

The Union Forum

SPRING 2014

 **FFAW | UNIFOR**
Fish, Food & Allied Workers



**Halibut fishery
mismanagement**

Cod pilot project

Sea urchin industry at standstill

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The Union Forum, the official magazine of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers' Union (FFAW-Unifor), is distributed free of charge to Union members quarterly.

The **FFAW-Unifor** is Newfoundland and Labrador's largest private sector union, representing 15,000 working women and men throughout the province, most of whom are employed in the fishing industry. The Union also represents a diversity of workers in the brewing, hotel, hospitality, retail, metal fabrication, window manufacturing and oil industries, and is proud to be affiliated with the Unifor Canada.

The Union Forum covers issues that matter to Union members - battles, victories and the pursuit of economic and social justice. As a social Union, it is understood that lives extend beyond the bargaining table and the workplace. The magazine will reflect on the struggle to make our communities, our province and our country better for all citizens by participating in and influencing the general direction of society.

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frequently
asked
QUESTIONS



Q: How much does the insurance cost?

A: The cost of insurance is included in your union dues. It is a benefit to all active, card-carrying members.

Q: What do I have as proof of my coverage?

A: Your union card is proof of your insurance. Your insurance coverage is only valid until July 31, 2014. After this date, if you have not paid your dues for the upcoming year **you are not covered. 46 life insurance claims were made in 2013, but 13 were rejected because of outstanding dues. There have already been 7 claims in 2014.**

Q: Am I covered only while working or fishing?

A: No. Coverage is for a period of one year, from August 1 to July 31 each year.

Q: What happens if I don't identify a beneficiary?

A: If you do not identify a beneficiary, the insurance will go to your estate. This may complicate matters and make it difficult for your family to receive the money in the event of your death. Protect your loved ones by filling out the beneficiary form.

Q: My circumstances have changed since I last sent in my beneficiary form (for example: married or divorced)

A: If this is the case, make sure you send in a new beneficiary form. The last beneficiary form on file will be the one used.

Q: Am I still covered once I retire, am no longer actively fishing, or am no longer employed with the company I currently work for?

A: No. The insurance is only for active, card-carrying members of the FFAW and does not cover members who are no longer active or no longer hold seniority status within the union.

Q: Is there an age limit?

A: Yes. Coverage discontinues when a member turns 70 years old. This is a requirement of the insurance company.

Q: Are prescriptions, hospital stays, therapy sessions, etc. covered?

A: No. This is strictly a life/accidental insurance policy. There is coverage for amputation, loss of hearing, loss of sight due to accidents only.

For questions or to request a new beneficiary form, please call us at 576-7276



Earle McCurdy
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Halibut fishery mismanagement

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans needs to fundamentally change the way it is managing halibut stocks adjacent to our shores.

The problem is twofold – overly cautious Total Allowable Catches, and lack of transparency in allocations. Compounding the problem was DFO's move a few years ago to quota reconciliation in competitive fisheries.

gear type, the fish finding technology, and the concentration of fish in smaller and smaller areas which allowed experienced Captains and crews to maintain reasonable catch rates.

The current situation with halibut is entirely different from that. Catch rates have been exceptional over a very wide expanse of fishing grounds with hook and line technology.

To be blunt about it, it appears the groundfish scientists in DFO have moved from conservation to preservation. Their number one objective appears to be setting quotas so low there is no risk whatsoever

There is a complete lack of transparency in how DFO set quota allocations at the time they implement quota reconciliation on the alphabet soup stock.

Let's start with the TAC issue. The standard DFO research tool – multi-species research vessel (RV) using otter trawl tows of very short duration – is a very poor tool for measuring the abundance of large fish such as halibut or, for that matter, large cod. The problem is pretty simple – these are powerful swimmers which can easily outswim the gear for the short duration of the tow.

In the case of the 4RST halibut stock (Northern Gulf), the RV survey is the only tool DFO uses to measure abundance. This has resulted in extremely low TACs despite phenomenal abundance of halibut all over the Gulf.

When license holders can catch their allocation for the year in a few hours using hook and line, the quota is obviously too low.

There have been cases in the past – northern cod is a classic example – where catch rates in the offshore fishery masked the decline in the stocks back in the 1980s and early 1990s. But this was a function of the

– at the expense of people who are trying to make a living from fishing opportunities.

The situation is somewhat different in the so-called “alphabet soup” halibut stock. It's called that because the stock area is 3NOPs4VWX5Zc. In other words, the scientists say there is a single stock covering the Grand Banks, 3Ps, the Scotia Shelf and George's Bank.

Because of the known unreliability of the RV surveys in measuring halibut abundance, there is also an industry long-line survey on this stock, which provides a better assessment of abundance.

The quota in 2013 for this huge area was 2,447 m.t. But according to the scientific advice, there is “little risk in harming the productivity of the stock at harvest levels < 4,000 m.t.”

In other words, there is no valid conservation reason for the quota being as low as it is. We have advocated a very substantial increase, which can be done without the slightest risk to future abundance.

CONTINUED

HALIBUT MISMANAGEMENT Continued

This is where management – or should I say mismanagement? – issues come in.

There is a complete lack of transparency in how DFO set quota allocations at the time they implement quota reconciliation on the alphabet soup stock.

One thing is very obvious though – harvesters on 3Ps who have a history fishing this stock got shafted on their quota share.

The result was that last year enterprises who fish a mixed groundfish fishery in 3Ps had to throw back all halibut, alive or dead, after their measly by-catch quota was reached, sometime in June. This is absolutely unfair.

I have personally raised this with the Federal Minister as well as with top DFO officials both in NL Region and in Ottawa, and demanded changes.

I have also raised the issue of the 4RST halibut fishery.

This was a competitive fishery until a few years ago. We heard at the time that DFO was considering breaking it down into provincial shares. I met with the Minister of the day, Loyola Hearn, and recommended very strongly that he not do that unless there was an agreement among the various fleets. He did it anyway.

It makes you wonder what the benefit is of having a Newfoundland Minister if he's going to make decisions that screw Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

To make matters worse, DFO used a lot of jiggery-pokery in establishing shares at that time, excluding the most recent years of catch history, which happened to be the years when our share of the catch was at its highest.

Then to rub salt in the wound, in her first tenure as minister, Gail Shea changed the sharing rules with respect to a small increase in the TAC, which cost our

Gulf fleet a few tonnes they could not afford to lose. This was rectified by Keith Ashfield with respect to subsequent increases, but our fleet remains a few tonnes short because of this change in sharing arrangements of the earlier increase.

With quota reconciliation in place, it's a real challenge to manage our measly share without an over-run. In conjunction with our fleet in the Gulf, we proposed a management plan last year to try to live within the quota. Had we not done so, we would not have a halibut fishery in the Gulf this year – it would have been caught last year and taken away this year under quota reconciliation.

Once again this year we have gone out to membership meetings in the Gulf with a plan that tries to make the best of a totally inadequate quota. Most harvesters attending the meetings agreed with the plan – they didn't agree with the quota share, but agreed with the approach to make the best of the bit of fish that was available.

Like the alphabet soup stock, the Gulf quota could and should be significantly increased without any meaningful risk to future abundance.

It's time for groundfish scientists to realize that they are involved not in some abstract, academic exercise in which the main goal is to protect their own reputations, but in a serious, real-life task which is very important to the livelihood of thousands of people.

The people who fish halibut on the south coast of our province and in the Gulf deserve better from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans than they have been getting.

We will continue the struggle to get these problems fixed.



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Changes to the gulf halibut fishery

David Decker

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FFAW-Unifor Secretary Treasurer

The abundance of halibut has greatly increased over the last decade and with that a dramatic improved distribution of the species.

With the continuing growth of halibut stocks, significant changes have been needed to stay within our quota and manage our fishery. At the 2013 Gulf Ground-fish Advisory Committee we requested an increase to 1200mt (up from 720) and while DFO implemented 864mt we will continue to lobby DFO to increase the quota. Until then we have to work with our current allocation.

Our 2012 fishery was overrun within the day and there is no doubt that if we had implemented the same plan in 2013 there would be no halibut fishery this year.

To work within our allocation and to try and ensure a fishery on an annual basis in 2013 we introduced individual catch limits, limited participation to active enterprises, provided a choice of five seasonal periods and also had a short-duration derby fishery. In addition all halibut were required to be tagged for accurate Dockside Monitoring (DMP).

Unfortunately prices were still far too low but we were able to stay within our quota. While 2013 was a step in the right direction there is still work to do.

For the upcoming 2014 season we will continue to improve upon gulf halibut management by looking to implement more changes. Earlier this year we held meetings in nine communities along the west coast, where over 200 harvesters attended. Based on these meetings we have come up with further modifications to the halibut fishery.

The objectives of these changes are to

spread out the fishery, raise the prices and to improve safety.

Flooding the market with fresh halibut is not good for prices. To stagger the product in market, there will be a choice of six openings that are increased from five to seven days duration. This will ensure there is fresh, traceable halibut in the market all season long.

