



ATLANTIC
LOBSTER SUSTAINABILITY
FOUNDATION

Newsletter

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Research. Replenish. Results.

347 Main Street, Shediac, NB E4P 2B3

Lobstersustainability.ca tina@lobster-homard.com 506.533.6241

Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Foundation hosts science workshop

Lobster sustainability was on the menu in Moncton in July as the Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Foundation hosted its first science workshop. Over 100 lobster stakeholders from Atlantic Canada and New England and representing harvesters, processors, government and the scientific community attended the workshop on July 26 and 27.

ALSF Executive Director Rick Doucet says it's smart business to put sustainability on the lobster industry's radar.

"Historically many of the practices around lobster fishing have made it less prone to stock depletion than other fisheries and in fact stock levels in some areas are quite high," said Doucet. "But we are also looking at global pressures: increasing population, concern for our ecosystems and a growing consumer awareness of seafood products that are fished sustainably."

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Keep the customer – and suppliers- satisfied: Selling sustainable seafood

"Fix the worst first," is the motto of David Smith, VP of Retail Strategy and Sustainability for Sobeys' Inc. As the man in charge of the sustainability policies at one of the nation's largest grocery retailers, David Smith was one of the most enthusiastically received speakers at the Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Foundation's recent workshop.

"Seafood sustainability has ushered in a new era for seafood purchasers. Retailers need to be more accountable for the products we sell, which means seeking more knowledge about how those products are harvested," said Smith in advance of his presentation. "So we increasingly engage across our supply chains and with numerous stakeholders."

Sobeys' has taken a strong stand for sustainability and have set the goal to stop

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"Retailers need to be more accountable for the products we sell, which means seeking more knowledge about how those products are harvested."

The science of sustainability

For Dr. Mike Chadwick, Chair of the ALSF Science Committee, the recent sustainability workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to not only share current research and information but also to establish research and investment priorities going forward.

“As a result of these discussions, the Atlantic Lobster Foundation will set up a scholarship program to attract talented Masters and PhD students to carry out research on lobster. Stay tuned for more details!”

“Often when stakeholders come together it’s to talk about what happens once the lobster leaves the water and heads to market. Forums like this workshop give us the chance to look at the bigger picture – stock levels, disease, habitat and environmental impacts,” says Chadwick. “It’s a discussion that’s science-based and future-focused and ultimately benefits all stakeholders: fishermen, processors, buyers and consumers.”

Science themes identified during the workshop:

Lobster enhancement

- Measuring survival of hatchery-reared larvae once they are released into the wild and comparing with natural survival of wild stocks.
- Determining if artificial reefs serve to attract lobsters or to produce more lobsters by improving survival.
- Measuring effects of diet on survival and growth of hatchery-reared larvae.
- Measuring health of larvae in terms of both their survival and their potential impact for contaminating wild stocks.
- Priority would be given to large-scale studies that measure survival over the normal range of a lobster’s benthic life history and longterm studies that measure survival for up to two generations.

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Workshop from page 1

“To meet market demands, we have to make sustainability a priority. We need to determine what that means for our industry, how we measure it and what research will support our sustainability objectives. The workshop in July kickstarted those discussions.”

Doucet says he hopes the science workshop will become an annual event as part of the Atlantic Lobster Sustainability Foundation’s ongoing efforts to engage stakeholders.

“This was a chance for us to learn about the work that’s been done but as importantly it helped us identify the work still to do. It was a valuable discussion in learning what role the ALSF can play going forward – where we should invest, how we should leverage our partnerships and how we reach out to our stakeholders and the public at large.”



Berried female lobster.

Lessons learned from 2011 Workshop

We want to ensure that our events and activities are meeting the needs of our stakeholders. The results of our survey at the end of the 2011 Science workshop have provided important feedback.

Overall response was positive with nearly **70%** of respondents ranking the event as **more than satisfactory or outstanding** and all respondents ranking it as satisfactory or higher. While there were some concerns over parking rates, over **80%** of attendees ranked the site and location as **more than satisfactory or outstanding**.

Highlights of lessons learned:

- Fewer presentations with greater opportunity for group discussions and questions
- Wider variety of presentations including more from the marketplace
- Greater representation from harvester's sector
- Greater clarity on Foundation's mandate and role and what we mean by sustainability.
- More networking opportunities as well as opportunities for stakeholders to poster and share materials
- More student involvement
- Conference timing that does not conflict with fishing season.

We will be reviewing all of this feedback as we plan for future events. 🍷

Selling sustainable seafood from page 1

selling any "seriously challenged" seafood species sourced from areas where the producers do not have an improvement plan, with specific milestones by 2013.

Smith is quick to point out that delisting is a last resort and eco-labels and certifications are part of the solution but not the only solution. His preference is to focus pressure on those with the least sustainable practices while working with suppliers who are demonstrating ongoing improvement.

"We welcome the opportunity to work with partners like the ALSF who are demonstrating commitment and expertise in this area." 🍷



View the full presentation from David Smith as well as all other presenters from the 2011 Workshop online at www.LobsterSustainability.ca

Science of Sustainability
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- Priority would also be given to initiatives that integrate, coordinate and rationalize lobster enhancement projects throughout the Atlantic coast.

Indicators of lobster sustainability

- Monitoring the abundance, recruitment, growth, age, maturity and health of lobster.
- Examining the inter-relationships or connectivity among lobster stocks.
- Priority would be given to studies that integrate information throughout the natural range of lobster.

Environmental impacts

- Examining the impact of contaminants and other sources of pollution on the survival and growth of lobster.
- Examining the impact of large-scale events such as acidification, temperature change, ocean currents and coastal erosion on the survival and growth of lobster.
- Examining the impact of the lobster fishery on the ecosystem, such as the origin and health of bait and the entanglement of endangered species in lobster gear.

Socio-economic aspects of sustainability

- Measuring the ecological footprint or conduct life-cycle analyses of the lobster fishery.
- Examining the consequences of lobster enhancement on coastal communities.

- Examining the costs and benefits of management and enhancement interventions.

“These discussions have helped us identify the opportunities and gaps going forward which will be important in determining where to invest research funding.” 

About the Foundation

The Lobster Sustainability Foundation is a non-profit, public/private sector association representing all stakeholders in the lobster industry; harvesters, processors, employees, marketers, customers, scientists, governments, and other interested parties; dedicated to preserving and enhancing the viability of the lobster industry and its communities for future generations through undertaking, sponsoring, and promoting scientific research on stock and habitat enhancement, environmental and ecological protection and sustainability of the industry as a whole. 

Find us online:

www.Lobstersustainability.ca



347 Main Street, Shediac, NB

E4P 2B3

Phone:

506.533.6241

Fax:

506.532.5310

E-mail:

tina@lobster-homard.com



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