



Agenda item 6.7(e)
For decision

Council

CNL(00)27

***Report of the Working Group to Develop Guidelines
on Containment of Farmed Salmon***

***Report of the Working Group to Develop Guidelines
on Containment of Farmed Salmon***

1. At its meeting in London, in February this year, the NASFI/NASCO Liaison Group agreed Terms of Reference for a Working Group to Develop Guidelines on Containment. This Working Group met in Brussels on 6 and 7 April 2000 and its report is attached. It has been distributed to all members of the Liaison Group. The draft guidelines on containment are in Annex 4 of this report. While the Liaison Group had asked for a progress report by 20 May and a full report by 31 October, the Working Group was able to complete its work at the meeting on 6-7 April, so the report is, in fact, a full report.
2. The Liaison Group agreed that the guidelines on containment, when accepted by the Council of NASCO and the industry, will represent an internationally agreed standard for use throughout the North Atlantic area. Once agreed, the countries would each draw up a national action plan, or regional plans, based on the guidelines and should advise the Liaison Group of its plan or plans, of the means of enforcement and of the reporting procedures. In some countries, action plans are already under development so the international and national or regional initiatives will take place simultaneously.
3. The Council is asked to consider the Working Group's report and to decide:
 - (a) if it can accept the draft Guidelines as they stand; or
 - (b) if it wishes to see further work on the guidelines under the auspices of the Liaison Group; and
 - (c) if it can accept the recommendations on research and development.

Secretary
Edinburgh
12 May, 2000

***Report of the Meeting of the NASCO/NASFI Working Group to Develop
Guidelines on Containment***

***Directorate General for Fisheries,
European Commission, Brussels
6-7 April 2000***

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 Dr Peter Hutchinson, Assistant Secretary of NASCO, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Brussels. He thanked the Directorate General for Fisheries of the European Commission for hosting the meeting and for the arrangements made. He referred to the fact that at the Liaison Group meeting in London there had been initial discussions on guidelines on containment, but the Liaison Group had recognised the need for further consideration of the technical aspects by a smaller Working Group. He noted that the task before the Working Group was to develop internationally agreed standards on containment, acceptable both to the North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI) and to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), which would be implemented through national or regional actions plans developed through cooperation between industry and the relevant authorities. The Working Group on Containment represented the first collaborative venture under the new NASFI/NASCO Declaration and it was important that the Group was able to make progress on this important issue, which could lead to mutual benefits. He wished all participants an enjoyable and productive meeting and a pleasant stay in Brussels.
- 1.2 A list of participants is contained in Annex 1.

2. Appointment of a Chairman and Rapporteur

- 2.1 The Working Group appointed Dr John Webster as Chairman. Dr Peter Hutchinson was appointed as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

- 3.1 The Working Group adopted its agenda, SLG(00)15 (Annex 2), after including a new item 6, "Recommendations for Research and Development".

4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Working Group considered its Terms of Reference, SLG(00)9 (Annex 3).

5. Development of Draft Guidelines on Containment

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference developed by the Liaison Group at its meeting in London on 10 and 11 February state that in developing draft guidelines on containment the

advance of further discussion within the Liaison Group and clarification of the meaning of the term "action plan", the Working Group agreed that, for the purpose of developing the guidelines on containment, "action plan" would be taken to mean the processes through which internationally agreed guidelines on containment would be implemented at national or regional level through existing or new voluntary codes of practice, regulations, or a combination of both. In this regard, different regions or countries could adopt different approaches to the prevention of escapes, with all approaches being based on the common standards developed by the Working Group.

