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The CCPFH would like to announce the addition of a new member organization:

Manitoba Commercial Inland Fishers Federation

Welcome Aboard!!



Saving lives at Sea – with the **E-SIMULATOR**



It's rough out there! – and fishing-vessel stability is tricky business. Around the world, thousands of fish harvesters have lost their vessels or their lives through capsizings and sinkings.

Better training in fishing-vessel stability can save lives.

Now, a new, Canadian-developed electronic simulator will make it easy for skippers and crews to learn the vital lessons of stability – using an ordinary home computer.

Here's the cover of the Council's new brochure on the electronic stability simulator now under development. The game-like program for home computers will be the world's first stability simulator for smaller fishing vessels.

(Photo courtesy of Provincial Airlines)

Training package will help harvesters run fisheries

Fish harvesters and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have long talked about shared management of the fishery. A new training package sponsored by the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters will bring that goal closer to reality.

Fish harvesters' representatives and fishery managers from DFO will soon meet to discuss the skills and knowledge needed for fisheries management. That will launch the process of producing a management handbook for fishermen and a training course to be given by fisheries schools and harvester organizations.

More than thirty years ago, the federal Policy for Canada's Commercial Fisheries and many speeches by fisheries minister Romeo LeBlanc called for fishermen to organize and take part in management. Organizations did grow stronger, especially on the Atlantic, and fish harvesters in the 1980's got a voice on many new fishery advisory committees.

But in the 1990's, even as DFO stepped up talk of "co-management," the picture got complicated. With smaller budgets, the department shifted more responsibilities to the industry. Some fishermen said that co-management was more like "co-payment," with downloading of costs and duties.

Meanwhile, certain industry members were accumulating Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQ's) and taking much more control of their fisheries. Independent harvesters sometimes wondered if co-management

was a mask for privatization.

Today, the picture is clearer. Owner-operators on the Atlantic have new protection against creeping privatization. And new calls have emerged for shared management. The Atlantic Fisheries Policy Review stressed both shared stewardship and the building up of harvester capabilities for that purpose. In another example, the Wild Salmon Policy in British Columbia emphasizes integrated planning and cooperation with fishery partners.



Photo submitted by Daniel Landry, FRAPP.

Fishermen already have much of the knowledge needed for fishery management. DFO tries to track fish migrations and behaviour, and to estimate populations. Fish harvesters do the same, and sometimes outdo scientists in their knowledge. Fishermen can also be their own best enforcers.

What's the rest of the DFO system? Mainly meetings and discussions about fishery policies and plans. Fishermen do that too, on every wharf and sometimes in government boardrooms. So they're not starting from scratch.

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Is “multi-skilling” an option for fish harvesters?

But the technicalities used by government, about Integrated Fishery Management Plans, Virtual Population Analysis, and so on, can sound like a different language. For fully shared management, fishermen will need both to learn more about how DFO operates, and to teach DFO more about how the fishery operates. Nobody will ever eliminate arguments about the right course, but there’s an increasing chance to steer together.

The training package will build on fishermen’s existing knowledge and capabilities, so they can hold their own in dealings with scientists, managers, and all parts of the fisheries bureaucracy. It will help make shared management a habit. Besides technical information, the package will cover “soft skills” such as bringing fishermen together, chairing meetings, and reporting back to others.

The CCPFH welcomes fish harvesters’ suggestions on the shared-management training package, whether or not your organization belongs to the Council.



Photo submitted by Captain Peter Noel.

Catching fish is only one of the skills needed to run a fishing vessel. Fish harvesters find themselves dealing with carpentry, plumbing, wiring, electronics, refrigeration, engine work, hydraulics, welding, and whatever else needs handling. They may not be recognized as professionals except at fishing, but they’re more than amateurs in other skills.

Some fishermen might want to upgrade those auxiliary skills, according to an idea making the rounds.

Many coastal communities are losing skilled tradespeople to the cities or the western oilfields. Meanwhile, with shorter fishing seasons, fishermen in some areas have more time for other work during the year.

So, the thinking goes, there’s a chance for interested fishermen to acquire more trade skills, extend their employment, and strengthen their communities.

That idea has come up at informal discussions within the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters, whose member organizations represent the majority of independent fish harvesters. The Council deals with skills development and professional recognition for fishermen.

Member organizations and national staff would be interested to know if fishermen like the “multi-skilling” concept. If so, the Council could look for ways to move it forward.

Eco-labelling: new challenge for fish harvesters?

Eco-labelling has become a major trend in Europe, and is starting to reach into North American fisheries. The idea is to reassure consumers that the fish they're buying comes from a sustainable fishery.

The leading entity for fishery eco-labelling so far is the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), based in the United Kingdom. If a fishery satisfies MSC criteria – including “chain of custody” certification – a label goes onto the final product at the retail level.

