

## Catching sector follow up meetings on blue whiting/mackerel

### AM & FB Meeting with Dominic Rihan, Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, 20 June 2024

- DR said BW is the easiest stock to reach an agreement. Mackerel and herring are much more complex.
- On the mackerel trilateral agreement between UK, Norway and Faroes, DR said the change in approach is 'good and bad'
  - Good: it holds hope that the CS can forge agreements and it should help to reduce fishing pressure.
  - Bad: it excludes the EU, Iceland, and Greenland, is far from a full agreement, and makes for negative sentiment between the CS, which is not helpful in encouraging collaboration.
- DR added the trilateral deal between UK, Norway and Faroes on mackerel has put CS back to square 1 again. EU views this as a quota grab. Multi-lateral agreements are not helpful.
- DR: If market starts playing hard ball people will react. He didn't know if retailers have willingness to go that far. The catching sector do not see it as their problem, they are playing the blame game.
- DR: The only way to get the catching sector to act, is through the power of the market. He didn't think the parties wanted to solve the issue, so the only way to affect change is the market. "It all boils down to money".
- AM: The market are threatening to act and have done so before - When MT certification was lost in 2020, Cargill and Skretting stopped sourcing BW, but re-engaged when the FIP was up and running. The FIP provides a vehicle for companies to keep sourcing and NAPA is applying for a 2 year extension. But without a FIP, some members of the market would likely walk away. We expect that some members may adapt their sourcing statements if the FIP does come to an end. The issues relate to P3 issues and are solvable.
  - DR agreed this situation was inexcusable.

- DR asked if the ITM option was under consideration? DR expressed ITMs as "FIPs in disguise".
  - AM: Yes it was, with some partners strongly supporting an ITM. But, following conversations with the catching sector, who would have to step in and lead an ITM, it was felt that the FIP extension would be more appropriate because 1) the FIPs were already in place, 2) the FIP allows the market to continue sourcing, 3) under ITM, P1 and P2 actions would need addressing, but these are likely to be beyond the scope of retailers/processors more the responsibility of the catching sector (the issue is meeting P3).
  
- AM highlighted the EU collectively catches and lands the biggest share of BW – Should NAPA consider working with the EU to encourage them to step forward and take leadership?
  - DR: EU feels very isolated/sorry for itself at the moment. There was some alignment between the CS on BW at the last CS meetings – they are closer in their positions than they are for mackerel and herring anyway.
  - DR suggested waiting to engage with EU until we hear more from CS. We offered to keep each other updated.
  - AM: If there are opportunities to push this forward together, NAPA would be grateful.

### **AM & FB Meeting with Tim Heddema, PFA, 2 July 2024**

TH: Reaction to Nor/Faroes/UK agreement on mackerel, thinks a full agreement is the only way forward to secure the sustainability of the stock. UK are saying 'join the party, there's space for others' but there isn't, the remaining share is much too low. UK would like a share of 35%, that's their goal. UK and Norway are effectively trying to increase their shares at the expenses of the EU. For Iceland, their share doesn't change much.

Response on this: <https://fiskerforum.com/european-industry-slams-uk-swapping-in-stolen-goods/#:~:text=European%20fishing%20operators%2C%20represented%20by,far%20from%20the%20shares%20applicable>

TH: Sad to see the UK siding with countries that are engaging with Russia, for herring. EU and UK have always been the grown ups, championing sustainability/restraint, that's ended. The UK narrative is that they are trying to get the Norwegian share down. They are legitimizing the inflated track records from Norway and there is a view that it is an opportunity to increase its share (extra catch from Norway)

AM: Will the EU retaliate? TH: Too early to say. We have a discussion this week. The sentiment is changing, they are stealing the fish, damaging the stock, there are no negotiations right now and very little appetite to restart negotiations. September negotiations have been penciled in. Last concrete proposal for mackerel came to the table in 2023, the last few years have been about process.

AM: Concerns that parties excluded from the agreement will exit altogether. NAPA's position has not changed. Partial agreement is something to work from but it is not a solution. We don't have a solution though, hoping to find ways to work with individual gov's., individual catching sector orgs.

TH: The agreement has not helped, it's kept parties away from the negotiating table

AM: I could see the EU taking a lead on BW which appears to be forgotten about. Can we work together on this? TH: BW is a very important fishery for EU,

TH: The biomass of the stock is challenging because it waters down the sustainability argument. We know the cycle of the stock and it will fall. For herring the projection of blim by 2026 is not even enough to get the CS around the table.

AM: We have been focusing on Norway b/c salmon is key to Norwegian economy. And this has implications for salmon production sector. A lot of this salmon is going into EU and UK retail. Anything we can do to work together with you to drive change for BW. You'd be welcome to join our meeting with Norwegian gov. TH: That will be tricky b/c the EU will not like it.

TH: PFA would be willing to work together with NAPA. This is a change in direction for industry. In the past we would argue that there shouldn't be a free stock agreement.

AM: gifting and gaining is a core part of this.

TH: For EU the market instrument is very important. Market access for these specific species esp for Norway to the UK. We have seen some limitations – loss of MSC label, threat of FIPs ending – this is a pressure point/lever.

AM: if the FIP ends in Oct, aquafeed companies will walk away. For FIP extension we need to change

TH: in the LDAC, we will try to draft a recommendation on NEAFC governance b/c this is another way to address the issue. The EU Com often sats out toolbox is empty so this a another way. I will consider how we can work with you as ACs. The PelAC and LDAC are relevant to these stocks – Industry and NGOs are members and draft joint advice. It's often better for the ACs to say something than just industry. We should raise the issue in the

context of the NEAFC annual meeting in November. I don't think we've come any closer to full agreement in the past year.

TH: Possible trilateral agreement between Norway, Faroese and Russia for herring. Most of the parties are giving external parties a 0% share. But EU would like 5-8% ideally.

AM: Would like to collaborate through the ACs, happy for you to be a guest speaker at our sub-group meetings. Let's stay in touch over summer. The more we can find alignment, that would be really helpful.

TH: There has always been a positive relationship between EU and UK but since Brexit, we don't go into much detail in the fishery. It's a civil, positive relationship.