- 5.6 The representative of the Maine Aquaculture Association proposed that once the containment guidelines had been approved by NASCO and the salmon farming industry, the North American Commission's Protocols on Introductions and Transfers, other NASCO agreements and relevant national regulations would be obsolete and their continuing necessity should be reviewed. While some members of the Working Group were able to support this proposal, others stressed that the question of amendments to or revocation of NASCO agreements and national regulations was beyond the Working Group's remit, and probably also that of the Liaison Group. Changes to NASCO's documents would require the unanimous approval of the Council or relevant Commission of NASCO. Furthermore, review of these agreements or regulations would only be appropriate after the provisions of the guidelines had been implemented through national or regional action plans and their effectiveness confirmed. It was suggested that the representative of the Maine Aquaculture Association might wish to raise this issue with the Head of the US Delegation to NASCO. The Working Group agreed that this proposal should be referred to the Liaison Group at its next meeting, scheduled for February 2001.
- 5.7 The representative of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance pointed out that the activities of other users of the marine and freshwater environments, e.g. fishermen, recreational boaters, etc., could cause damage to fish farm equipment and structures which could result in escapes, and that the Working Group should consider making recommendations on this issue. In Norway, there is legislation which restricts public access to salmon farming sites, but this is not the case in other countries. The Working Group recognised that the issue of access rights was beyond its competence but agreed to draw to the attention of the Liaison Group the fact that there are activities which could result in escapes which are beyond the control of fish farmers, and which are not, therefore, addressed by the draft guidelines on containment.
- 5.8 The representative of the Norwegian Fish Farmers Association noted that, in Norway, there is concern about the increased risks associated with the use of larger farming units capable of holding very high numbers of salmon. The use of these units raises concerns about escapes and fish health. While the Working Group recognised that the probability of an escape from such units may be lower than for smaller units because of their technical specifications, in the event of a catastrophic incident there could be a very large escape to the wild. This development would, therefore, need to be kept under review.
- 5.9 The representative of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance indicated that his industry did not accept that escapes from salmon farming posed a threat to the wild stocks, that there was no scientific proof to support such a view, and that the reason for developing containment guidelines was to ensure that the industry was efficient,

escapes so that measures to improve containment can be targeted in order to minimize escapes.

- 6.2 The Working Group recognised that progress on research and development in relation to containment will require adequate funding and noted that the issue of funding mechanisms in order to support research of interest to the Liaison Group, but which might not otherwise be able to attract funding, had been identified by the Liaison Group as an area for discussion at a future meeting.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 The representative of the Scottish Executive stated that during the Working Group's meeting a Parliamentary Question had been asked in the Scottish Parliament concerning the measures being taken to prevent escapes from salmon farms. He indicated that the issue of containment is, therefore, topical and there will be considerable interest in the Working Group's deliberations.

8. Date and Place of Next Meeting (if required)

- 8.1 The Working Group agreed to complete its business by correspondence and that a further meeting would not, therefore, be required. The Working Group would be willing to continue to work by correspondence in order to develop a template for a model action plan based on the containment guidelines if the Liaison Group considered that this would be a useful initiative.

9. Report of the Meeting

- 9.1 The Working Group agreed a report of the meeting.
- 9.2 In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked participants for their contributions. The representative of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance apologised to the Chair for the position he had needed to take on certain issues during the meeting, but indicated that this was because there had been insufficient time to be properly briefed before the meeting.
- 9.3 The Working Group thanked the Chairman and Rapporteur for their work, and Mr Piccioli for his contribution and for the arrangements made.

**Working Group to Develop Guidelines on Containment
European Commission, Brussels, 6-7 April 2000**

List of Participants

Mr Sebastian Belle	Maine Dept of Marine Resources, Augusta, USA sebastian.belle@state.me.us
Ms Mary Colligan	National Marine Fisheries Service, Gloucester, USA mary.a.colligan@noaa.gov
Mr David Dunkley	Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department, Edinburgh, UK david.dunkley@scotland.gov.uk
Mr Michael Edwards	Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Rothesay, NB, Canada edwardsmi@dfo-mpo.gc.ca medwards@acoa-apeca.gc.ca
Ms Eva Espeland	The Royal Ministry of Environment, Oslo, Norway ee@md.dep.no
Mr Knut A Hjelt	Norwegian Fish Farmers Association, Trondheim, Norway knuta.hjelt@nho.no
Dr Peter Hutchinson (Rapporteur)	NASCO Secretariat, Edinburgh, UK hq@nasco.org.uk
Mr Regin Jacobsen	Føroya Arbeidgevarafelag, Torshavn, Faroe Islands bakkarj@post.olivant.fo
Mr Joseph McGonigle	Maine Aquaculture Association, Brewer, USA jmcgonig@mstf.org
Mr Brian Meaney	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, St John's, NF, Canada bmeaney@mail.gov.nf.ca
Mr Alessandro Piccioli	European Commission, Brussels, Belgium Alessandro.Piccioli@cec.eu.int
Mr David Rideout	Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, Ottawa, Canada rideoutcaia@aquaculture.ca

