a national stage.

"The culinary challenge is demanding as it requires the trainee chefs to present food that is suitable for fine dining. We have worked with Label Rouge Scottish Salmon for almost twenty years because the fish is simply delicious and it is perfect for these occasions," he added.

Scott Landsburgh, Chief Executive of Scottish Quality Salmon, the management body of Label Rouge Scottish Salmon, said: "As the Master Chefs of France promote excellence in the kitchen and the use of the finest ingredients, it is once again a great honour for the quality of our fish to be recognised by the most highly-starred group of culinary experts in the world.

"Scottish farmed salmon became the first non-French product to obtain the prestigious French government's Label Rouge mark of distinction in 1992. Twenty years on, it continues to be the benchmark of quality and taste," he added.

Tancredi Dell'Oste, from Paris, was crowned the overall winner of the competition and winner of the best fish category. The competition was judged by a panel of eighteen Master Chefs of France. The student chefs had previously won regional events to reach the final in Paris.



The Fish Industry Golf Society

This group of keen golfers and their guests tend to meet in the Midlands area as it is central and has a very good airport.

The latter being essential as some of the Society members come from Norway, Switzerland, Germany and

even landlocked Switzerland. Last year's extremely successful event was held at the Forest of Arden, near Coventry. The Society hope to meet again in September this year with a venue yet to be decided upon.

Anyone interested that has not attended before and would like further details, please contact John Adams adams.john@talk21.com

Scottish fishermen criticise 'Hugh's Fish Fight' for inaccurate portrayal of scallop fishing...

An inaccurate and negative portrayal of scallop fishing that will be aired as part of the 'Hugh's Fish Fight' Channel 4 TV series has come under stinging criticism from the Scottish Fishermen's Federation.

The SFF fears the three-programme series, which begins tonight, will offer a totally imbalanced and distorted view of the scallop fishing sector, which supports many jobs and provides consumers with a much valued and sustainable food resource.

Bertie Armstrong, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation said: "Scallop fishermen depend upon abundant scallop stocks and a healthy marine environment and are committed to the protection of marine biodiversity. Scallops prefer to live in less sensitive habitats such as sand and gravel, which are naturally dynamic environments due to the movement of water on the seabed from currents, tides and waves and this is where scallop fishermen concentrate their efforts. Scallop fishermen avoid areas where there are unusual marine features and fully support the need for protecting ecologically important habitats and species. Scallop fishermen have also pioneered the use of state-of-the-art Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) technology to aid this process".

"The scallop industry has been involved in a number of environmental initiatives in recent years such as the development of a 'Good Practice Guide for Scallops', which includes the commitment to work in partnership with fishery and conservation managers, and the Statutory Nature Conservation Agencies to ensure that scallop fishing activities avoid damage or disturbance to sensitive seabed habitats and protected sites. We have also been proactively involved in a number of gear trials with different styles of dredges to improve the selectivity of the gear and mitigate any impact on the seabed".

"The suggestion by some celebrity chefs that we should eat only hand-dived scallops is wrong and totally impracticable as only 2% of scallops are harvested by divers, which would deny the vast majority of consumers the opportunity to enjoy this superb and sustainably caught seafood, leaving the availability of scallops to only a rich elite. The scallop sector is also very important to our economically fragile coastal communities, employing 600 fishing sector jobs and 750 processor jobs all around the coast".

Mackerel

Recent reports that have appeared in the press following the Marine Conservation Society's statement on down grading mackerel from its eat list to eat with caution, would have the public believe that stocks of mackerel are in dire shape.

The statement is a result of the inability of the Faroese and Icelanders to agree a deal with the EU and Norway over quotas and the suspension by the Marine Stewardship Council of the certificate of sustainability for the North East mackerel fishery. The reason for all this furore over mackerel is due to the stocks moving further North West into the fishing grounds controlled by Iceland and Faroe. As a result the Faroese and Icelanders have given themselves a bigger slice of the cake much to the horror of EU and Norway who have retaliated by imposing sanctions until a sensible solution to the problem can be reached.

All of this does not mean that mackerel stocks are in poor shape. To the contrary the biomass is greater than it has been for many years due to quotas being set below what is considered to be the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). Scientists are already in disagreement about the actually level of biomass with ICE's saying it is around 2.3 million tonnes whereas others are saying the figure is nearer 2.7million tonnes. Either way it certainly does not mean that there are no mackerel. However, irresponsible journalism has led many members of the public to question whether or not they should continue to eat mackerel.

Apart from the fuss over the Northern stocks there is also a very healthy hand line fishery for mackerel in the South West which has also suffered due to this press, for as far as the public is concerned a mackerel is a mackerel.