We have also given notice to negotiate halibut prices to ensure fishers get a better price for their catch. Negotiations will be based on market price fluctuations.

Single enterprises will have an individual quota of 1,250lbs and buddy-up fishers will have 2,100lbs, an increase in the buddy-up as a percentage of the single allocation as noted from harvester feedback in 2013. There is also an option to use these individual limits as a by-catch in the turbot fishery, or the halibut can be directly fished.

There will be no derby fishery this year due to safety concerns and the fact that almost everyone acknowledged that increased participation would lead to an overrun in the quota.

With all of these changes in combination with the introduction of the traceability project, we expect that this year's halibut season will provide a better return for harvesters.

Full details of these changes will be mailed to harvesters around mid-March.



Making the minimum wage a living wage

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

- Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948.

Courtney Pelley

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FFAW-Unifor Communications

What is a living wage? What does it take for someone to afford housing, food and transportation?

A living wage does not leave someone who works full-time to decide between paying rent and buying food. A living wage is not the absolute minimum companies will pay in order to maximize their profits.

A full-time, minimum wage job in Newfoundland and Labrador will leave you below the official poverty line, and 8 per cent of the province's population currently live this reality. Many are not even able to find full-time employment and have to work two or more part-time jobs, which offers very little stability and security.

The Harper government claims that employment rates have increased, however the increase has been in part-time, precarious employment, whereas full-time employment rates have actually dropped.

According to Nobel-Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, in a healthy economy, wages rise in-line with increased productivity, sustaining economic growth which, in turn, supports new business investment.

Real minimum wage (adjusted for inflation) is one third of what it was in the 1970s, even though productivity has increased by 120 per cent. More profits go to the top of the company and the workers are left with less and less.

Our country is in desperate need of a fundamental shift in how we view minimum wage. We need to seriously consider equality and fairness - because "trickle-down" economics obviously aren't working.

A recent study shows the country's top 100 CEOs make 171 times the average Canadian, and 194 times the average Canadian woman.

"By 11 pm on January 2nd, the first working day of the year, Canada's top 100 CEOs already made \$46,634 - what it takes the average Canadian an entire year to earn." - CCPA

To make matters worse, the share of the top 1 per cent continues to grow. They continue to take a bigger and bigger piece of the pie, leaving hundreds of thousands living below the poverty line. When do we say enough is enough? It's time to talk about equality.

"14 per cent of all income in Canada is received by the top 1 per cent, compared to 8 per cent in the 1980s." - Broadbent Institute

To put that into perspective, over the last 20 years, for every one dollar increase in national earnings, 30 cents goes to the top 1 per cent, while the remaining 70 cents is divided among the bottom 99 per cent.

The majority of Canadians see no benefit from economic growth because the profits from that growth are not shared among those who fuel it - only those who control it.

Those who are against raising the minimum wage for fear of increasing unemployment should consider the alternative to that argument. If people are earning more money, they have more disposable income, and will therefore put that back into the economy. Increased wages leads to increased demand, something that will continue to stimulate the economy rather than weaken it.

"1 in 10 Canadian children live in poverty. In aboriginal communities, that number is 1 in 4." - Statistics Canada

14.9 per cent of all Canadians live in the low-income bracket. These numbers are shocking, and they have steadily grown over the last decade.

Companies who pay a living wage see it as an investment in their business; employees are motivated to be more productive, turnover is reduced, absenteeism is diminished, and a loyalty to that company is formed.

Canadians deserve to be paid a fair wage for their hard work. They deserve to be able to provide an adequate living for themselves and their families, because no full-time worker should have to decide between paying rent and buying food.

Member of a union? Fighting to join a union?

Check out these:

The wages of a unionized job



On average, unionized workers make \$5 more than non-unionized workers

33% of women have a unionized job and they make \$6.65 more an hour than non-unionized women

Unionized women make 84% what unionized men make, on average, while non-unionized women make 70% of what non-unionized men make

21.5% of young workers (aged 15-29) are unionized. They make an average of \$5.53/hour more than non-unionized young workers

In PEI, workers who are unionized make \$8.71/hour more on average than non-unionized workers

Québec has the smallest gap, but unionized workers still make \$4.29/hour on average more than those non-unionized.

(source: CLC 2013)



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Inshore negotiations for the 2014 season

The most favorable foreign exchange rates in several years will be a key consideration as we enter a busy round of inshore negotiations this spring.

The Canadian dollar has weakened in comparison with the U.S. dollar, the British pound and the Euro (European Union currency), but is stronger than a year ago against the Japanese yen.

A continuation of this trend would improve our return from the U.S. and European markets.

As an example, the U.S. dollar has recently been trading at about \$1.09 Canadian, compared with about \$1.02 when our main negotiations took place in 2013. This means that a sale of \$100 (U.S.) worth of fish would bring a return of \$109 Canadian compared to \$102 a year ago.

Weakening of the Canadian dollar has been even more pronounced in comparison to the British pound and the Euro - 1.79 compared to 1.55 a year ago for the pound, and \$1.48 compared to 1.35 a year ago for the Euro.

Changes from year to year in market and currency conditions are the primary factors taken into account by the Standing Fish Price Setting Panel which sets minimum fish prices in the province if our Union and the processors' bargaining agent fail to reach agreement.

Current year market reports were not available at the time this edition of Union Forum went to press, but FFAW-Unifor President Earle McCurdy said the improvements in the currency situation "certainly put us in a better position than we were a year ago heading into price negotiations."

McCurdy said the current year market situation for crab in particular is usually not clear until after the Boston Seafood Show, which is held in mid-March, while shrimp and cod markets are often not clear until the Brussels Seafood Show in early May.

Crab negotiations will be held in late March, shrimp in April and cod likely in early May, McCurdy said.

"I realize harvesters would like to have prices resolved earlier, but we don't have the market information we need until the fishery is just about ready to start," he added.

One exception to this is lobster, because the price agreement the past three years tied the raw material price to market prices on a weekly basis throughout the season. In light of this, McCurdy said the Union will be proposing earlier lobster negotiations than in previous years.

The Union negotiates a number of species - mostly with the Association of Seafood Producers (ASP), but sometimes with the Seafood Producers of Newfoundland and Labrador (lobster) or with individual buyers, depending on whether either of the processor associations represents buyers who bought a majority of the landings of a particular species in the previous year.

A Union committee meets with the negotiating committee for the processors for each species. The two committees attempt to reach agreement on price, and the Panel makes a final decision if there is no agreement.

In most cases, the Panel is required to make a decision on the basis of a system called "final offer selection" - they have to pick either the Union's final offer or the processors' final offer, whichever one the Panel feels best reflects the current market and foreign exchange conditions.

Union officers and staff advise the Union negotiating committee in each species, and the President or other senior officer of the Union heads up our negotiating committee, but the final decisions are made by the harvesters on each committee.

Negotiating committee members are drawn from elected fleet committees and/or from harvesters who have been elected to the Inshore Council.

The Union is currently engaged in a total review of our communication strategy. One of the objectives of this review is to provide our members with more timely and comprehensive information on collective bargaining, Price Setting Panel decisions and the like.

This review includes a survey of our membership. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in this survey so we can take your views and needs into account in trying to improve on our communications.

Employment insurance changes for fishers

Allan Moulton

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FFAW-Unifor

The federal government's attack on the employment insurance program is continuing. On April 7, 2013, the best 14 weeks ended as a pilot project and was replaced with the best 14 to 22 weeks, depending on the unemployment rate in your area. This was made a permanent feature of the employment insurance (EI) legislation.

The unemployment rate varies in different regions. For example, if the unemployment rate in your area is 13.1 per cent or higher the best 14 weeks of employment are used and if the unemployment rate in your area is six percent or less, they use your best 22 weeks of employment.

Fishers who get 420 hours of labour work are automatically set up on a labour claim, and once you start a labour claim you cannot close it out to begin a fishing claim - the labour claim has to run out first. You have to qualify for benefits on either the labour or fishing income, you cannot combine both to qualify for benefits. But under certain circumstances, labour

and fishing income can be combined in the calculation of your benefit rate.

Initially, the government said they would only use fishing income that was earned in the same weeks as your best 14-22 weeks to set a fisher's benefit rate rather than do as they did in the past and let fishers use all income earned in their rate calculation period (last 26 weeks of employment). Those weeks had to fall into your qualifying period - the last 31 weeks from the start date of your last claim.

Being unable to use this labour income to set the rate was a huge disincentive for fishers to look for or accept additional work when they stopped fishing. In other words, they were going to penalize fishers for accepting additional work, as Trout River fisher Marsha Crocker and others found out when they went to file their claims. FFAW-Unifor and others have been in constant contact with Service Canada officials and others to try and have this injustice reversed.

Finally, after raising the issue over and over, the federal government acknowledged they had indeed erred and were prepared to reverse their decision. Having reversed their decision, they have begun making retroactive payments to affected fishers.

