



MEMORANDUM

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Date: April 14, 2006

To: Private Hatchery Committee Members

From: Guy Chilton

Subject: Minutes of Private Hatchery Committee Meeting 2/17/06

The first meeting of the Private Hatchery Committee took place on February 17, 2006 at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife headquarters, in Salem. Those in attendance were:

Clint Bentz – Oregon Aquaculture Association
Joe Rohleder – Oregon Aquaculture Association
Lyle Negus – Desert Springs Trout Farm
Drew Hansen – Island Springs Hatchery
Kathy Bridges – Santiam Valley Ranch
Steve Williams – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
John Thorpe – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Tony Amandi – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Health Section
Guy Chilton – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dalton Hobbs – Oregon Department of Agriculture
Mike Thompson – Oregon State University Extension Service
Todd Hanna – Mt. Hood Community College

The following items were on the agenda for discussion:

- A. Develop a list of issues to address
- B. Finalize committee membership
- C. Discuss protocol
- D. Establish a meeting schedule

Item A. Develop a list of issues to address

The committee members developed the following list of issues, in order of priority:

1. Fish Health Assessment
 2. Trout purchases by ODFW
 3. Fish Transport Permits
 4. Sturgeon Aquaculture
 5. Culture Species
 6. Pond Management
- Ongoing – Public Image

Discussion:

1. Fish Health Assessment

Cost of ODFW disease certification versus certification by private labs –

Tony Amandi presented itemized costs for ODFW to provide bacterial kidney disease (BKD) testing, virus testing, and bacterial examination:

- BKD testing by ELISA: \$5.18 per fish, \$310.80 per 60-fish sample
- Virus testing: \$165.56 per 60-fish sample

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- Parasite and bacterial examination: \$6.16 per fish, \$65 per sample of 10 dead or moribund fish and 4 active fish

Costs were lower than those of commercial testing labs; the cost of annual private health certification had been previously estimated at \$1500 per site. It was pointed out that the costs provided did not include costs for travel, sample collection, and equipment costs, as these would vary among sites sampled.

Questions generated:

- Can ODFW legally provide disease certification or charge a fee for certification?

[Steve Williams will look into this.]

Would it be possible to increase the Propagation License annual fee to include the cost of fish health inspection?

- Does the Lower Columbia Fish Health Center provide services to private hatcheries? Are there other federal entities that may participate in fish health issues?

[Tony Amandi – The Olympia USFWS Fish Health Center examines fish from one private facility; the Lower Columbia Fish Health Center also examines fish from one private facility in an outreach mode. Idaho Fish Health Center personnel examine fish from three private growers and are working on an agreement with the Idaho Department of Agriculture to set up some sort of reimbursement process.]

- *Sampling issue* – should fish for health examinations be collected by ODFW Fish Health personnel or sent in by hatchery operators?

[Tony Amandi – If funding for examinations and travel is available, ODFW personnel would collect the samples. If funding is only available for examinations, the growers would collect the fish and send them to the lab for examinations (this would be problematic for fish that are to be shipped out of state, since some other states do not accept this practice).]

- *Level of regulation* – At what levels should testing take place? Will the scope of testing be dependent on the risk level or the size of the facility? Should U-catch operators be subject to the same testing and certification as production facilities?

- Whirling disease management policy – Guidelines are needed for procedures and best management practices.

[ODFW will make guidelines available to hatchery operators.]

- *Training* – Is there any training on fish health and fish diseases available?

[Ray Brunson of the USFWS presents classes annually on Fish Health. The 2006 class will be in Olympia from June 5th through the 9th.]

- Will ODFW disease certification be accepted by other states?

2. Trout Purchases by ODFW

Private producers stated that they would like to see continued purchase of trout from private producers for stocking by ODFW. They also requested better advertising of anticipated purchases, with more advanced notice to allow producers time to get fish up to the desired size.

3. Fish Transport Permits

Private producers say there is too much delay in the permit process – customers often want to take delivery of fish on the day of purchase.

The State of Washington requires the purchaser to obtain the transport permit, rather than the seller.

Approval of permits by ODFW has been exacerbated by the difficulty of obtaining inspections of the stocking sites.

[Guy Chilton (4/14/06) - ODFW Recreational Fisheries Section is presently in the process of revising the Fish Transport Permit process. Proposed changes include:

- Revising the permit form to include specific stocking site location information to allow ODFW staff to evaluate sites in a timelier manner.
- Providing a basin by basin plan showing where fish can be stocked and under what conditions, as well as showing which species cannot be stocked.
- Developing specific screening criteria.
- Making fish transportation information and permits available on the ODFW website.