What this does illustrate is the need for fishmongers to keep abreast of what is going on in order to be able to re-assure their customers and provide them with good advice regarding the products they offer for sale.



Talks to Finalise Quota Allocations for Shared Fish Stocks

Crucial talks between the EU and Norway got underway in January

Crucial talks between the EU and Norway to finalise the catching opportunities in 2013 for shared stocks got underway in January. It had not been possible to reach a quota agreement on these shared stocks at a meeting at the end of last year between the EU and Norway because of legal red tape surrounding the EU's cod plan.

The plan had threatened further automatic cuts in days at sea and a 20% reduction in the North Sea cod quota, despite the stock showing encouraging signs of recovery. This hurdle was removed by EU fisheries ministers just before Christmas.

Bertie Armstrong, Chief Executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said that it was now vital that the Scottish and UK negotiating teams at the EU-Norway talks ensure that last year's cod quota is rolled over into 2013. Since 2008, the spawning stock biomass of North Sea cod has doubled.

The bilateral talks had concluded and against a background of recovering stocks and the scientific advice, quota increases were agreed for a number of key stocks including North Sea haddock (15% increase), North Sea whiting (11%), North Sea plaice (15%), North Sea saithe (15%) and North Sea herring (18%). The North Sea cod quota remains unchanged at the 2011 level, with a facility for boats to increase their cod catch further if they participate in catch quota trials. There was also a 15% increase for West of Scotland saithe.

For mackerel, a catch limit was set that followed scientific advice and which will maintain the EU and Norway's traditional share of the total allowable catch. This is an arrangement that will signal the resolve of the EU and Norway against the background of continuing failure to achieve an international management agreement for the stock with Iceland and the Faroes.

Bertie Armstrong, Chief Executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "This is a good outcome based on the science, which reflects the status of our recovering stocks in the North Sea. The rollover of the cod quota will help bring some stability to fishermen - this stock is recovering well and a cut in quota would only have led to unavoidable discarding.

"Our fishermen have been at the forefront of spearheading a range of innovative conservation measures, including technical alterations to trawls to dramatically reduce discards, and adhering to real-time area closures to protect spawning and juvenile fish.

"The decision to set our overall share of the mackerel at the traditional level was also a sensible move, as it was important that nothing was done to reward the irresponsible over-fishing of the stock by Iceland and the Faroes".

Responding to the news that the Marine Conservation (MSC) had removed mackerel from its latest version of the 'fish to eat' list, Ian Gatt, Chief Executive, the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association said: "Mackerel is still being sustainably caught and it is important that the consumer is made aware of this. The north-east Atlantic stock is in robust health and the sustainable fishing practices of our fleets have actually led to an increase in abundance in the stock in recent years. However, the over-fishing of the stock by Iceland and the Faroes is leading to some uncertainty over the future, and this is why it is essential that these countries come back to the negotiating table and agree a sensible deal.

"We believe the Marine Conservation Society have reacted far too quickly on this and have not taken into account the current science and projects that are about to be undertaken to shed further information on the stock status of mackerel.



The Common Fisheries Policy

Much has been written about the reforms that are being proposed as a result of the ten year review of the Common Fisheries Policy. The EU commissioner, Maria Damanaki, has worked tirelessly to try and get some sensible reforms and to stop the wasteful discard situation highlighted by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall in his channel 4 programmes last year.

However, it is not always easy to get changes, even sensible and well-meaning changes, through the bureaucracy that exists within the corridors of Brussels. The CFP reform is proving to be extremely difficult due to the fact that it is now subject to a co-decision making process between the Commission and the European Parliament, with each organisation not wishing to cede ground or authority to the other.

A recent speech by the Prime Minister, David Cameron and also by Mayor of London Boris Johnson does indicate a possible way forward. Both want to re-negotiate out terms of entry into the EU and what better than repatriation of some of our fishing grounds which were given away so frivolously by the then Prime Minister Ted Heath. The fishing grounds around our coast are some of the most fertile in the world and repatriation of the 0-12 nautical miles into domestic control would allow us to undertake some real work on sustainability and also to help regenerate our fishing coastal communities that have been decimated by years of a wasteful CFP.

This could be a perfect opportunity to start lobbying your local MP to support an initiative to regain something that has been lost for the past 40 odd years and provide our industry with a real future. In the recent plenary session of the EU Parliament there was a massive majority vote of 502 against 137 in favour of accepting the reforms to the current CFP.

The proposals now go back to the Council of Ministers and Fisheries Committee for further consideration. These discussions are known as the TRILOGUES. The Irish Presidency are prioritising the reforms in order to get the new regulations in place by the end of their term which finishes in June.