Processing in Harbour Breton and St. Alban's

Will Reid

FFAW-Unifor

When Barry Group did not renew Cooke Aquaculture's lease at the Harbour Breton processing plant, it left nearly 150 workers uncertain about their future.

The Harbour Breton plant was shut down in the fall of 2013 when the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) ordered Cooke's to destroy a large volume of salmon due to ISA infection. Plant employees were laid off with that closure.

As of January 31, Barry Group has taken over the facility, however it is unclear at this point just how many jobs will be offered when the plant begins

operations. Under Barry Group, the Harbour Breton plant will process salmon from Northern Harvest.

In the meantime, Cooke Aquaculture will take over processing at the St. Alban's plant. St. Alban's operates most of the year and currently employs about 50 people.

St. Alban's has a shortage of skilled workers. As a result of this, Barry Group has expressed willingness assist workers relocate. This provides an opportunity for those who traditionally leave the province for seasonal processing work to find employment closer to home, and with the assistance of Barry's, they may receive help getting there.

These changes bring good news to many workers, and stabilizes both plants in the short-term.

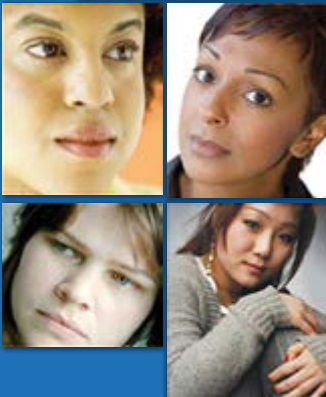
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Unifor | FFAW Women's Advocates

If you are interested in becoming a women's advocate, please contact Tina Pretty at 576-7276

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New federation protects interests of independent fish harvesters across country

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FFAW-Unifor Inshore Director

A new federation brings together fish harvesters' organizations from across the country. The Canadian Independent Harvesters Federation will lobby for independent harvesters interests, protecting them from threats of corporate ownership. The members of the Federation represent more than 8,500 individual licence holders in six provinces that are owner/operator based.

"Our main concern is to promote the independent, small-business, community-based approach to fishing in Canada," says Christian Brun, newly elected President of the Federation. Brun says the new federation will work with government to ensure that fisheries policy support actual fishermen.

The owner/operator fleet system aims to keep profits with the fishers. However, this method is being threatened by the erosion of this system in favour of corporate owned fleets. The effects of such a system have already been seen in British Columbia where owner/operators are being pushed out of the market

because big companies are permitted to purchase quotas and licences.

The federation aims to protect the interests of independent harvesters by preventing such policies from being adapted in other provinces, such as in Newfoundland and Labrador where under 65 foot fleets are protected by the owner/operator and fleet separation policies. By bringing together harvesters on local and regional levels, the federation hopes to influence national and international fishery policy, as well as to increase the bottom line for harvesters.

"Taken together, our fleets are coastal Canada's largest private sector employer", Brun said.

"Year in year out, our members create another 20,000 jobs for crew members on our boats and in our communities. Our fish provides thousands more direct jobs in fish processing, handling, transportation and marketing. We also create jobs in boat construction, gear supply and maintenance services" Brun said. "Most importantly we create these jobs in rural, coastal Canada where jobs are scarce." The provinces involved include Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and British Columbia.

Research into Atlantic Lobster

Jackie Baker

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FFAW-Unifor Science Projects/Logistics

Fishing industry, academic researchers, and federal and provincial government representatives recently participated in a two-day general assembly held in Halifax.

The meeting focused on research into the American lobster species (*homarus americanus*) being conducted throughout Atlantic Canada from 2011 to 2015.

Led by Dr. Remy Rochette of the University of New Brunswick, five research projects are currently underway to better understand the American lobster. Research activities focus on abundance, movement and settlement, distribution of larvae, bottom movements, connectivity and genetics. Funding for the initiative is provided by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada (NSERC).

There are 44 lobster harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador participating in lobster research. We look forward to profiling these projects in 2014.

Cod pilot project aims to increase quality of catch

Bill Broderick

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FFAW-Unifor Inshore Director

A new pilot project aims to help inshore cod harvesters get a better price for their cod by improving the quality of the product.

Cod markets are extremely challenging and a repeat of 2013 is not an option. The cod fishery will never be economical at today's raw material prices. Our only hope for a viable cod fishery in the future is to penetrate the high end of the market with consistently high quality products. Cheap competition from both farmed and wild whitefish (pollock, tilapia, pacific cod, etc.) has made the lower end of the market a completely unviable option.

As a result, FFAW-Unifor, in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation as well as

federal and provincial fisheries departments and interested harvesters, have been working on a new pilot project aimed at significantly improving our returns on cod.

The pilot project is designed to test the quality results of landings in various regions of the province in all months in which fishing is feasible in the respective areas, using best handling practices.

This will provide information for future years on the best times of year in the different regions of the province for landing top quality product. The project will take place in about 65 sites around the province.

Public announcements will inform harvesters of the selection process and requirements of the project, and give interested harvesters an opportunity to apply to participate.

The project will require participating harvesters to bleed the fish immediately upon taking it over the side of the boat, cool the fish in slush ice and put the fish on ice. There will also be a limit on soak times for landings under the project.

The Union proposed this project in light of the great difficulties harvesters had with cod last year, both in terms of unacceptably low prices and, in many cases, lack of a market for fish.

"For example," said Union Secretary-Treasurer David Decker, "I don't buy the argument of processors that you can't produce a good quality product from fish off the St. Pierre Bank for half the summer and most of the fall. This project is aimed at getting the facts - identifying the times of year when good handling practices can produce good finished product. That means good handling practices in the transportation and processing of fish, as well as on board the boats."

Further information will be published on the FFAW-Unifor website and in future editions of Union Forum, as more details of the project are finalized.

The project will require approval and participation from both levels of government, including flexibility on DFO's part to allow test fishing to take place throughout the year.

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Major changes needed for province's cod fishery

Radical changes are needed to the approach to the cod fishery in our province if we are to avoid a repeat of disastrous 2013.

Not only were prices at an unacceptably low level in 2013, but many harvesters had no market for their catch. This was especially a problem in 3Ps, with the result that 11 million pounds of inshore quota was left in the water. This has to change. Nobody makes money on fish left in the water.

The Union's strategy to address this problem is threefold – a quality grading pricing system aimed at significantly increasing the raw material price for fish that meets the demanding standards of the modern market, an opportunity to test the U.S. market for whole, fresh cod, and a pilot project aimed at identifying the best times of year in the different areas of the province to provide the highest quality finished product (see article on page 12).

We believe this approach will lead to better prices, increased landings for harvesters and more work for plant workers.

With the exception of a couple of small buyers with very limited capacity, there was no market for 3Ps harvesters from late July till early November.

This led to a demand from harvesters to be allowed to sell to outside buyers. This was turned down by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister at the time, Derrick Dalley, who cited the ongoing CETA negotiations as a major factor in the decision. It later became known publicly that the provincial government had been negotiating a federal/provincial fisheries fund based on the exemption to Minimum Processing Regulations (MPRs) provided for in the CETA agreement.

A follow-up meeting with the current Minister, Keith Hutchings, led to a decision on his part to open the door to direct sales of whole, fresh cod to the U.S. market, but it was subject to what he called "well-structured, detailed pilot project proposals" designed in collaboration with various stakeholders, including any interested local processors.

The details of this matter were unresolved at the time this edition of Union Forum went to press.

FFAW-Unifor President Earle McCurdy said the problems our members experienced with the 2013 cod fishery underline the importance of a coordinated fish marketing strategy for the province, something the union has been advocating for years.

"We need a clear focus on better prices, which means full attention to the quality of our products from ocean to plate. It requires product development and market development on a coordinated scale. That's what our competition is doing."

McCurdy said funding to support market development and product development activities should be the top priority for the use of funds from the \$400 million federal/provincial fund that was negotiated in conjunction with the CETA negotiations.

"One thing is for sure. We cannot afford a repeat of what happened in the 2013 cod fishery. A more favorable foreign exchange rate will help this year, and the elimination of punitive tariffs into the E.U. will help in the future, but we can't just rely on those factors. We need to be aggressive and pro-active in producing and promoting high quality fish products, including cod."

McCurdy noted that the market for whole fish in the U.S. could be part of addressing the market shortfall from 2013, but that is a very limited market in terms of how much product it can take without collapsing the price.

"There's no point in that. That's what happened to the fresh market for haddock this winter, and no one gains from a price collapse except the end user."

He said our industry has to expand sales into all markets, including the United Kingdom and Europe as well as the United States.

"The competition is stiff. Iceland is flying more than 20 million pounds of high quality fresh cod into the U.S. annually. The Barents Sea has a huge quota of cod, in excess of a million tonnes this year. The low end of the cod market is totally unviable."

He said the union's goal is to find a market for the fish, and to significantly improve on last year's raw material prices.

"This can only be achieved with a total focus on quality."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Improving the quality of our catch

George Chafe

I was very happy to hear Earle McCurdy's comments on the need to maximize the quality of cod. It's sad but true that our cod is not known for being good quality. The global market is changing and we need to change with it if we want to survive.

