

Notes from MTF R&D&E AC phone conference meeting
March 10, 2017
Call to order at ~9:05 am.

Present: Keith Criddle, Ginny Eckert, Bob Foy, Jeff Hetrick, Carter Newell, Cynthia Pring-Ham, Mike Stekoll, Eric Wyatt.
And: Kirsten Shelton Walker (McDowell Group), Margo Reveil (ASGA President)

Next Meeting: April 14, 9-10 am AST.

What to do with the species spreadsheet

Cynthia: will try to get to it, has been busy.

Carter: Already have oysters and mussels in commercial production. What about geoducks and seaweed.

Cynthia: there was no production of geoducks or clams for 2015.

Carter: One priority is to make oysters viable and to id bottlenecks will be of primary importance. These four species must have priority. There are too many issues to look at so we need industry leaders to agree on 4-5 bottlenecks that need to be addressed. The strategic plan needs lists of species that are currently being cultivated. What are the models that will enable a successful enterprise? As for enhancement, what species will be likely to be successful? For enhancement, we need to focus on an economic model.

Eric: What Carter is saying is similar to what we are already doing.

Cynthia: Can Margo help with this task of ID-ing bottlenecks?

Margo: Can help with this, but is unsure of where this AC is at. Need a structure in order to bring the industry into this discussion.

Mike: speaking for researchers, our research in many cases is driven by what RFPs are out there, since that is how we are funded to do research.

Carter: There are issues that are or may be common to all the potential species, such as site selection and disease. Discussion should be what does the industry need and not what RFPs are out there. How do we coordinate research priorities and funding? The Scottish Collective Aquaculture Center is a model. We need some kind of a consortium.

Bob: What comes from this group may help drive future RFPs. Also there is likely to be a regional component to research issues in Alaska. For example, Kodiak has a PSP problem which may not be relevant to other areas of Alaska.

Carter: Agrees, and in addition, different regions may have different needs and different species of interest. But we cannot do it all at once.

Eric: Agrees with Bob. Last ASGA meeting listed priorities. Industry does need to give guidance. An in the long term we need a structure that might be like that in Scotland.

Mike: Now we need some of us or others to put the priorities in writing for each species of interest.

Carter: what about geoducks?

Cynthia: 30% of the farms list geoducks.

Carter: But is anyone doing anything with geoducks or scallops?

Cynthia: too few people on record for her to divulge information on scallops.

Carter: Oysters, mussels, seaweed then geoducks and enhancement

Mike: Suggests that oyster and mussel research priorities be done by Eric and Margo. Mike will do seaweed. (Note: seaweed is not one species and though some would be cultured in a similar manner, others would require very different culture methods.)

Bob: We should emphasize regional issues.

Carter: Use environmental information to determine what can be done.

Bob: Predict extent of possible production based on environmental variables.

Margo: has a question for Cynthia about introducing other oyster species from outside AK.

Cynthia: That is a possibility. Other oyster species could be cultured in AK but the policy would have to be changed or amended.

Margo: would like to have new oyster species approved.

Carter: Back to the bottleneck priorities. For each species group list of R&D bottlenecks plus how the future of mariculture might look and what would be the return on investment in the research.

Eric: we can get to that eventually. The regional issue is important. For example, it seems that mussels cannot grow well in SE Alaska for unknown reasons.

Margo: we need a summary of past projects. Also how will results of research be shared? How will stakeholders be included in the process? One important consideration is that the people from the government agencies are paid for their time to be at these meetings but the farmers are not and they should be compensated for their time.

Carter: that is a good point. If some kind of mariculture center is created, industry needs to be included. Also there is a need for some kind of "best practices" guide to be created for each species under cultivation so new comers into the industry can get a running start.

Cynthia: are we including seed production issues as part of the priority.

Answer: any aspect is to be included

Eric: there is so much to be done.

Jeff: Let's circle back to the species under culture. Again, what R&D is needed for these species? We are not constrained to be doing only basic research. The WRAC(?) process works well for industry driven research.

Carter: How do we create an effective R&D program? We need to think about the structure to keep R&D going. In Maine bonds(?) have been issued to help develop the mariculture industry.

Eric: wants Margo to have access to our Google Docs site.

Margo: 22 farms reported products and only 11 met DNR requirements for a viable farm. 9 of these 11 are on the ASGA. So she will have access to the main players in the industry.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:05 am.