Defra has already started a series of stakeholder workshops with industry representatives to discuss the best way forward for ensuring that the UK is best placed to meet the new reforms.

As part of the reforms there will be a landing requirement that will bring an end to discards. This will be phased in and will be fully in place by 2017. The first stage will be to ban discards in the pelagic fishery from 2014.



The Fishmongers & Poulterers Institution

In these difficult and uncertain times, it is easy to shut ones eyes to other people's worries and troubles.

Prices are high, fish is in short supply and trade is poor but for us, our glass is half full, give a thought to those people whose glass is half empty with little chance of replenishing it. As a charity the Fishmongers and Poulterers Institution are unable to make everything right, but we are there to at least assist in small ways to make life a little more comfortable. Every case will be taken on its merits and a decision made by the Trustees.

If you know of any case where you think the Institution could help, please contact us. The Institution celebrated its 180th Anniversary this year. Will you help keep it going for another 100 years?

For more information visit:

www.butchershall.com and click on Education and Charities.

Scottish Government Support for Scotland's Mackerel Fishermen

Scottish fishermen have welcomed the support from the Scottish Government on unfounded claims that mackerel is not being fished sustainably.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) said yesterday that it has removed mackerel from its latest version of the 'fish to eat list'. However, the Scottish Government has come out in support of Scottish mackerel catchers, underlining that the fishery is sustainable.

Ian Gatt, chief executive of the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association, said: "We welcome this support from the Scottish Government and also their continuing support in the ongoing mackerel fishing dispute with Iceland and the Faroes, who are irresponsibly overfishing mackerel. As the Scottish Government has pointed out, the mackerel stock is being fished sustainably at the moment and in line with the latest science."

For more information:

Ian Gatt, SPFA, M: 07803 041021.

Bertie Armstrong, Chief Executive, Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Tel: 01224 646944, 07801 626822.

Keith Broomfield, Tel: 01259 742575, M: 07890 781151

Fish & Chip Shop of the Year

Fishmongers' Company inspector, Barry O'toole was one of the judges at the 25th annual award for the Fish and Chip shop of the year.

During a day of judging the 10 regional finalists were whittled down to the first three who were awarded their prizes at a Gala dinner at the Lancaster hotel.

This year's winner was the Bay Fisheries from Aberdeen who impressed the judges with their work in the community and with school children along with their policies on sustainability.

Local Catch Launches iPhone App

To embrace the new season this year, Local Catch have brought out an iPhone/iPad App, showing the nearest places to buy locally caught fish, get recipe ideas and watch videos on how to prepare fresh fish and seafood.

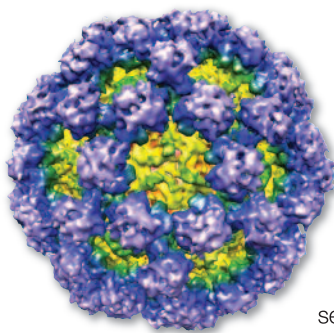
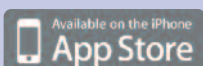
Local Catch is the web and app based hub of information about the latest catch of the day, your nearest fishmongers, seafood restaurants and fishermen. It also gives support on how to prepare seafood, recipe ideas and factsheets about the species caught off the coast.

Consumers downloading either the Android or iPhone App also receive the latest alerts about the catch of the day, events and seafood information. Alerts can also be found on the homepage of the website.

Local Catch was developed in conjunction with fishermen, fishmongers and consumers to make it easier for buyers to find locally caught seafood. Since its launch last year in the South East of England, Local Catch is now rolling out across England.

Henriette Reinders, project manager at South East Seafood: "People are often hesitant about buying and cooking seafood. This App will help them find their local fishermen and fishmongers, identify local species, assist them on how to prepare the fish or shellfish and how to cook it. Local Catch is very much here to support local fishermen and make it easier for people to buy fresh, locally caught seafood often the day it has been caught. We also want to make people more aware of which species are caught off the coast in England, which are in plenty of supply, good value for money and as with all seafood, good for you!"

The App is not just for consumers, local chefs and restaurants can get involved too. She continues: "We are really keen for chefs, restaurants, pubs, cafes, delis and fishmongers to use Local Catch too - they simply need to register in the same way as members of the public would. Once they've purchased from their local fishermen they are then able to send out an alert that lets people in the local area know they've got fresh, locally caught seafood on the menu."



Norovirus

One of the biggest concerns at the moment in this Country are the outbreaks of norovirus, sometimes referred to as the winter vomiting bug. This virus is highly contagious and is easily spread by person to person and by various means of cross-contamination.