Competition with other countries like Iceland and Russia is tough. They're producing a better product than us and they're getting more money for it. As fisherpeople, we have to focus on improving the quality of our catch.

There's a lot more to quality than just catching the fish. For all species, not just cod, the fish has to be bled as soon as it comes over the side of the boat. Then it has to be put in ice slush for twenty minutes - no less - before it's put on ice. If you're net fishing and the fish gets stuck head first, don't pull it through the other side or you'll damage the flesh- haul it out backwards. We also can't have product left in trucks

for 5 or 6 days.

As for crab, quality really matters. The ones who are careful with their catch subsidize the ones that are careless. Some are getting a better price for their catch because they have a better quality catch.

See, crab is like carton of eggs. Don't be careless heaving it into the boat or you'll lose half the legs. Less legs equals less money, simple as that. Without all of the legs intact the crab loses its worth. Haul the crab over the boat in pans, not loose. There's also a growing market for live crab. The Japanese demand a top quality product, but they're also willing to pay top dollar for it. If we show a little more care we can justify a better price.

Things are changing and we've got to change too. It won't happen overnight, but if we don't work on it we won't be able to compete. If we bring in a better quality product we will get a better price, so let's work together to improve our product.



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Market for lumpfish roe uncertain



Luroma 2014 attendees in Hamburg, Germany.

Bill Broderick

bbroderick@ffaw.net

FFAW-Unifor Inshore Director

Lumpfish, also known as lumpsuckers, are harvested for their roe – a delicacy in Europe that is less expensive than other caviars. The international competition for lumpfish harvesting is tough, the market in Europe is limited, and the timing of seasons makes it particularly difficult for Canada to compete since we are the last to fish.

I recently attended Luroma 2014, the annual meeting of international lumpfish harvesters, which was held in February in Hamburg, Germany. This annual meeting brings countries together to discuss market trends and strategy for lumpfish harvesting.

Processors do not explicitly say how much roe they would like supplied, but by analyzing yearly trends, the amount can be estimated. The objective is to provide as close this amount as possible without oversupplying. If processors are supplied too much, the price is lowered and the supply needed for the next year is reduced, since the roe keeps for a long time.

The main producers of lumpfish, in order of amount harvested, are Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Canada and Denmark. The fishing season for lumpfish in these European countries occurs in March and

April, while Canada's does not begin until May.

Over the last ten years, the average number of barrels harvested between all countries was between 25,000 and 28,000. However, in 2010 Iceland harvested 18,000 barrels and Greenland harvested 8,000, which equals over 90% of the market supply. As a result of this, processors have already received the majority of their supply by the time Canada's season opens.

If the market is undersupplied, Canada's late season can be beneficial since the processors are willing to pay a higher price for their last chance to buy roe. This left Canada in a good position in previous years but more recently it has not been positive for us.

In 2010 the market began to be oversupplied, and the price declined significantly. By 2012 we lost our negotiated bonus, and in 2013 the market collapsed to a point where it was not worthwhile for Northern Peninsula harvesters to fish for lump roe (the price offered was 75 cents, compared to over \$4 before oversupply began).

Efforts are being made to curtail the amount harvested in other countries, but the outlook is not overly positive.

This year, FFAW-Unifor will begin negotiations closer to the end of April, when the others countries are close to wrapping up their harvesting season and we have a better idea of the market situation.





Vigil for Murdered Women and Girls in Newfoundland and Labrador

Tina Pretty
FFAW-Uniform
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With standing room only, the names were read. Juliane Hibbs, CBS ... Brenda Young, St. John's... Samatha Walsh, Fleur de Lys... Many names were familiar but most were not. As the grisly and detailed descriptions of their deaths were disclosed a heavy silence descended on the room. It was a solemn and emotional ceremony that spoke clearly of loss and grief.

At the first annual Vigil for Murdered Women and Girls in Newfoundland and Labrador, which was

held at the Holiday Inn in St. John's on February 3rd, 61 presenters lined up to name the women known to have been murdered since 1815.

Most of the readers were men and women from the community or from groups and organizations dedicated to ending violence against women. However, it was the family members and friends of these women who made these tragedies hit home as they courageously stood and read the brief summary of their loved one's death.

For most in attendance, the weight of the loss, which intensified with each name read, was only truly appreciated when you realized that these women were also mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts and nieces and not just names in the news.

With each name and summary read out, these women and girls were given back the voices that had been so violently stolen from them. These voices told of brutal and ugly deaths. They told of murder by every sort of means imaginable (and unimaginable) by knives, screwdrivers, shot guns, handguns, axes, hands and fists - in most cases by men they knew.

The St. John's Native Friendship Centre has been compiling the names of murdered women into a database. This is an ongoing project and more women will be added as research uncovers more victims. Even before the ink was dry on the printed programs for the Vigil, five more names had been added.

Connie Pike, Executive Director of Coalition Against Violence was the final speaker and passionately urged everyone to speak out about intimate violence and to confront it in their communities.

The Vigil was coordinated through Marguerite's Place, St. John's Native Friendship Centre, the Coalition Against Violence - Avalon East, and the NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre.



Photo by Breannah Tulk

One Billion Rising for Justice - St. John's

Tina Pretty
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There's something very powerful about dance and movement. Maybe it's our ancient primal roots that hears the rhythm and picks up the beat. Whatever it is about dance, it resonates with us all and the catchy "Break the Chain" dance choreographed for the global One Billion Rising campaign is as catchy as they come.

One Billion Rising was the biggest mass action in human history. The campaign began in 2012 as a call to action based on the staggering UN statistic that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than ONE BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS.

On February 13, One Billion Rising for Justice - St. John's came together to dance and rise in defiance of the injustices women suffer and to demand an end at last to violence against women. The event was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall on St. Clare Avenue and was truly a community event. Over 40

organizations were represented, including FFAW-Unifor and hundreds of people came through the doors over a six-hour period.

This kitchen-party-like celebration featured information booths, crafts, food vendors from the Multicultural Women's Organization of NL, and entertainment, including the Salty Dolls and the Moonshine Men. And of course, there was dancing. Women practiced the theme song and performed it several times during the afternoon and evening.

The fact that women all over the world were dancing to the same song made this a unifying and powerful global event.

In St. John's, an action piece was also planned for Friday, February 14th. In the last provincial budget the Family Violence Intervention Court was slashed and a demonstration was planned to demand the reinstatement of this important initiative. However, due to a winter storm the demonstration was postponed to a later date.

To see how huge this global campaign has become, google One Billion Rising and view some of the videos from around the world. Who knows, perhaps you'll learn the dance for next year's event!



Workers reach agreement with Labatt to end strike



Labatt

Labatt workers have voted to accept a new collective agreement and end an eleven month strike. Members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE), the Labatt employees were replaced with scab workers during the difficult dispute.

The settlement lifts the boycott on Labatt products that has been in effect since June. Carol Furlong,

President of NAPE, said, "We believe the support from the people of our province for the boycott had a significant impact on the outcome and we are very appreciative of that support."

The Labatt's strike points out a serious weakness in provincial labour legislation. According to FFAW President Earle McCurdy, "Multi-national corporations which couldn't care less about our province can starve out NL workers and bring in scab labour to replace them, and our own government hasn't lifted a finger to help. We saw the same thing at the Vale labor dispute in Voisey's Bay a couple of years ago. It's time for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to start supporting working Newfoundlanders and Labradorians."

The new collective agreement runs until March 2020.

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Oil and gas explorations in the province

Jóhan Joensen

jjoensen@ffaw.net

FFAW-Unifor Industry Liaison

The past couple of years have been busy when it comes to petroleum exploration activities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 2013 there were five vessels conducting seismic activity in the Labrador Sea, the Newfoundland Northeast Slope, Flemish Pass and Cap, and around the production fields on the Grand Banks.

For 2014 there are already five vessels expected to do some type of exploration activity. Three of the vessels are anticipated to do seismic activities, one will be doing water and seabed sampling, and one is expected to do a Controlled Source Electromagnetic survey.

Although the majority of activity pertains to conventional seismic, it is worthwhile to provide some more information on the Controlled Source Electromagnetic survey. This involves deployment of sensors on the seabed in a grid pattern. Equipment emitting an electromagnetic pulse is then towed in the water column above the sensors that measure the relative resistivity in the geological formations below

the seabed. This is used to supplement the information gathered through conventional seismic data.

Through this work petroleum companies expect to have better information on whether seismic data contains water or carbon hydrates. The Controlled Source Electromagnetic program proposed for 2014 is likely to focus on the Sackville Spur and the Orphan Basin.

Most of the proposed exploration activities are likely to begin between May and June. Although only one of the above mentioned activities has been confirmed, there may be other companies that will want to pursue work in the province. All work planned or proposed is pending approval and authorization from the Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board.