This revision process is expected to be completed by January 2005.]

4. Sturgeon Aquaculture

Private producers would like to change regulations regarding sturgeon aquaculture to allow production of sturgeon for human consumption.

5. Culture Species

Private producers stated that more information is needed on allowable species for aquaculture, locations where species will be allowed for culture, and risk assessment and the decision process followed on allowing new species for culture.

6. Pond Management

Private producers would like to have better participation by the OSU Extension Service in providing sources of information on pond management, pond construction, predator control, and invasive species. [Mike Thompson suggested contacts at OSU – Scott Reed, Jay Rasmussen (Sea Grant).]

Public Image – the group considered this item an ongoing top priority item

Provide information to the public on the existence and function of the committee.

Private producers would like to build political consensus on funding for fish purchases by ODFW.

The possible inclusion of sportsman groups and conservation groups on the committee was suggested.

Item B. Finalize Committee Membership

The group discussed including a member on the committee who comes from the receiving end of the industry – farm pond owner, seafood processor or marketer, restaurant owner, etc.

Marketing is seen as an important issue – development of niche markets not saturated by Idaho trout producers, possibility of marketing live fish at farmer's markets and ethnic markets.

It was suggested that marketing representatives be brought in for special focus meetings on marketing issues, rather than as full-time committee members.

Issues related to transport and market access may need fixing, including USDA and FDA issues.

[Dalton Hobbs offered to provide expertise on food safety regulations.]

Item C. Discuss Protocol

There was no discussion of this item.

Item D. Establish a Regular Meeting Schedule

It was discussed whether meetings should be bi-monthly or quarterly. It was decided that the next meeting will be in April.

Further Fish Health Discussion by Tony Amandi

ODFW facilities receive a monthly examination consisting of 10 dead/dying fish (if available) and 4 live fish from each species/lot of fish, and a pre-liberation inspection for salmon species consisting of 60 live fish for BKD testing.

Annual inspection at private facilities would consist of 60 fish for virus and *M. cerebralis* testing. Some of these live fish would be used for parasite testing and moribund or freshly dead fish would be tested for bacterial agents. A 60-fish sample is the minimum required to provide statistical validity.

The bottom line is protecting the fish resources of the state.

Tony would like to do quarterly health exams (10 dead / 4 live fish) – this provides a fish health history for the facility.

BKD testing will not be required for rainbow trout, but will be available at cost. This may be required for out-of-state shipping to some surrounding states.

There are seasonal constraints on the Fish Health Section staff availability – there is no time to do testing during salmon spawning season (August to December) so annual testing will have to be done at a different time of year.

The private producers raised the question of small producers or grow-out facilities that have fish on-station for short periods (3-4 months) that may not be able to afford annual inspections – should they have different requirements?

Three options were offered up by the private producers for discussion:

Option 1: Increase the Fish Propagation License fee to cover the cost of the annual health exam. Small grow-out facilities would be grandfathered in at the present fee, but no new licenses would be issued to small producers unless they can pay the full fee (or small producers would be given a 3-4 year moratorium, after which they would have to pay the increased fee or lose their license).

Option 2: Look for outside funding to cover the cost of annual exams, such as economic development funding for rural areas or small businesses, federal funding, or lottery dollars.

Option 3: The Fish Propagation License fee would be on a sliding scale based on the pounds of fish produced – larger producers would pay a higher fee to help cover the cost of health exams for smaller producers.

Sample collection costs – cost for ODFW to send someone to a facility to collect fish for health exams versus facility owners collecting their own samples and sending them in (samples may arrive in poor condition).

Is a separate Propagation License required for each facility/water source even if there is a single owner?

[This is current ODFW practice (example given was Clear Creek having separate licenses for facilities at two different locations).]

Private producers would like to have this clearly stated in the regulations.

What are the consequences if diseases are detected?

[This depends on the disease category, as defined in the ODFW Fish Health Policy (OAR 635-007-0960).

Category IV – no concern.

Category III – small concern, some other states may have restrictions on transport.

Category II – restriction on transport, can be severe as in the case of whirling disease.

Category I – may lead to destruction of fish and disinfection of facility.]

Private producers would like methodology written into policy, describing what actions would be taken for each category of infection.

Is there crop insurance for aquaculture to cover loss of income due to disease?

[This is available commercially.]

Other Discussion

It was suggested that District Fish Biologists visit private facilities so operators can get to know them. District Bios used to do annual site inspections of private facilities.