Already this winter it has been responsible for the closure of several hospital wards and childrens' nurseries but it is when it gets into food it seems to draw the most publicity. Who can forget the incident in the famous "Fat Duck" restaurant. The case is still under scrutiny four years after the event. The initial allegation was it came via contaminated oysters but in reality no-one seems to know exactly where about the infection started, was it infected food handlers, was it the oysters or was it infected customers. The chances are we will never really know and this will just drag on and eventually the only people who will win will be the lawyers. Which really demonstrates the problem with norovirus, it is estimated that between 600,000 and 1 million cases are caused every year.

So how does a business protect itself! Not an easy one to answer, but scrupulous attention to personal hygiene is of paramount importance. Hand washing is particularly important for food handlers and the use of disposable paper hand towels will reduce the risk. Warm air dryers can themselves be contaminated and can also spread the virus by blowing it around the room. Also reporting the sickness to your GP and staying off work until symptoms have properly subsided are important as a person can still discharge the virus for up to 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.

The FSA have produced an excellent booklet that can be downloaded from their website www.food.gov.uk entitled: Food Handlers: Fitness to Work. The booklet gives regulatory guidance and best practice advice for food business operators.

Smoke Problems

NFF member, Walter Purkis, recently encountered an unwarranted visit from his Local Authority telling him to stop smoking as he was causing a nuisance. No he was not smoking a cigarette but smoking fish in a traditional smoke hole that had been in constant use for the past 130 years. The reason for this intrusion was they had received a single complaint from a neighbour alleging that he was creating a nuisance from his fish smoking operation. On investigation they found he was emitting smoke in a smoke free zone in contravention of the Environmental Pollution Act and the Clean Air Acts.

This as one can appreciate came as a bit of a shock to Wally and his son John, who runs this shop on Wally's behalf, for apart from the fact that smoke fish makes up around 40% of the turnover of this business, they had done nothing different to what had been done for the previous 130 years on these premises.

The various Acts to which these officers were referring came in a long time ago, in fact the last one was nearly twenty years ago in 1993, so one would have thought if there was a problem it would have surfaced much sooner. In the meantime the shop had been inspected on several occasions by another department of the Local Authority and been awarded a five star rating on each occasion for its hygiene and operation. The suggested remedy to the problem was to use smokeless fuel, which somewhat defeats the object of a smoking operation.

Fortunately they did not take this lying down and there was an excellent piece in the Telegraph detailing their plight, the case has also been reported in several other parts of the media and of course the Federation played its part by providing sound advice and guidance on the steps to take. It seems for the time being the Local Authority have backed off and allowed them to re-commence their smoking operation.

The reason for all this fuss seems to emanate from a block of flats that was built adjacent to the shop around five years ago. But even so it still took five years for a complaint to be made. This all sounds a bit familiar to townies moving to the countryside and then complaining about farm smells and early morning alarm calls from the local rooster.

Hopefully, common sense will prevail and Wally and John will be left in peace to continue their business and produce the top class smoked product for which they are famed. But do not be too sure, these jobs worths are a persistent bunch!

Membership of the Shellfish Association of Great Britain

NFF membership of the SAGB

and as such can enjoy the following benefits:

- Show your support for totally sustainable shell fisheries
- Support environmentally friendly, carbon positive shellfish cultivation
- Have access to a database and advice on sustainable fisheries and farms that supply the food industry
- Have an input into the products you want to see readily available for your business
- Tangible membership benefits:
The SAGB has negotiated discounts on a variety of services and products. They include insurance, credit card acquiring, debt collection, Utilitrack (Landline, mobile and energy) Legal advice (employment and environmental), Food Safety consultancy, food safety equipment, aquarium/holding tank equipment, marketing/advertising, Printing, Microbiological testing and courses at Billingsgate Seafood Training School.
- Advice on:-
 - Legislation that affects the shellfish trade, sourcing, storage etc.
- Have input to lobby the regulators and Government
- Membership Certificate for display and use of SAGB logo
- Assistance with promotional material
- Availability of SAGB's own literature, nutritional leaflets and recipe booklets
- Membership rates at the SAGB Annual Conference and dinner at Fishmongers' Hall
- The knowledge that you are contributing to the security and the sustainability of the shellfish sector

**Contact: Tel: 0207 283 8305 www.shellfish.org.uk
<http://twitter.com/sagb> www.youtube.com/shellfish.GB**

Travel Insurance

The NFF are pleased to announce a new Travel Insurance Quote and Buy facility exclusive to all members.

A 10% reduction in premium has been negotiated for all members and will shortly be available via the Federations website.