With the continual changes and developments in petroleum exploration in the province, FFAW-Unifor strongly encourages members to call the office in St. John's if there are specific concerns or questions. FFAW-Unifor has a Petroleum Industry Liaison whose main responsibility is to engage the petroleum industry on behalf of the membership.

We continue to be concerned about the impact the seismic activity is having on fishing operations.

Unifor scholarships

Unifor is concerned about the lives of our members' families, and we recognize that post-secondary education is out of reach for many working class children due to skyrocketing tuition fees. Unifor scholarships are awarded to children of Unifor members in good standing.

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public institution in Canada, you are eligible to apply. Submissions must include a letter of recommendation, an official application form, and a transcript of marks.

For more information and to receive an application, please call the FFAW at 576-7276 or visit www.unifor.org. The deadline to submit your application to the FFAW-Unifor office is April 20th, 2014.

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REMEMBERING ALEX SKINNER

Alexander Benjamin Skinner
October 10, 1944 -
January 28, 2014

Alexander Benjamin Skinner passed away peacefully on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at the age of 69. Husband of long-time FFAW Executive Board member Mildred, Alex ended his battle with cancer at the Connaigre Peninsula Health Care Centre in Harbour Breton.

Alex was born and raised on Sagona Island in Fortune Bay. A lifelong fisherman, Alex and his family relocated to Harbour Breton where he met the love of his life, Mildred. Their 44 year marriage brought four children and seven grandchildren.

The funeral service was held Friday, January 31, 2014 in Harbour Breton at St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church. The show of solidarity was truly exceptional and moving, as many people came from miles away to show their support. Fishermen young and old formed an honour roll to provide Alex with a fitting send-off.

Alex is remembered fondly for his kindness and generosity by all who knew him.

FFAW and Nalcor reach agreement to compensate scallop harvesters

Your union has reached a landmark agreement with Nalcor Energy to compensate scallop harvesters in the Strait of Belle Isle who will be permanently impacted by the installation of underwater cable to bring power from Muskrat Falls to the island of Newfoundland.

“This agreement is the first of its kind in the province and shows that Nalcor is taking responsibility for the impact of their work. We hope others will learn from their example,” said FFAW-Unifor President, Earle McCurdy.

An approximately 1.5 km section of scallop fishing area 14A will be affected by the installation of the Strait of Belle Isle marine cable crossing. A portion of the scallop harvesters’ fishable area will be permanently closed.

Nalcor held public consultations where harvesters raised concerns about the impact of the installations. As a result, the company agreed to negotiate compensation and an elected committee of scallop harvesters was formed. More than 90 per cent of scallop license holders signed written agreements to have us negotiate on their behalf.

“We listened to the concerns raised by local scallop harvesters about the interaction of their

equipment with the rock berm that will protect the transmission cables across the Straits and worked closely with the local harvesters committee, FFAW-Unifor and regulators to identify a solution that we believe is fair and agreeable to all parties. We are happy with the outcome and positive consultation process undertaken with FFAW-Unifor and its members,” said Gilbert Bennett, Vice President Lower Churchill Project, Nalcor Energy.

Factors that were taken into consideration in the agreement included the amount of area closed, the permanent nature of the closure, and the effect on incomes of current and future harvesters.

Nalcor has agreed to a \$2.6 million lump sum as well as an additional 15 per cent for administrative costs to cover long-term compensation costs. The union will administer the fund by providing annual payouts to affected members for up to 30 years.

Affected members are those actively participating in the fishery in any year and their share will be proportionate to their landings.

The area closure will take effect prior to the 2014 scallop fishing season. The first payments will be made from the fund at the end of the 2014 season, based on scallop landings throughout the year.

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Dividing up the northern shrimp quota

Our Union has taken the fight for a fair share of northern shrimp for the inshore sector to Fisheries and Ocean Minister Gail Shea.

A small delegation from the Union, headed by President Earle McCurdy, told the Minister the inshore share is being eroded under DFO's current management regime.

"The inshore shrimp fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador supports not only 250-plus fishing enterprises and their crew members, it also is the lifeblood of ten shrimp plants around the province, employing more than 1,500 workers," McCurdy said following the meeting.

The average inshore share of northern shrimp between 2000 and 2010 was roughly 41%, but recent quota cuts in Shrimp Fishing Areas 6 and 7 have dropped the inshore share to around 36%. (Area 6 corresponds to 2J3K and Area 7 corresponds to 3L)

The problem, said McCurdy, is that the northern shrimp stock is divided into a number of management areas which are managed as if they were separate stocks, even though recent scientific research suggests they are genetically similar.

Compounding the problem is that the offshore sector has access in all management areas, while the inshore sector is limited essentially to SFAs 6 and 7.

In recent years, the shrimp have been moving north, which has led to increases in some northern quotas and decreases in SFA 6 and 7.

"There are two ways to fix that," McCurdy said. "Reinstate the inshore share as a percentage of the overall TAC, or give us access in SFA 5 to offset the loss of quota in 6 and 7. Or both."

The inshore shrimp fishery on the northeast coast started in 1997 following an explosion in the northern shrimp population, which occurred in the wake of the collapse of groundfish stocks in the same waters.

The Fisheries and Oceans Minister at the time, Fred Mifflin, made a crucial decision in favor of harvesters, plant workers and communities on the

northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the Northern Peninsula, when he set aside a share of the increased TAC for an inshore fishery which, at its peak, supported 13 peeling plants.

The inshore fleet initially received temporary permits, but these were changed to regular licenses in 2007 by Loyola Hearn, who was Minister at that time.

"It's our position that the change to regular licenses meant the inshore fleet was here to stay," McCurdy said. "Our share of the overall TAC should be confirmed. Under the current arrangement, the overall TAC could increase yet we could still lose quota share in the inshore sector if there is a continued northward migration of the stock."

He noted that many enterprises and communities are heavily dependent on the shrimp fishery. This is especially the case of the Northern Peninsula, which has more than 60 shrimp fishing enterprises and four peeling plants.

"There wouldn't be much left of the Northern Peninsula without a shrimp fishery," McCurdy said.

The Union has had ongoing dialogue on the shrimp issue with the provincial government, which has been supportive of the Union's position at the Northern Shrimp Advisory Committee.

The 2014 quota for SFA 7, which is managed by NAFO, has been cut in half since last year.

SFA 6 is managed by DFO. No decision had been made on this year's quota as of press time.





New Union Forum editor

As the new Union Forum Editor and FFAW-Unifor Communications Officer, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Courtney Pelley and I was born in Labrador City. When I was eight years old, my father was transferred to work in Ottawa, where I grew up, attended university and began my career.

I visited Newfoundland nearly every summer to spend time with my grandparents in Port Anson and Deer Lake. I am very excited to be back in the province, living in St. John's and working for FFAW-Unifor.

At the University of Ottawa I studied political science, economics and international relations. Over the last six years I have worked in various communication roles for the Privy Council Office, Transport Canada, a hospital, and two organizations in Peru.

Unifor has great plans for the upcoming years and I am thrilled to be part of it. I'm looking forward to engaging you, our members, to make your voice heard. Campaigns like Rights at Work and Join the Good Jobs Revolution unite us to fight for fair wages, safe workplaces, and security and stability for the future.

In your billing envelope mailed in February, you will have found a survey asking questions about computer skills and social media. I am looking to find out the best ways your union can get in touch with you, and the topics you would like to be informed of. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and mail it back in the pre-paid envelope enclosed. Surveys received by May 1st will be entered to win 1 of 5 new FFAW-Unifor jackets.

I would like to thank Mandy Ryan Francis for making this transition easy and for being so supportive with all of my questions. I wish Mandy the best of luck in her exciting new position with the Traceability and Branding project.

I welcome your ideas and would love to hear from you. If you have any stories you'd like to see in the Forum, please email me at cpelley@ffaw.net, give me a call at 576-7276, post on our Facebook page or tweet at me!

In Solidarity,
Courtney

OCI reopens Fortune plant

Greg Pretty
FFAW-Unifor Industrial/Retail Director

The news of Fortune's Ocean Choice International (OCI) plant reopening was an early Christmas gift to over a hundred workers.

The announcement was a long time coming, and frustrations in Fortune were mounting as the plant had been closed for a year. The closure has been very tough on workers so the news of a five year commitment was welcomed.

OCI has committed to a minimum of 36 weeks of

work in 2014, but Blaine Sullivan, OCI's chief operating officer, hopes that number could be closer to 40.

The provincial government provided \$300,000 for OCI to modernize the plant, which was what allowed the company to reopen the facility.

OCI has leased a new long-line vessel for cod, which has been going very well to date. The plant will also process halibut, haddock and yellowtail flounder.



Gilbert Linstead awarded Order of Newfoundland and Labrador



L-R: Bill Broderick, David Decker, Gilbert Linstead, Ken Fowler

Gilbert Linstead, general manager of the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company Ltd., was one of seven people to be awarded the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador in December.

The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador is the highest honour of the province. The objective of the Order is to recognize individuals who have demonstrated excellence and achievement in their field, benefiting in an outstanding manner Newfoundland and Labrador and its residents.

