

Aquatic Livestock Biosecurity Forum - Compendium Report  
November 15-16, 2007 - Des Moines, Iowa

Richard Clayton, Joseph Morris  
Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management  
339 Science II, Ames, Iowa 50011-3221

and

David Starling  
Aqueterinary Services®, PC  
1229 Florida #303, Ames, Iowa 50014

# Aquatic Livestock Biosecurity Forum - Compendium Report

November 15-16, 2007 - Des Moines, Iowa

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Background .....	4
Forum Agenda .....	5
Thursday, November 15, 2007.....	6
Task # 1 .....	6
Top 3 issues resulting from vote .....	7
Task #2 .....	8
Friday, November 16, 2007 .....	9
Group 1 – No uniformity in state regulations (statement needs clarification) .....	9
Group 2 – Limited availability of fish health officials - Producers need someone with knowledge of interstate procedures. ....	10
Group 3 – No uniformity of testing standards among states – No one set of standards accepted by all states .....	10
Wrap up of Forum .....	10
Aquatic Livestock Alliance (ALA) Formation .....	11
Proposed Mission Statement .....	11
ALA Board .....	11
Aquatic Forum Attendees and Founding Members .....	12

## **Executive Summary**

The focus of a Forum hosted by the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) on November 15-16, 2007 in Des Moines, Iowa, was to address the policy, laws, and regulations whereby cultured aquatic organisms can be moved within a regulatory framework similar to that of traditional livestock, e.g., swine and cattle. Invited participants included private and public aquatic producers, traditional livestock health representatives from public agencies, and state agriculture and natural resource regulators from the North Central Region. The reason for this Forum was the effect of a federal order (October 2006) issued by USDA-APHIS on interstate transport and subsequent changes in state regulations due to outbreak of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS). At the onset of the meeting, the facilitator assured an open dialogue amongst all participants, many of whom would not normally be sitting at the same table. Issues that the 37 Forum participants were in consensus on in rank order were:

1. No uniformity in state regulations,
2. Limited availability of fish health officials, and
3. No uniformity of testing standards among states.

An outcome of the 2-day Forum was the agreement by all participants to establish the Aquaculture Livestock Alliance (ALA) with the following mission statement: "The Aquaculture Livestock Alliance (ALA) exists for the purpose of promoting the interstate commerce of aquaculture livestock." To formally create the ALA as a non-profit corporation, the participants approve the formation and membership of a six-person executive committee.

## **Forum Introduction and Invitation**

In early fall 2007; a question was raised by regional producers as to the possibility of bringing aquatic stakeholders together from various backgrounds to discuss the regulatory and administrative discrepancies among states when it comes to aquatic livestock, biosecurity, and commerce. The concept of a meeting/forum evolved into an action plan to try and accomplish this task. A forum was designed to explore federal and state regulations that are impacting the profitable and efficient interstate movement of aquatic livestock for both private and public purposes in hopes of finding consistent uniform methods for the North Central Region (NCR) and other states currently under the federal order for VHS.

The concept of this Forum was to discuss improvement and revision of state regulations and policies whereby aquatic livestock for both public and private purposes can be enhanced while also maintaining animal health in 2008. The five delegate groups are: private producers, public producers (such as hatchery personal), animal health representative (veterinarians), state natural resources and agriculture state agencies representatives were invited from fourteen states. The states in the NCR (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) and those affected by the federal order on VHS (New York and Pennsylvania) were chosen. These states and stakeholders that were invited were methodically chosen. Those listed at the end of this document are those that attended.

Those invited to attend this Forum are stakeholders that have vested interests and experiences in aquatic livestock and the regulations that permit livestock to move efficiently in interstate commerce. The purpose with this selection process by the three organizers was: 1.) to bring a relatively small, regional group together that shared industry issues, and 2.) conduct an effective dialogue about these common issues. Neutrality was the main concern with this Forum. National, state, or any type of "group" from the various backgrounds were not invited so that a common agenda would be formed by the invited stakeholders allowing everyone attending a voice/vote. To reach this goal of neutrality and try to make the Forum a success, Dr. Paul Lasley, Chair of the Sociology Department, Iowa State University, was hired as a moderator.

The Forum started with the invitees having name tags for assigned seats at the prepared tables. The plan was for members from each of the five groups to be present at every table to assure that each table had good cross-section of the total Forum. State delegations were likewise dispersed as much as possible, although some states were better represented by the five groups.

### **Background**

To help open the dialogue to the meeting, a background document was assembled by several individuals and presented to the invited stakeholders. You can find this document at <http://www.aquaticlivestock.org/>. This document was provided as one perspective of the history that put us where we are at today (at the time of the Forum).

