

# Partnership on Health And Safety in Scotland

## Working with the Scottish aquaculture industry (agenda item 5)

### Issue

- 1 To work in partnership with the Scottish aquaculture industry to reduce the incidence of ill health and of serious and fatal injuries in this sector.
- 2 To provide support for the promotion of good health and safety practice throughout the Scottish aquaculture industry.
- 3 To support initiatives to enhance the provision of rehabilitation services to those employed in the Scottish aquaculture industry and particularly those in rural communities.

### Recommendation

- 4 The Committee is invited to offer its support to the newly formed UK Fish Farming/Aquaculture Health and Safety Committee (FFAHSC). It is proposed that this support would include:
  - i. The provision of advice and guidance on issues outwith the expertise of FFAHSC - specifically where those issues fall within the remit of national stakeholders represented on the Committee.
  - ii. To facilitate specific partnerships between the FFAHSC and national stakeholders where those partnerships have the potential to reduce the incidence of ill-health and injury and to promote rehabilitation services in rural communities.
  - iii. To consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals for support of individual projects put forward by FFAHSC where the involvement of the Partnership would significantly enhance their potential to drive forward improvements in the health and safety performance of the Scottish aquaculture industry.

### Background

5 The aquaculture industry is of significant economic and strategic importance to Scotland. Approximately 92 % of Great Britain's aquaculture products are produced in Scotland<sup>1</sup>. The value of farmed fish and shellfish to the Scottish economy has been estimated at approximately £354 million per year<sup>2</sup>.

1. 'Fish and Shellfish Cultivation Review'. R J Slaski. MAFF. 1999
2. Futureskills Scotland Industry Profile: Aquaculture and Fishing in the Highlands and Islands
3. 'The economic impact of Salmon Farming' Scottish Office Economic Research Paper, 1999.

6 The particular significance of the aquaculture sector is that it supports employment in rural communities where there are relatively few other job opportunities. In the salmon farming sector alone over 70% of Scottish employment is located within the Highlands and Islands <sup>2,3</sup>.

7 In March 2005, Stewart Campbell (HSE Director, Scotland) chaired the first UK Health and Safety Seminar for the aquaculture industry held in Inverness. Following this meeting the aquaculture industry was urged to form a Health and Safety Working Group. It was proposed that this Group would be able to share knowledge and promote best practice throughout the industry leading to a rise in standards and reduction in the incidence of workplace injury and ill health. This would offer significant economic benefits to the industry. Such a Group would also be ideally placed to act as a key stakeholder for HSE in the aquaculture industry.

8 In addition, the aquaculture industry in Scotland works with a wide range of enforcement agencies and, during the March seminar, industry representatives urged those agencies to work more closely in areas where interfaces occurred. This Group would enable those bodies, together with the industry, to ensure that regulatory pressures can be streamlined and minimised as far as possible while improving health and safety standards for aquaculture employees.

9 As a result, the Fish Farming/Aquaculture Health and Safety Committee (FFAHSC) has now been formed by the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency as a sub-committee of its District Marine Safety Committee (DMSC). Although the first meeting was specific to the West of Scotland, approximately 40% of the Scottish fish farming industry was represented. Furthermore, the chair of the DMSC has instructed that the committee should widen its membership to include the rest of the UK and NI. As 92 % of Great Britain's aquaculture products are produced in Scotland<sup>1</sup> this committee will fully represent the interests of the Scottish aquaculture industry.

10. The members of the FFAHSC were fully supportive of the opportunity to widen the committee's scope to allow HSE-specific issues to be discussed as well as those aspects that interface with the MCA and other regulatory bodies. It is therefore ideally placed to work in partnership with HSE to improve health and safety in the Scottish aquaculture industry.

### **Action.**

11 The Committee is invited to discuss the issues raised here and to recognise the potential benefits of this development to the health and safety of those employed in the Scottish Aquaculture Industry by agreeing the recommendations at paragraph 4, above.

1. 'Fish and Shellfish Cultivation Review'. R J Slaski. MAFF. 1999

2. Futureskills Scotland Industry Profile: Aquaculture and Fishing in the Highlands and Islands

3. 'The economic impact of Salmon Farming' Scottish Office Economic Research Paper, 1999.