



RFS News

RESPONSIBLE FISHING SCHEME

No 3 | March 2010

Introduction



“Welcome to the third edition of RFS News. Thank you

for your feedback on previous newsletters. You have asked us to demonstrate the value that membership of the scheme provides long-term, and we will continue to report on what we are doing to promote the scheme.

The RFS is continually improving the reputation of our industry and this is vital to help us fight the many challenges we face. However, there is more to do and we welcome your help in identifying ways we can champion your commitment to sustainable fishing.”

Mick Bacon, Seafish

10%

Benefit from a saving of ten percent on a Vessel Stability Monitor – see p4



“We are proud to use RFS fish.”

ROYAL FISHERIES



RFS in the market

We’ve been working with a number of processors who want to demonstrate that the seafood they source is RFS certified. Some have been sponsoring local vessels through the scheme, to allow them to secure routes to market with their customers, as they are keen to distribute RFS catch.

We see a growing trend in this area and will commit additional resources to support this.



J K Thomson in Musselburgh has developed systems to label and market their products as sourced from RFS vessels.

Royal Fisheries

Royal Fisheries Whitby is now proudly using and advertising RFS fish.





Sri Lankan Tuna

Twenty-one vessels long line fishing for yellow fin tuna in Sri Lanka were recommended for RFS certification. This demonstrates the growing desire to sell RFS fish. Each fish can be individually identified and traced through the supply chain right through to an accredited processor in the UK.

Following this initial (client-funded) work, Seafish has begun discussions with further

21 *Sri Lankan vessels recommended for RFS certification*

companies to expand the volume of RFS tuna available in the UK. The introduction of RFS tuna from Sri Lankan vessels has increased interest in the scheme from major retailers and helped the RFS to become firmly established.

Funding for audits

Some Regional Development Agencies have additional funds to support and promote RFS vessels. SEEDA (South East England) are offering 25% of costs to support vessels in their region entering the scheme. This demonstrates their long-term belief in the scheme. Why not ask if there is any local funding available to you to assist with entry or continuation with the scheme? Seafish also offers 50% funding grants: contact Mick Bacon on 07976 222986 for details.

RFS skippers start to sell direct



Chris and Steve Wightman, of Maximus, have opened their own shop.

A number of skippers from RFS certified vessels are venturing into retail, with some now opening their own shops.

Chris and Steve Wightman are opening a retail outlet in Farnham and will only source from RFS vessels. They are actively seeking RFS qualified vessels to supply them, so call Chris on 07980 000284 to find more.

Three other vessel owners, Dean Ellis (*Fair Maiden*) and Bob Roberts (*Gannet*) and another yet to qualify are also looking at moving into the retail market.

Helping the scientists

Scientific agencies have called for vessels to return any tagged species captured. This will enable them to make better decisions about stock status and fishing mortality.



Useful websites

www.seafish.org | www.intrafish.com |

Waitrose visit Brixham

Waitrose is focused on local sourcing, including seafood. Waitrose has a very strict seafood sourcing policy and they work hard to maintain their reputation. On a recent visit to beamers at Brixham, buyers Quentin Clark and Jeremy Ryland-Langley confirmed that they will use the RFS as a yardstick for their purchasing decisions to help them source more regional quality produce.

Seafood Devon and Dorset extended an open invitation to Waitrose buyers to showcase the growing RFS fleet in South West England. Further meetings are anticipated with Waitrose in the hope of identifying RFS vessels in a position to potentially supply Waitrose stores in the future.

Exclusions from hygiene inspections

Seafish is pushing for RFS vessels to be excluded from periodic local authority hygiene inspections. Inspectors have said that the records and audits of RFS vessels are far superior to the hygiene requirements. If agreed, this would remove an administrative burden on skippers and owners.

Processor Survey

We are conducting a survey of key processors to gauge their uptake of RFS product. This will allow us to target communications more effectively and will also raise awareness of the scheme within the supply chain.

Talks with Marine Managers



RFS vessels need to get recognition for their environmental benefits.

We want to highlight to government policymakers the commitment and dedication to environmental protection by RFS boats. This will ensure that member vessels receive proper recognition for their good work and are represented in situations that may affect future fishing opportunities. To this end, we will meet with conservation agencies and NGOs over the coming year to promote the RFS.

In a recent meeting with James Marsden (Marine Director, Natural England), the strengths and benefits of

the RFS were discussed in detail. Mr Marsden would encourage other fishermen to get accredited.

The potential of using RFS as a tool to gain conditional access to the growing number of Marine Protected Areas was also discussed. The fact that vessels on the scheme have to hit a regularly audited standard makes the RFS a real alternative to the crude and blunt regulations which may need to be introduced. Seafish is committed to pursuing this line with other agencies and government over the coming months.

“The strength and benefits of the RFS were discussed in detail.”

NATURAL ENGLAND



RFS and Vessel Monitoring



30 *number of vessels in the south west of England the project will take place on*

Seafish is launching a project, funded by Defra, to develop 'fit for purpose' inshore vessel monitoring. The project will take place on 30 vessels in the south west of England and aims to benefit fishermen as well as fisheries management. The system will allow vessel owners to go online and view information on

vessel location, water temperature, salinity and possibly integrate crew safety features.

Seafish is committed to promoting the RFS and is currently pursuing its application alongside low-cost VMS as means of allowing fishermen accesses to fish in Marine Protected Areas. This is proving an attractive option to managers given RFS vessels' commitment to sustainability and doing the right thing!

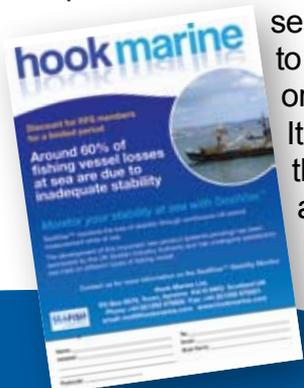
RFS Specification review

The RFS was launched three and a half years ago. Both Seafish and the British Standards Institution (BSI) agree that it's time to review the specification of the scheme. Over the coming months, Seafish will be working with BSI to identify individuals and organisations to help with the review. The aim is to ensure that RFS remains a comprehensive and valued tool for the seafood industry.

Special Offer – 10% off

In November 2008, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch published a comprehensive report of fishing vessel accidents in the UK from 1992 to 2006. This study showed that around 60 per cent of vessel losses at sea are due to foundering or capsizing. It also stated that the fatal accident rate for UK

fishermen from 1996 to 2005 was 115 times higher than that for the general workforce in the country as a whole. An Ayrshire-based company, Hook Marine Ltd, has addressed the problem of stability loss, and is launching a new product to monitor the situation while a vessel is at sea. Seafish has negotiated a 10% discount for any RFS vessel interested in buying this safety device and EFF funding will also be available.



Contact Details

Recently we were asked to email our members with an offer promoting 10% off Vessel Stability Monitors (VSM). In doing so, it became clear that many vessels have not logged their email address with us. Having your full contact details means we can send you details of special offers and allows customers who want to source from RFS vessels to contact you. Please check that your details on the website are complete and up-to-date.

If you have a story that you would like to share, please contact j_dunlop@seafish.co.uk or call Jo on 0131 524 8684, or m_bacon@seafish.co.uk. Call Mick on 01736 732759 / 07976 222986