A testament to his contributions to the fishing industry, Mr. Linstead says he didn't even know he was nominated, and was very honoured to receive the award.

Established in 1978, the company began as a cooperative (co-op) to apply for shrimp licenses and to help Labrador fishermen get work on shrimp vessels. After a successful first year, the co-op mandated all profits go towards creating jobs by developing the inshore fishery and fish plants.

In 1982, the board and its members voted to cancel

its registration as a co-op and formed a company now known as Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company Limited. However, the organization has maintained its concept of one share per fisher, and all profits were to be kept in the company for the purpose of developing and creating employment along the Labrador Coast.

"The coast of Labrador would be a dismal place today if not for the outstanding role performed over the past thirty-plus years by the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company. Gilbert Linstead has been a very steady hand at the tiller during the ups and downs of those thirty years. This is not just Gilbert's award, it is a recognition of the great contribution of the organization, under the direction of a Board of Directors made up of fish harvesters. It just shows what can happen when government policy allows cooperative institutions to flourish," said FFAW-Unifor President Earle McCurdy.

The company currently employs over 500 people on a seasonal basis and services 600 fishers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Congratulations Gilbert!

Lobster sustainability program: a more economically viable fishery for the future



The lobster sustainability program first announced in November 2011 will conclude on March 31, 2014. The program, designed to encourage the future long-term sustainability and economic prosperity of the lobster fishery, achieved its objective to increase incomes by significantly reducing lobster fishing capacity in Fortune Bay, the southwest coast and the west coast (lobster fishing areas 11 to 14B) through voluntary lobster trap reductions and lobster licence retirements.

“Net incomes of those who remain in the fishery in the areas covered by the license retirement program will be significantly improved as a direct result of the program. There is now a better balance between the number of participants in the fishery and the available resource, and this has been achieved without the accumulation of debt that would threaten the financial stability of fishing enterprises,” said Earle McCurdy.

The program has permanently removed 105,000 lobster traps from the fishery (36% reduction) as well as 266 lobster licences (24% reduction).

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2013 International Coldwater Prawn Forum

Keith Sullivan
ksullivan@ffaw.net
FFAW-Unifor Market
Research

The 2013 International Coldwater Prawn Forum, held in London in November, was attended by nearly two hundred professionals with an interest in shrimp - from harvesters, to processors, to retailers and market analysts.

There were opportunities for discussions with many in the prawn business (shrimp to most of us). FFAW-Unifor members had the

opportunity to attend the Forum which had coldwater shrimp markets as a main focus. Members find discussions with harvesters from other countries, such as the USA, Norway and Greenland, particularly insightful.

The official program began with a complete outlook on all the stocks of *pandalus borealis* shrimp harvested in the world and illustrated a worldwide harvest of 247,000 MT in 2014 (approximately 140,000 MT from Canada), a reduction of more than 45 per cent from peak harvest just ten years ago. This is a frightening trend for the industry but it should allow for opportunities to create value and move away from the practice during periods of high abundance by undercutting the price.

Many challenges for the industry were pointed out but even more opportunities were identified. The challenges include finding innovative products (moving away from a focus on cheaper production), educating consumers on value, differentiating the products and moving appeal to younger consumers and new markets.

With limited volume there are opportunities to niche market the coldwater prawn based on values



Attendees at the 2013 International Coldwater Prawn Forum

such as wild-captured, healthy and sustainable images. These attributes appeal to consumers even in the potential growth markets like China and Russia.

Marketers of shell-on shrimp have invested four million dollars to develop the Chinese market for shrimp, which has resulted in significant price increases. There are several factors that should make coldwater shrimp more appealing and drive prices in the short term, such as high prices of warm water shrimp (and other shellfish), the lower Canadian dollar and improved tariff regimes with Europe.

Many speakers throughout the conference referenced the need for a new category of thinking, or an industry-wide approach to create value for consumers. Following the conference, members of the Forum have engaged in discussion about how to make the first step towards this. It will need investment, but examples show that this will pay off.

While many of the benefits come from the informal meetings and discussion during breaks, there are some very interesting presentation outlines to be found on the website at www.icwpcf.com.



Government must show seniors some respect

Jerry Dias
Unifor Canada President

For all the challenges we face as a nation, this great country we have today is the result of decades of hard work by the Canadians who came before us to build this into a place we can all be proud to call our home.

By working with community groups or their unions to make Canada a better place for their children, by joining with their friends and neighbours to build the kinds of communities they wanted, and by voting for governments that promised the kinds of laws and programs they knew Canada needed, our predecessors – today's seniors – forged Canada into the country we know and love today.

Some of them even volunteered to join our armed forces, willingly putting their lives on the line to defend the country they had helped build.

For all these efforts, today's seniors deserve our deepest respect. That's easy to say. But for our federal government, it seems a difficult thing to do.

Just look at its track record.

Two years ago, the Harper government announced that Old Age Security payments would be delayed to age 67, from 65, in a change to be phased in over several years.

These OAS payments are a supplement to the Canada Pension Plan, and meant to help lift seniors out of poverty in retirement. For many, it is their best hope of a life of dignity in their retirement. Instead, thanks to the Harper government's changes, many will be forced to keep working longer just to make ends meet.

And then there's the plan to close Veterans Affairs district offices across Canada, with Ottawa telling our retired Armed Forces members that they can go to a website instead of visiting with a real person in a real office.

To the men and women who proudly wore the uniform of our Armed Forces, this was a slap in the face.

They rightly objected, and rallied outside the offices slated for closure across the country.

They also sent a delegation to Parliament Hill to bring their case directly to the government and hoping to meet with Veterans Affairs Minister Julian Fantino.

Fantino showed up more than an hour late for the meeting, insulted the veterans who had travelled to Ottawa to meet him, then ducked out early.

His office then, if you can believe it, issued a press release claiming that Fantino had met with the veterans and discussed their concerns. Talk about nerve. Mere minutes after being so insulting and dismissive of these veterans, Fantino was actually trying to spin a tale of having consulted them.

Insult heaped on insult – and when the whole thing blew up in his face, Fantino claimed that the vets were nothing but union stooges.

Unbelievable.

And it doesn't end there. When Canada Post announced it was ending home mail delivery, the Harper-appointed head of the crown corporation said walking to community mail boxes would be good exercise for seniors.

Two years ago, in March 2012, Conservative MP Rob Anders was caught texting and falling asleep at Veterans Affairs Committee meetings, then tried to smear his critics as "NDP hacks" for pointing out his shortcomings.

This is all too much to be mere coincidence. What we are seeing, in fact, is a systemic disrespect for Canada's seniors.

To me and most Canadians, this sort of behaviour is simply unacceptable. It's arrogant for any one, and a government in particular, to be so dismissive of the opinions of our seniors. In these challenging times, we need to draw on the experiences of those who came before us and overcame the challenges of the past.

That means listening to and respecting our senior citizens, not insulting them or dismissing them when

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

2014 - the year of the lobster?

Keith Sullivan

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FFAW-Unifor Market Research

2013 was tough year for most in the lobster business. Just when many believed that lobster markets could not get any worse, prices all-time lows with a minimum of \$3.25 for many weeks. Prices were depressed all over eastern Canada and the Northeast United States.

Market update

As we begin to look forward to the 2014 season there are more encouraging signs of an improved market for the spring season even though fishing is still a time away. Prices from winter fisheries have been in the range of one dollar higher than they were at the same time in 2012/2013.

Landings for lobster (US and Canada) in 2012, and similar in 2013, were 300 million pounds, up 63% from 190 million in 2007. Markets have not been developed to the degree to grow our markets and ensure higher, stable market prices. It is hard to believe landings like this can be sustained and it is reported that the winter fishery in the Maritimes has seen decreased landings.

Furthermore, markets such as Hong Kong and China grow particularly around Chinese New Year, which started January 31 this year.

Another more positive factor at the moment is the 10% increased value from the exchange with the USD. Last February both currencies hovered close to par. That is 70 cents more on a 7 dollar lobster, even without any other changes in the market.

Lobster Events

The past year has been a busy in in the world of Canadian Lobster. A Maritime panel was struck this past year and they released a report with 33

recommendations covering three major themes - industry relationships, operations, and structure (available at www.novascotia.ca/fish).

Stemming from this, a Lobster Value Recovery Summit will take place in Nova Scotia on March 26th and 27th. The summit's goal is to review the panel's 33 recommendations and try to build a consensus and plan for implementation.

Even though the panel was struck in the Maritimes, it will be important to have Newfoundland and Labrador input because of the connectedness in all of the Canadian lobster fisheries.

Lobster Council of Canada

The Lobster Council of Canada (LCC) has been very active on its mandate to improve the value of the lobster fishery for all participants. The LCC is helping organize the Lobster Summit referenced above.

Many recommendations made by the panel are consistent with the work of the LCC. For example, the LCC has promoted a levy to support such work as developing and implementing a generic marketing and promotion campaign. The development has already begun as the LCC has engaged an experienced, creative agency to develop a brand identity that can be used in promotion and marketing in targeted markets.

