

Atlantic Salmon Seawater Standards Technical Advisory Group Meeting
10am Wednesday 27th April 2022
Meeting Summary

Welfare Outcome Assessment (WOA)

The group discussed the formal introduction of WOA into the standards. Many companies are already performing these to some extent and the advantages and opportunities were discussed, as well as the challenges and limitations. There are considerable benefits in the seawater phase by performing regular WOAs, e.g. to allow the earliest possible detection of potential welfare issues, so the introduction was agreed.

Enrichment

Environmental enrichment was discussed as a potential direction of travel. There is scientific evidence that some forms of enrichment can positively impact fish welfare but the commercial evidence is lacking at this time and the group discussed concerns about potential unintended consequences. The group was positive about investigating enrichment in the marine environment, so avenues of research will be pursued.

Slaughter

A number of improvements around stunning and slaughter were discussed. Standards relating to CCTV coverage are to be updated to ensure all stages of stunning and slaughter, including post-stun assessment, are covered. There was further discussion about how to improve the stunning process, as well as discussing the status and future of electrical stunning.

Non-medicinal treatments

Non-medicinal treatments for parasites and gill pathogens are widely used in the industry and we will introduce standards to regulate the use of such treatments, safeguard welfare of fish and drive the continued improvement of these tools. A working group is to be created to progress this.

Cleanerfish

The need for improvements in cleanerfish welfare was discussed and agreed as a group. Immediate changes to transport stocking densities and other parameters were agreed and further discussions were had about the implementation of WOAs for cleanerfish, as well as improvements in general handling. Vaccination standards were also to be considered as there are currently none within the standards.

Sea lice control methods and novel technologies

New sea lice control technologies are likely to enter the UK market in the near future so it was agreed that there should be a provision to allow their use in certain circumstances while data and knowledge surrounding fish welfare in these enclosures is gathered together.

AOB

There were some general queries about the standards, the development process and future meetings which will be taken into consideration and implemented if possible or discussed further if needed.

Atlantic Salmon Freshwater Standards Technical Advisory Group Meeting
10am Thursday 28th April 2022
Meeting Summary

Welfare Outcome Assessment (WAO)

The group discussed the formal introduction of WOA to the standards. Many companies are already performing these to some extent and the advantages and opportunities were discussed, as well as the challenges and limitations which are more pronounced in freshwater than in seawater. There are benefits in the freshwater, and seawater, phase by, for example, performing WOAs during handling events to allow the detection of potential issues, so the introduction was agreed.

Enrichment

Environmental enrichment was discussed as a potential direction of travel. There is scientific evidence that some forms of enrichment can positively impact fish welfare but the commercial evidence is lacking at this time and the group discussed concerns about unintended consequences, particularly surrounding hygiene and water quality. The group was positive about investigating enrichment so avenues of research will be pursued.

Euthanasia

A standard was discussed which aims to reduce and eliminate the need for euthanasia of healthy, viable fish. The practice is not common within the industry and the group was supportive of introducing this standard. The use of electric euthanasia was also discussed and agreed to be an acceptable method of euthanasia of freshwater fish

Smolt handling and transport

With the recent move in the industry towards larger smolts, the group discussed potential changes to the standards to reflect best practice. It was agreed to introduce and/or update standards relating to equipment provision, contingency planning and the presence of adequate facilities.

AOB

There were some general queries about the standards, the development process and future meetings which will be taken into consideration and implemented if possible or discussed further if needed.