The eco-labelling trend coincides with new interest by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) in an “Ocean-to-Plate” agenda, including more attention to sustainability, quality, and marketing. That in turn could involve various initiatives, including training, to help fish harvesters take the best advantage from changing markets.



Photo submitted by Monique Anne Morin.

Nobody knows for sure how eco-labelling will affect Canadian fisheries, but it's a good time to stay alert. Some background information follows.

From Europe to North America

The eco-labelling trend started in Britain and Western Europe (e.g. Holland, Belgium, Germany). Although other eco-labelling organizations exist, the Marine Stewardship Council is the best known. Still, out of all the world's fisheries, MSC has so far certified only 22, with another 20 or so being assessed. Although some are large fisheries, such as Alaska salmon, most are smaller-scale.

Consumer consciousness is pushing retail food companies towards certification, and they in turn are influencing fish producers. For example, United Kingdom retailers pressed B.C. salmon producers to get certified or lose market share. In North America, Wal-Mart has announced that it will move over several years to eco-labelled fish. This has raised high interest among American and Canadian fish producers and dealers.

How certification works

Processor or government organizations initiate most certifications, but fishermen's groups have also done so. The Marine Stewardship Council certifies by the fishery or fish stock combined with the fishing method/gear and practice.

MSC internationally has approved 4 fisheries “certification bodies” (including the Tavel corporation, based in Halifax), which

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do the actual assessments. There are 9 chain-of-custody certifiers.

Certification goes by three main principles – stock sustainability, ecosystem impact, effective management – and related criteria. After a pre-assessment, the certification body sets up an assessment team that deals with scientists, managers, and fishery participants. “Stakeholders” – other interested parties such as environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGO’s) – also play a role. Performance indicators are defined, and a corrective action plan developed as necessary. Each part of the chain of custody must also be certified before a product bears the MSC label.

Certification often takes around 18 months. Bigger fisheries can take longer, and smaller ones less time. A small fishery might cost \$50,000, but it varies; certification costs have ranged from less than \$30,000 to more than \$400,000, depending on the nature of the fishery.

Smaller-scale fishing or community groups seeking certification can sometimes get help from such agencies as the WWF organization (originally, World Wildlife Fund) and the Sustainable Fisheries Fund.

The North American picture

Several fisheries on the US west coast have gotten certification, including Alaska salmon and pollock, and North Pacific halibut and sablefish.

No Canadian fisheries have been certified to date. Fisheries seeking certification



Photo submitted by Josh Duncan, NBBC.

include Atlantic northern shrimp, Gulf of St. Lawrence shrimp, Pacific halibut, and Pacific salmon. The salmon fishery had major difficulties because of its complexity. The effort has taken 5-6 years and has cost more than \$400,000.

Apart from certification, initiatives such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s “Seafood Watch” in the United States and Canada’s fledgling SeaChoice campaign try to sensitize consumers to choose products from healthy, sustainable fisheries.

DFO in May 2007 sponsored a National Workshop on Seafood Eco-labelling and Certification. The department is also in the early stages of developing Sustainability Checklists. These will show buyers the status of management measures and biological aspects of sustainability.

Aquaculture and forestry labelling

In the aquaculture industry internationally, various systems exist to certify industry methods and practices. The Canadian

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Photo submitted by Daniel Landry, FRAPP

Aquaculture Industry Association (CAIA) in 2004, with help from Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada, launched a “Brand Canada” initiative. Although not an eco-labelling system, this effort encourages good practices and a national traceability program, and has its own logo.

In the forestry sector, Canadian organizations have developed third-party systems to certify for sustainability.

Is the MSC system inevitable for wild fisheries?

Some certified fisheries have benefitted from higher demand for eco-labelled fish. But competing non-certified fisheries, even if sustainable and of high quality, may lose out. Other problems include the cost and time required for certification and periodic re-assessments. And some people question a situation where, although most of the MSC evaluation looks at governmental science and

management, in Canada it is the industry sector that pays the main cost.

Some industry observers say that the MSC system, which costs money and time and has certified only about two dozen fisheries, may falter. They add that, in Canada, some fisheries by nature would be extremely hard to certify. Even if major fisheries like lobster or crab never got certified, they say, the market would still be there.

But others think that some form of certification is here to stay, including such aspects as traceability for the chain of custody. And the MSC seems far enough in the lead that it will remain important for some time to come.

Planning is well under way by the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for a workshop on the “Ocean-to-Plate” agenda this fall, to look at skills implications for fish harvesters.



Photo submitted by Captain Peter Noel.

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**Look for our
next newsletter
to be published
in October
2007!**

Picture Submissions

The Council is always looking for photos to use in our newsletters and other promotional materials. If you have a commercial fishing related photo, we'd like to see it.

The pictures featured in this newsletter are just a few of the wonderful photos we've received.

Any originals you send us will be copied and returned to you or email your digital pics to fish@ccpfh-ccpp.org

**Thank you to all who have sent us photos.
Please continue sending us your pictures!!!**