Working Group to Develop Guidelines on Containment

Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Appointment of a Chairman and Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference
5. Development of Draft Guidelines on Containment
6. Recommendations for Research and Development
7. Any Other Business
8. Date and Place of Next Meeting (if required)
9. Report of the Meeting

***Terms of Reference for a Working Group to Develop
Guidelines on Containment***

1. The Liaison Group decides to establish a Working Group to produce draft guidelines on containment to apply throughout the area covered by the NASCO Convention. These guidelines should have as their objective the prevention of escapes of farm salmon in the marine and freshwater environments. In carrying out this task the Working Group should:
 - (a) make appropriate use of document SLG(00)5
 - (b) make appropriate use of other codes of containment
 - (c) use such other relevant information available to it
 - (d) advise on future needs for research and development to update the guidelines in future.
2. The Working Group shall consist of members from industry representing salmon farming interests and members from NASCO Parties representing the relevant authorities. This group should communicate and consult widely and could invite other participants as appropriate. The members of the Working Group shall be appointed by 1 March 2000 and notified to the NASCO Secretariat who will inform the Liaison Group. The Working Group shall hold its first meeting during 6-7 April 2000 in Brussels, Belgium. The NASCO Secretariat shall provide the necessary coordination and administrative and other support. The Working Group shall appoint its Chairman.
3. The Working Group shall make a progress report to the Liaison Group before 20 May 2000 so that there is an opportunity for comment before the report is considered by the Council of NASCO at its Seventeenth Annual Meeting during 5-9 June 2000. The report will also be considered by the appropriate national industry organizations. The Working Group's full report should be available by 31 October 2000 so that it can be considered at the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

Draft Guidelines on Containment of Farm Salmon**Section 1: Introduction**

- 1.1 The North Atlantic Salmon Farming Industry (NASFI) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) established a Liaison Group which met in London on 10 – 11 February, 2000. This Liaison Group recognised the importance of conserving and enhancing wild salmon stocks and of supporting a sustainable salmon farming industry and is seeking to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements in order to make recommendations on wild salmon conservation and sustainable farming practices. To this end the Liaison Group has developed guidelines on containment to apply throughout the NASCO Convention area.

Section 2: Objectives

- 2.1 these guidelines are intended to result in the prevention of escapes of farmed salmon in the freshwater and marine environments.

Section 3: Site Selection

- 3.1 sites shall be selected having regard to the capability of the equipment to withstand the weather and other environmental conditions likely to be experienced at that site;
- 3.2 in the interest of avoiding collision damage, equipment shall comply with the relevant national and international regulations regarding navigation and marking;
- 3.3 careful consideration shall be given to the siting of land-based facilities, so as to minimise the risk of escapes from these facilities.

Section 4: Equipment & Structures

- 4.1 nets, cages and moorings systems shall be designed, constructed and deployed to prevent escapes having proper regard to the prevailing conditions at the site. Moorings systems should have a significant in-built safety margin;
- 4.2 nets and cages should be marked with an identification number; adequate records of each net and cage in use should be maintained in order to assess its fitness for purpose;
- 4.3 nets shall be: compatible with the cages with which they will be used; secured to the cage collar so that the collar alone bears the strain; and adequately UV-protected. Net weights shall be installed in such a way as to prevent damage to the nets;
- 4.4 tank systems shall be designed to contain fish effectively and to minimise the chances of fish escaping. Where the outflow from tanks passes into a settling pond, the

- 6.3 a site-specific contingency plan shall be developed for use when an event occurs which may have led to an escape defined as significant under the action plan. The contingency plan shall include details of the method of recapture to be used and the area and timeframe over which a recapture programme would apply. Efforts shall be made to recapture farmed salmon immediately provided that this is practicable and does not adversely affect wild Atlantic salmon populations;
- 6.4 action plans should require appropriate authorities to take all reasonable efforts to issue permits for facilitating the contingency plans developed for each farm.

Section 7: Implementation

- 7.1 each jurisdiction should draw up a national action plan, or regional plans, based on these guidelines and should advise the NASFI/NASCO Liaison Group of its plan or plans, of the means of enforcement and of the reporting procedures.
- 7.2 the action plan or plans should be based on co-operation between industry and the relevant authorities and should include the allocation of responsibilities under the plan or plans and a timetable for implementation.

Section 8: Revision

- 8.1 these guidelines shall be subject to revision, with the agreement of the Liaison Group, to take account of new scientific, technical and other relevant information.