## Forum Agenda

The meeting progressed with the following agenda where by the stakeholders were purposefully placed at round tables with a seating chart.

### Thursday November 15

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 4:30 – 5:00 pm | Break – snacks/beverages   |
| 5:00 – 5:15 pm | Welcome - Deputy Secretary, Karey Claghorn, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  |
| 5:15 – 5:30 pm | Introduction and concept of forum: neutrality  |
| 5:30 – 8:00 pm | Dr. Lasley perspective<br>Roundtable Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify key barriers to Aquatic Livestock Commerce</li></ul> |

### Friday November 16

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 7:00 – 8:00am | Continental Breakfast for all participants                                 |
| 8:00 – 9:00   | Identified barrier # 1- what, who, and how to proceed                      |
| 9:00 – 10:00  | Identified barrier # 2- what, who, and how to proceed                      |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Break – snacks/beverages   |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | Identified barrier # 3- what, who, and how to proceed                      |
| 11:30-1:00    | Lunch – on your own  |
| 1:00 – 3:00   | Opportunities for growth and expansion in aquaculture – stakeholders input |
| 3:00 -3:30    | Break – snacks/beverages   |
| 3:30-4:00     | Closing remarks  |

***Thursday, November 15, 2007***

The meeting started with a welcome and introduction by Paul Lasley, the moderator. The question “What are the barriers for growing the aquatic livestock industry?” was presented to the group. Many of the same issues have been faced by other stakeholders and other industries, i.e., dairy industry. Some of the most controversial issues have been over the swine industry.

The following lists of concerns/issues were created:

**Task # 1**

- What are the barriers to growing the Aquatic Livestock Industry?
- Some issues common among various industries

Round 1 by table:

- 4 – Having no uniformity between states
- 5 – Bio-security measure
- 6 – Over regulated on land use at various levels
- 1 – Access to fish health officials and labs
- 2 – Lack of science behind regulations
- 3 – Violations of interstate trade laws

Round 2

- 4 – Private and government producers have short history of working together
- 5 – Nasty invasive species
- 6 – Who is in charge of aquatic program in each state?
- 1 – Availability of investment capital
- 2 – Lack of third party
- 3 – Foreign imports not held to same standards

Round 3

- 4 – Some states don't want aquaculture to grow
- 5 – Out of topics
- 6 – Aquaculture viewed as minor industry has little political clout
- 1 – Uniformity in testing protocol
- 2 – Timeliness of certification
- 3 – Power play in government between state departments

#### Round 4

- 4 – Proximity to market
- 5 – Out of topics
- 6 – Licensing of public water for private use
- 1 – Lack of fish therapeutics
- 2 – ALS fitting into terrestrial livestock mold
- 3 – Misuse of the LACY act\

#### Round 5

- 4 – Catastrophic disease can kill industry (Should we have health testing?)
- 5 – Out of topics
- 6 – Lack of networking between producers
- 1 – Cost of testing
- 2 – Negative press on fish consumption
- 3 – Lack of stakeholders input in many states

#### Round 6

- 4 – Interstate movement of fish
- 5 – No uniform documents (Question asked by participant at table 5. Why are we here? Why did you come to this meeting?)
- 6 – Diversity in broad category of aquaculture. What do we mean when we say aquaculture?
- 1 – Out of topics
- 2 – Out of topics
- 3 – In many states the Department of Fisheries gave fish away in direct competition with private producers. Regulators are competitors.

After the list of concerns/issues was posted on the wall, each person was able to vote a total of 10 times. All ten votes could have gone on one topic if that stakeholder felt that strongly about that topic. After the votes were counted the following three topics came to the top of the list:

#### **Top 3 issues resulting from vote**

1. No uniformity in state regulations,
2. Limited availability of fish health officials, and
3. No uniformity of testing standards among states.

Questions to ask related to the preceding topics are: –

- What is the issue?
- Who is responsible?
- What should be done?

Homework assignment: How do we go about fixing this problem? Is there a way to do it? Is there an equivalent to the various associations for aquaculture an aquatic livestock association perhaps?

There needs to be some sort of recommendation going back to the national organizations. A group of this size should have some impact to put together through this process some feed back to the USDA-APHIS saying here are some guidelines from industry from all the groups represented here.

## **Task #2**

What is the issue? Who is responsible? What should be done?

