

POMS

Biosecurity Response

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My year of POMS as Coordinator of Oyster Biosecurity

Key work areas have included the following:

- Confirmation sampling
- Summer surveillance sampling
- Managing Movement Permits
- Promoting Oyster Hatchery Biosecurity
- Liaising with Bay Groups, Industry and Public

Confirmation Testing 2016 - 2017

- Samples were collected from the 1st reported OsHv1 virus activation in each of the 4 previously infected areas
- Samples were q PCR tested at Mt Pleasant Lab

Confirmation Testing

- POMS disease activity confirmed:
- Pitt Water - 8/12/2016
- Pipe Clay Lagoon - 4/01/2017
- Blackman Bay - 4/01/2017
- Little Swanport – 17/01/2017

Summer Surveillance Testing

The 2 main purposes of testing were for:

- Proof of Freedom
- Disease Status

Sampling was prioritised and limited due to testing costs.

Proof of Freedom Testing

Undertaken to ensure that an area classified as being free of POMS remained free.

The areas tested were Circular Head, Port Sorell and Georges Bay.

Sampling was undertaken based on water temperature at the beginning of summer and at the end of summer.

All 3 areas tested free of POMS this summer.

Disease Status testing

- Undertaken in Intermediate areas
- Looking to confirm POMS status
- Stock profiles of growing areas were assessed and representative samples taken
- Sampling was undertaken when water temperatures averaged over 18c for 21 days.
- Samples were sent to Mt Pleasant Labs for q-pcr testing.

Movement Permits - History

- Feb 2016 Statewide control area declared for POMS
- Based on testing results, areas of state declared either Free, Intermediate or Infected.
- Movement Permit system introduced to allow traditional oyster business to continue.
- Movement Permits issued for all oyster movements and all used oyster equipment movements.
- Since Feb 2016, 454 Movement Permits issued.

Movement Permits - Future

- POMS is no longer an emergency disease, it is here to stay.
- A movement permit system needs to reflect that.
- To that end a new movement permit system has been designed and has the approval of Oysters Tasmania.
- Under the new system, area classifications will remain the same; Free, Intermediate & Infected.
- Movements will be allowed without permit from an area of the same or worse classification. Eg Intermediate to Intermediate or Infected. If necessary production returns will be used to track movements.

Movement Permits – Future Cont'd

- Hatcheries will be issued with an annual permit for the areas that they are allowed to supply.
- It will be a condition of a permit that records of movements are available to an Inspector.
- Used oyster equipment movements will still require a permit.
- Bay Groups with specific movement limitations will be supported by BT and or movement restrictions.

Oyster Hatchery Biosecurity

- Feb 2016 – 6 hatcheries in the State.
- None were an approved Biosecure hatchery.
- Shellfish Culture Pty Ltd was the first oyster hatchery in Tas to be recognised as an approved Biosecure Hatchery.
- Cameron's of Tasmania also now has an approved and independently audited Biosecurity Plan.
- 2 other hatcheries are working towards that approval and 1 hatchery has closed.
- Biosecurity Tasmania has worked closely with all hatcheries through this process and will continue to do so.

The year ahead

I will:

- Continue to support oyster growers and oyster hatcheries in relation to POMS Biosecurity matters.
- Continue the collaboration with IMAS working towards next years POMS Mortality survey.
- Continue to manage the Movement Permit system.
- Continue Summer surveillance sampling.
- Provide advice to the wider community in relation to POMS.
- Hopefully, I will continue to learn more about the POMS virus and it's impact.