Inshore Council member and lobster harvester, Kevin Hardy from LFA 12 is a new member of the Board of Directors of the Lobster Council of Canada. Kevin will have big shoes to fill as he replaces FFAW Executive Board Member and LFA 14 harvester, Loomis Way, who has been a tireless promoter of the lobster industry and the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Half of the board members with the LCC represent fish harvesters. Please visit <http://lobstercouncil-canada.ca/> to keep up to date with all the news from the Lobster Council.

SHOW SENIORS SOME RESPECT Continued

they raise concerns.

After lives spent building this country, they have earned our respect, and the right to retire with dignity. That means putting OAS back to age 65, and it means affording common decency to our seniors, and listening respectfully when they speak out.

They have a lifetime of experience. We should be listening.

Jerry Dias is the National President of Unifor, Canada's largest union in the private sector with more than 300,000 members and a very active retiree council, and a retiree on its National Executive Board.



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A long-term solution to Manolis L.?

Robyn Saunders Lee

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FFAW-Unifor Industry Liaison

Reports of oiled birds and oil washing ashore on Change Islands in December 2013 prompted further onsite investigation by the Canadian Coast Guard regarding the sunken paper carrier Manolis L.

Following site inspection by a ROV, it was determined that the cofferdam installed to collect leaking oil on the ship last summer had actually shifted due to an increased current and warmer water temperatures at the site. As a result, oil that had been collecting in the coffer dam began to escape. It is estimated that about a thousand litres of oil escaped, about 4 to 6 litres per day.

In late January, a new, redesigned coffer dam was constructed and installed on the hull with a seal and added weights to secure its placement. The leaks appear to be plugged for the time being. However, the cofferdam can only hold up to 3500 litres of oil.

The Liberian-flagged vessel sank with more than 500 tonnes of fuel and diesel onboard. The Coast Guard intends to drain oil collected by the cofferdam and inspect the vessel and neoprene seals after the winter ice moves away from the area. Four underwater current meters and five temperature sensors deployed near the shipwreck will also provide a better understanding of subsea conditions to support ongoing operations at the site.

Meanwhile, fish harvesters, mussel farm owners, tourism operators, residents, scientists and politicians have displayed outrage at the band-aid fix, fearing it is the federal government's solution for an environmental disaster waiting to happen. Many have likened the situation to a Second World War-era wreck off the coast of British Columbia that had been leaking oil for over a decade.

The U.S. Army's Brigadier-General M.S. Zalinski sank 70 years ago in 34 meters of water, 100 kilometers south of Prince Rupert with 600 tons of bunker oil in its fuel tanks. Reports of oil slicks were made for 50 years before the wreck was even identified and divers started patching and sealing the hull as any upwelling

events occurred over the past decade.

Further clean-up efforts on the Zalinski stalled until late last year when Coast Guard hired a contractor to remove oil from the rusted tanks through an operation known as "hot-tapping." Holes were drilled into the side of the vessel and hot steam was then pumped into the fuel tanks.

As the temperature of the oil subsequently increased it was able to flow more easily such that it could be pumped (through hoses) to the surface. According to a DFO press release on December 23, 2013, the two month project "safely extracted approximately 44,000 L of heavy Bunker C oil and 319,000 L of oily water from the wreck." This means that almost half of the oil that sunk with the ship 70 years ago is unaccounted for. The operation had an estimated \$30-50 million price tag.

Discussions with Coast Guard have indicated that the area and depth of the Manolis L. creates significant challenges for doing work similar to the Zalinski, which was located in relatively shallow, calm waters. Some have also speculated that the clean-up of the Zalinski was conveniently timed to showcase the Coast Guard's oil-spill response capability for the December decision

by the Joint Review

Panel

on the

Enbridge

Northern

Gateway

pipeline

and tanker

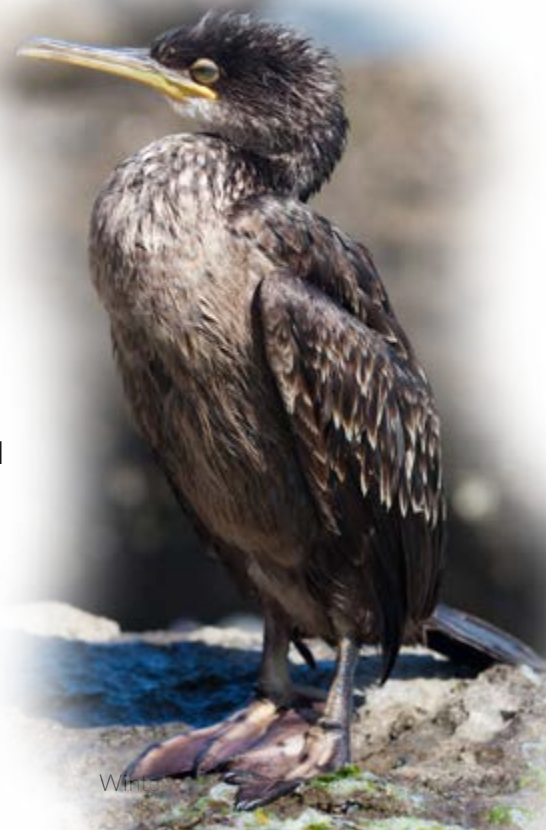
proposal on

the west coast.

Where there's

a political will

there's a way?



Unions under attack like never before

Lana Payne

Unifor Atlantic Regional Director

Imagine Canada without unions.

Who would speak up for workers? Who would fight for a fair sharing of the economic pie? Who will defend important programs like Employment Insurance? Pensions? Universal Health Care? Who will fight to ensure our workplaces are safe? Who will stand up for equality?

I do not ask that you consider this lightly. I ask because we are experiencing a very serious and unprecedented attack on the very existence of trade unions and collective bargaining.

Right-wing politicians and some business leaders are ramping up their attack and they have a good friend in the Harper government.

No matter how often unions prove their worth to society, from reducing poverty and inequality, there are powerful forces pushing to weaken the power of working people's democratic organizations. They do not like the fact that we force wealth to be shared.

We are now having this discussion again in Canada. Every time we do workers and unions are forced to defend what are fundamental rights in our country, including the right to belong to a union and the right to fair and free collective bargaining.

The Harper government, in particular, is on the attack. And it has been relentless. Indeed the creation of Unifor was in response, in many ways, to this attack at the collective and political bargaining arenas.

Unifor, the coming together of two great unions (the CEP and the CAW), was an act of hope and solidarity that we could strengthen the voice of working people.

Unions exist to make conditions for workers fairer and safer, across all sectors and all workplaces. The process of collective bargaining benefits all workers, not just those in unions, and it gives workers a greater say in their working conditions. But that's not possible without good laws that make unions and collective bargaining feasible.

It is those laws that are currently under attack.

One proposed law, coming forward in the form of a private member's bill (C-525), would make it very



difficult for workers to form a union in a federally-regulated workplace, but extremely easy for employers to push to get rid of unions. The proposed law (which was being debated at Parliamentary Committee stage during press time for the Union Forum) would give those who don't vote power over those who do. In other words, in a decertification drive, workers who didn't bother to vote would be counted as if they voted against the union.

All employers would have to do is "encourage" workers to stay home and not bother voting. If that rule were applied in the House of Commons, not one MP would hold their seat. It is a travesty of democracy.

Unifor has been doing a lot of work to get this bill killed including meeting with the federal labour minister and with federal employers.

Our message has been clear. This bill - if it were to become law - will destabilize labour relations in the country. It will spill over into our workplaces and employers need to be very concerned about what the impact will be and what actions will be taken by our union.

Most employers have not been asking for this kind of change to labour laws, but they could be doing more to pressure the government into dumping this anti-democratic, anti-union proposed law. In addition to this, there have been numerous cases where the federal government has interfered in collective bargaining and when the government does this, it is

UNIONS UNDER ATTACK Continued

always on the side of the employer.

Unifor is pushing back. In addition to our work in the political arena, we are undertaking a historic membership engagement and outreach campaign. Known as Standing Up for our Rights at Work, the campaign is being launched through a Leadership Tour.

National President Jerry Dias will be meeting with Unifor members in 19 cities and towns across the country. In Atlantic Canada, I will join Dias. The meetings were being scheduled for February 25, 26, and 27. Local union leaders and activists and executives were all being encouraged to attend.

But this is just the start. In addition to our workplace canvas which will follow the Leadership Tour, we are meeting with employers to make sure they understand just what is at stake here.

And you should be aware that what happens at the federal level will quickly start spilling over into provincial jurisdictions. Indeed, in Ontario, the leader of the Conservative Party, Tim Hudak, has launched an all-out attack against the existence of unions, proposing U.S.-style right-to-work-for-less laws.

Defending our fundamental human and labour rights is therefore the top priority of Unifor, and indeed the entire labour movement. If Harper, Hudak and others are successful in gutting fundamental rights that underpin our unions, Canada will never look the same.