- Eight states – all different regulations
- Lack of communication
- Lack of defined authority
- Stakeholders not always involved

**Friday, November 16, 2007**

### Components of an Action Plan

1. Definition of the problem. (Specificity, clarity)
2. Who is the recipient, intended audience, of the recommendation?
3. What needs to be done? Recommendation(s)
  - Who is responsible?
  - How should it be accomplished?
  - When should it be implemented?
  - Source of funding
  - Expected outcomes of these recommendations

In response to the previous day's activities, the following questions were presented to the group. Where are we going today? What action are we going to take with this diverse group of stakeholders? Each group (assigned to the top three topics) needs to take ownership in the process.

Suggested topics from last night's vote and talk:

1. No uniformity in state regulations,
2. Limited availability of fish health officials, and
3. No uniformity of testing standards among states.

Questions to ask-

- Clarity/definition of the problem
- Who is the intended audience? Who are we trying to reach? Who should we send our recommendation to?
- What needs to be done? Your recommendations. What industry, what organization and who is responsible. Who, how, when?

After much discussion within and between groups the stakeholders came up with the following action plans for each issue:

### **Group 1 – No uniformity in state regulations (statement needs clarification)**

Action –

1. Recommendations should go to all stakeholders
2. Want single contact/state

3. Ask for input from states not attending meeting.
4. Feedback from all states to the question, will they implement?
5. Time frame to put into practice.
6. Timely responses to fish movement request needed.
7. Follow up meeting needed.

**Group 2 – Limited availability of fish health officials - Producers need someone with knowledge of interstate procedures.**

Action –

1. Aquaculture group in each state, commodity trade group, go to the legislature and get them to understand that there is a problem and maybe generate funding.
2. Training program for fish health individuals

Comments: Wisconsin has an online training program. It started March 2006 and vet accreditation specific to aquaculture coming to Iowa State University

**Group 3 – No uniformity of testing standards among states – No one set of standards accepted by all states**

Action –

- Levels of risk
- Appropriate level of testing
- APHIS website showing current state standards

Recommendations: Communication and compliance with interstate movement of aquatic livestock.

**Wrap up of Forum**

Common theme across all groups was communication and how to bridge the communication gap. Paul asked, “How would you like to see things move forward and how do you build upon this Forum?” All of the stakeholders at the Forum stated that they would all like to see the momentum from this meeting carried forward.

### ***Aquatic Livestock Alliance (ALA) Formation***

The following questions and observations were then presented to the group. Do we want to form an aquatic livestock alliance? If we leave here as individuals and we go back to our respective states as individuals that's how we will remain. If we leave here as an alliance group that we can refer to APHIS or anybody else, we have a little more credibility. We'll never reach any of our goals if we don't bind together.

Motion made and seconded that we create a formal Aquatic Livestock Alliance (ALA).

Vote – all approved

The ALA will need a mission statement and officers.

### ***Proposed Mission Statement***

The Aquaculture Livestock Alliance (ALA) exists for the purpose of promoting the interstate commerce of aquaculture livestock.

Vote – all approved

### ***ALA Board***

Ron Johnson (public producer)

Mike Mason (state natural resources)

Tony Forshey (state vet & Dept of Ag)

Myron Kebus (Dept of Ag)

Dan Longnecker (private producer)

Robert Baldwin (web master)

Action Plan:

- Form a task force to write articles of incorporation and to write the mission statement
- Get officers in place

Get a website – get the name out there. This group needs to get together before next spring, maybe January or February.

There will be expenses so a membership fee will be needed. People will join because they think they might miss something and they want to have input.

A meeting was suggested for January in Chicago.

It was suggested to have an “open membership.” The Board of Directors will work with the goal to define membership while also retaining standards and professionalism.

## **Aquatic Forum Attendees and Founding Members**

### Indiana

Robert Lyons

### Iowa

Rich Clayton

Marion Conover

J. Alan Johnson

Todd Hinegardner

Larry Hinegardner

Mike Mason

Joe Morris

David Schmitt

Mark Shearer

David Starling

John Thomson

Randy Wheeler

### Kansas

Brent Culver

Randy Nelson

### Michigan

Robert Baldwin

### Minnesota

Roy Johannes

Greg Oswald

Nicholas Phelps

Ling Shen

### Missouri

Bart Hawcroft

Paula Moore

Devona Weirich

### Nebraska

Dean Rosenthal

### Ohio

James Brick

Tom Chairvolotti

Tony Forshey

Elmer Heyob Jr.

Dan Longnecker

Geoff Wallat

### Pennsylvania

Charles Conklin II

Tony LaBarbera

### South Dakota

Thomas Cline

Regg Neiger

### Wisconsin

Tim Gollon

Ron Johnson

Myron Kebus