



GULF NOVA SCOTIA FLEET PLANNING BOARD

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Coronavirus Working Group Conference Call

Lobster Council of Canada

Date: April 2nd, 2020

Present: Leo Muise (NS Seafood Alliance), Jerry Amirault (NS/NB Lobster Processors Association), Stewart Lamonte (Tangier Lobster Co.), Nat Richard (Cape Bald Packers), Ian MacPherson (PEIFA), Charlie McGeoghegan (Lobster Fishers of PEI Marketing Board), Catherine Boyd (Clearwater Seafoods), Monte Way (FFAW), Bernie Barry (Coldwater Lobster), Victoria Cullen (GNSFPB)
PEI Seafood processors association,

1. Opening remarks – Geoff Irvine
2. Revisions to the model – Max Breau
 - a. Slight increase in product moving to Asia brought down the estimate of stranded lobster.
 - b. Model will be modified based off of March landings.
 - c. Continued analysis of new and active cases to traditional markets.
 - d. Stewart adds that the work Max is doing is incredibly valuable. We are trying to engage a larger group of live shippers to improve some of the assumptions made in the model.
 - e. Leo Muise: Had a call with Colwell on various issues. The topic of lobster inventory came up. The Minister made an offer that if there were enough companies interested, they would be willing to provide a service to anonymously compile and report on total inventory on a monthly basis. He was adamant that it would be completely anonymous.
3. Roundtable discussion:
 - a. Coldwater Lobster, Bernie Barry: Very little fishing going on in Southwest Nova. In a holding pattern. Catches are light. Price around 6.
 - i. Geoff: How many have hauled their gear or are not fishing?
 - ii. Bernie: Probably around 1200 fishermen (LFA 33 and 34). Vast majority are fishing 1 maybe 2 days a week. Much of the gear that came in has not made it back out.
 - b. Tangier Lobster, Stewart Lamonte: Had heard that activity on the water was increasing in 33 and 34. Catches have been light, and demand has been growing. If it were non-Covid, price would be 10-12\$ on the shore. Market situation; Europe and Middle East is still around 0-5%, Canada/US is around 15%. People are becoming more and more aware of the nature of the challenge that lies ahead.
 - c. NS Seafood Alliance, Leo Muise: Sensing a shift to genuine fear and concern among employers and workforce. Got a call this afternoon being told that the Boston Seafood Show is back on for September.
 - d. NB/NS Processors, Jerry Amirault: Been working with processors in QB, NB, NS, PEI. We have issued a final letter calling for the government of Canada to order DFO to delay any fisheries in the Gulf. Changes to be made based upon period reviews every 2 weeks. No mention to specific associations or fleet cancellations. We're all trying to achieve the same thing – the Spring season is important to us, but social distancing MUST be complied with. For example, things like car-pooling – employees are going to have to wear PPE in their vehicles or they could be charged. Continued reluctance to bring foreign workers in to the communities.



- e. PEI Processors: Working with province and PEIFA. Majority of processors want to go May 1st, but some would like a delay due to labour and market issues. Health and safety is the number one concern. Most of our plants are collaborating to develop Covid-19 protocols. So many issues to work through. No new Covid-19 cases in PEI. One issue is that 37% of the product harvested on the Island is shipped to NB for processing.
- f. PEIFA, Ian MacPherson: PEIFA put out a survey to members today, the results will be in at the beginning of next week. We are looking for direction on our next steps. In the case of the season proceeding, two major issues remain – 1) the opening date and 2) where will product that can't be processed off-Island go? There is some uncertainty in how things will proceed in NB. To compound, a couple of off-island buyers have stated that they won't be purchasing from PEI for the full season. Hopefully will have more clarify next week.
- g. FFAW, Monte Way: Agreed to delay opening by at least 2 weeks. A new Notice to Fishers from DFO came out that delays the opening of all fisheries until at least May 1. This includes crab, herring, scallop, etc. Lobster buyers are supportive of a delay.
- h. Questions:
 - i. Charlie Mcgeoghan asks why is it that processors in NS and NB do not have the concern or outlook that in a few months time, this may be behind us, and then we won't have any product to sell?
 - ii. Jerry explains that those who are still considering this an issue of markets and inventory are missing the point. It is about the health of our communities. We're dealing with a decision to expose our workers to a pandemic, like we have never experienced before. The comments have been made as if this decision was made lightly. How could we possibly determine a price? We have no certainty on operations from one day to the next. We would like to be able to get you the information you're asking for, but it is just not possible.
- i. Geoff adds that he continues to be encouraged by the level of information sharing and collaboration among those on the call.