The facility will offer quotations for Single Trip, Annual Multi-trip and Long Stay policies with a range of options available to suit your requirements. There will be no upper age limit on single trips and unlike most online policies, cover can be provided for pre-existing medical conditions either as standard or by referral depending on your circumstances. Please keep an eye on the Federation's website for further details shortly.

Contact **David Oliver Associates** for a quotation on your Shop Insurance. We guarantee to beat your premium if you have been trading at least three years with no previous claims*

Please contact Phillip Oliver at David Oliver Associates on 0844 225 9757 or e-mail Phillip@doainsurance.co.uk

*subject to circumstances

E.COLI 0157 Cross Contamination Guidance

You may be aware of the FSA guidance issued in February 2011 on E.coli 0157 Control of Cross-contamination. The guidance was developed in response to the serious outbreaks of E.coli 0157 food poisoning in Scotland in 1996 and Wales in 2005, and the recommendations of Professor Hugh Pennington's Inquiry report into the 2005 outbreak.

One of the key cross-contamination control measures highlighted in the guidance is the use of separate complex equipment, such as vacuum packing machines, slicers, and mincers for raw and ready-to-eat foods. Concerns have been raised by some industry stakeholders on the requirement relating to separate complex equipment. In order to ensure that the FSA addresses those concerns they propose to commission an independent research body to test alternative controls to cross-contamination proposed by stakeholders. The work will be commissioned by tender.

New Style Federation Ties and Sew on Badges

NOW AVAILABLE!

**Ties only £11.00 each
Badges only £7.00 each**

includes postage and packing.



Diary Dates

NFF Council Meeting

Fishmongers Hall, London
15th April 2013

Buckland Colloquium

Fishmongers' Company
March 1st 2013

Fish Friday

21st June 2013
in aid of the Fishermens' Mission

NFF Council Meeting

Fishmongers Hall, London
24th June 2013

Cardiff Harbour Festival

Cardiff Bay
24th - 26th August 2013

British Fish Craft Championships®

Cardiff Bay
25th August 2013

NFF Council Meeting

Fishmongers Hall, London
21st October 2013

NFFNews

is compiled by the



**National Federation
of Fishmongers**

www.fishmongers.info

for more information and a list
of council members in your area
please contact:

The N.F.F. Secretary
P.O. Box 9639,
Feering,
Colchester CO5 9W

Telephone: 01376 571391
Email: helen@natfedfishmongers.fsnet.co.uk



Ken's Column

Another report from a former NFF President

I suppose some confidence will be felt within many of our processing communities at the news that Iceland will reduce its quota of mackerel by 15% this year.

This action will maybe open the doors for a more comprehensive process for future negotiations, but even with this reduction, Iceland will still be taking 25% of the total allowable catch (TAC), and is still viewed as unsustainable behaviour which is putting Scottish jobs and coastal communities elsewhere at risk.

Catches of mackerel - the most valuable to the Scottish fleet

(as reported in these columns for almost two years) have been at the centre of growing tension, caused by Iceland and Faroe unilaterally increasing their quotas of mackerel.

Mind you there is a side effect to the mackerel congregating in greater numbers in Icelandic waters, and this is the threat to juvenile stock of cod on which the mackerel feed, causing damage to future cod stocks.

Since the news of Iceland's mackerel reduction broke earlier this month, Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, (known by some Scottish journalists as "King Eekie the First") has urged Members of the Scottish Parliament(MSPs) to get behind an initiative to resolve the mackerel quota dispute between Scotland and Iceland. Mr Salmond' is hoping that all parliamentarians would support a proposal to bring in an independent international mediation expert to help broker an agreement.

Apart from Mr Salmond' s suggested approach, the considered stronger process would be for more biting economic sanctions from the European Community to be taken against Iceland and Faroe. Whether this action would bother Iceland-who have strong export links with Africa-and is currently negotiating a free trade deal with China, only time will tell. Hey Ho!!!

A recent research study carried out by Ireland's Marine Institute and the National University of Ireland in Galway, has shown that sea lice are not killing large numbers of wild salmon. The report was published in a science publication; the Journal of Fish Diseases, and rates sea lice as an insignificant factor in influencing the conservation status of the salmon stock.

Of course this comes as good news to the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO) whose salmon farmers have been blamed for infestations of sea lice spreading to wild stocks and killing fish. The research study - which involved 350,000 fish being released into eight (8) rivers in 28 experiments - scientifically exposed this as a myth.

I wonder if this will help to end this problem. Let' s watch this space!!

Ken Watmough.



If you would like a photograph of yourself competing at

The British Fish Craft Championships®

Contact Neil Morris at Touchdown Design

telephone **07973 711523** email neil@td-d.net