We must talk about the importance of unions wherever we can. We must challenge the attack in every way we can. We will make it politically impossible for Conservatives to gut labour laws that will then harm the overall well-being and prosperity of entire communities. But we can only do this together.

This affects all of us, brothers and sisters, and we must all play a role. The sidelines are for bystanders and in the struggle for rights, there can be no bystanders.

If you would like more information about Unifor's Rights at Work campaign, you can check out <http://www.unifor.org/en/take-action/campaigns/rights-work>

Lana Payne is the Atlantic Regional Director of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union with more than 300,000 members.

Ever thought of taking a family holiday with your union?

Want a summer vacation where your accommodations, meals and airline travel are paid for? Want some quality time in a resort-like setting, where quality childcare staff provide programs for your children? Want to meet people from across Canada, learn about our new union and issues facing Canadian families, and enjoy one of the most beautiful sunsets in the world? If the answer is YES then you should apply for:

Unifor Family Education Program

SESSION 1: Saturday June 28 to Saturday July 5

SESSION 2: Saturday July 5 to Saturday July 12

SESSION 3: Saturday July 26 to Saturday August 2

SESSION 4: Saturday August 2 to Saturday August 9

The program is held at the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario, on the shores of Lake Huron. To find out more information, and to obtain an application form, please contact us at 576-7276.

Registration Deadline is Friday, March 28, 2014

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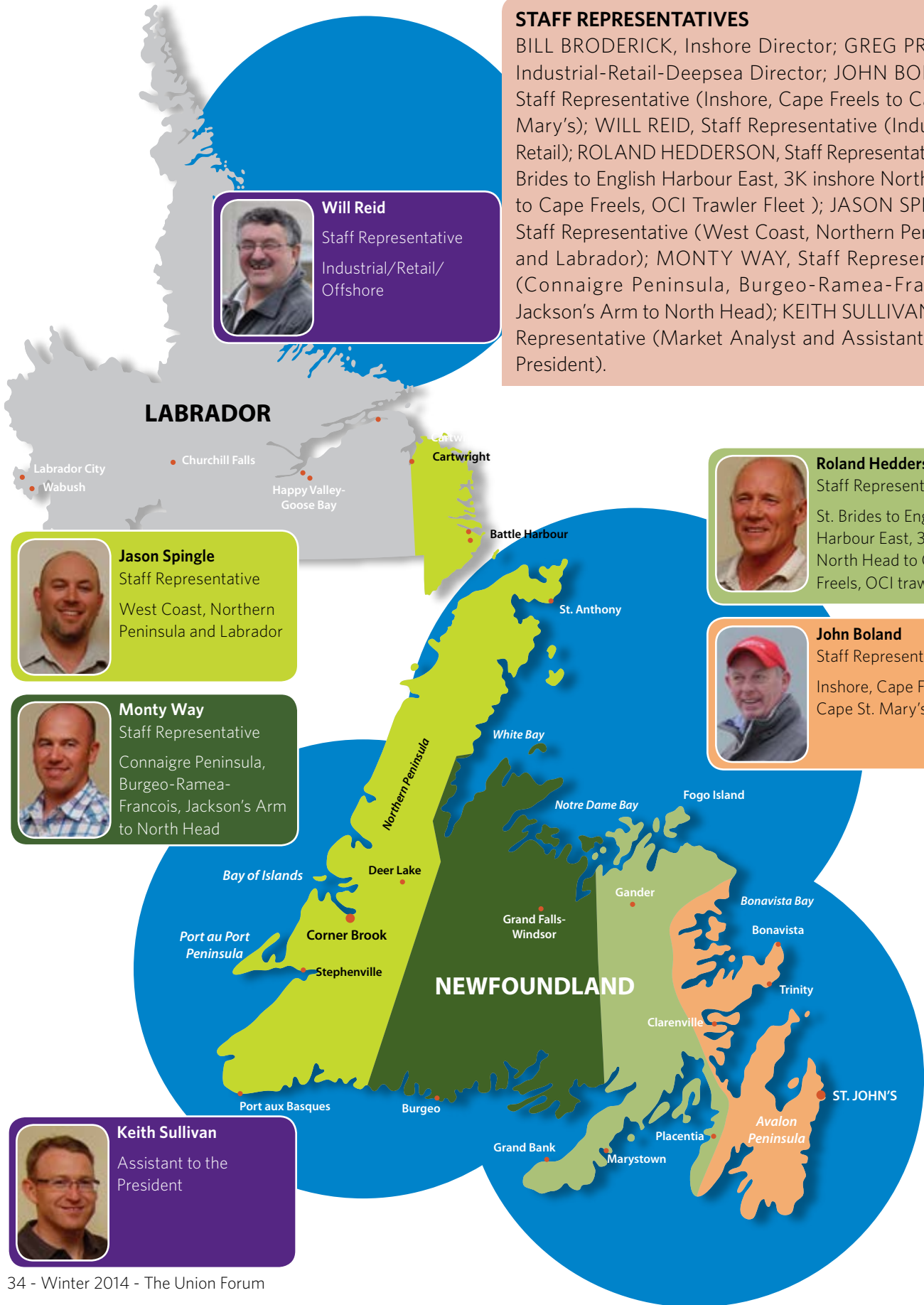
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Sea urchin industry at standstill

John Boland
FFAW-Unifor

The future of Newfoundland and Labrador's sea urchin industry is uncertain. In January, harvesters banded together to boycott the industry by not fishing.

Up until recently, provincial regulations required 75 per cent of the quota be processed in the province, but processors do not have the capacity or skilled efficiency to meet that requirement. New regulations have changed that number to 50 per cent, but harvesters say that still isn't good enough.

The roe from sea urchins, called "uni", is processed and shipped mainly to Japan, where buyers are very particular. Consumers closely examine the layout, colour coordination, consistency in size, and more. The product must therefore be processed with the utmost care - a very delicate and skilled operation that harvesters say is simply not up to snuff here in the province.

By comparison, urchin plants in Maine, where harvesters previously sold their catch, process the species seven or eight months per year and have been doing so for over 25 years. It is a learned skill that takes time to gain the expertise, and the plants in

this province have only been around for a few years.

The government's argument is to keep jobs in the province. However, working at full capacity the plants still cannot handle close to the volume the harvesters are capable of bringing in. This resulted in harvesters being turned away, wasted product, limited profits, and threatened jobs. In addition to that, harvesters receive a very low price for the product - less than they were receiving in the mid-nineties.

Processors want to ship out all the excess themselves, but harvesters don't benefit from this. When there were no urchin processors in the province a few years back, harvesters sold the urchins directly, and it was in this system that they benefitted the most.

With the current regime, harvesters are paid for their catch only after the urchins have been processed and exported, and the price is based on the quality purported by the processors. This system is subjective and does not allow for any recourse if the harvesters feel they have been treated unfairly. It also leaves no incentive for plants to process a higher quality product since harvesters are paid based on the roe processed.

Gerald Hussey is a harvester from Bonavista who has been diving for urchins for many years. Hussey says that harvesters received the best prices for their catch when they were allowed to sell directly to markets out of the province. He says that plants need to pay a better price for their share of the quota, and harvesters should be able to sell the rest themselves.

Next season, FFAW-Unifor will negotiate on behalf of the urchin harvesters for a new pricing structure with the plants- similar to what is done with many other species. Harvesters would like to see a dock-side grading program implemented where samples can be tested and graded at the dock. They want to be paid at the dock rather than days or weeks later using a subjective method that favours the processor.

The provincial government must step-up to save Newfoundland and Labrador's sea urchin industry. As long as the plant is working at full capacity, harvesters should be allowed to sell their unprocessed surplus. Harvesters can get a fair price for their product, plant workers keep their jobs, and plant owners have incentive to keep processing.



Traceability program to link harvesters and consumers

Mandy Ryan Francis
mfrancis@ffaw.net

FFAW-Unifor Traceability and Branding

The first public traceability tags are about to be attached to halibut and lobster caught in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region this upcoming fishing season.

The “ThisFish” tags will allow consumers to trace their lobster or halibut back to the person who pulled their seafood from the ocean. “ThisFish” is an initiative of Ecotrust Canada, a non-profit organization that works on community economic development while improving the sustainability of Canada’s natural resource industries.

By going to the [www.“ThisFish”.info](http://www.ThisFish.info) website and entering a unique code, the consumer can also learn about the seafood they’ve purchased, where it was caught, the type of vessel used to catch it and see photos of the harvester, among many other things. There are fishing videos to view, tasty recipes to try and loads of information about the species they’ve purchased such as the conservation measures that are in place within the fishing area it was caught.

The benefits of the NL Seafood Traceability Program don’t stop there. For the harvester, they are able to learn about exactly where their catch ends up before consumption. They sometimes have the opportunity to correspond with the consumer and find out information like how much was paid at the end of the chain for the seafood they caught.

The main goal of the project is to add value to lobster and halibut and in turn increase the return to harvesters. FFAW-Unifor has been working on developing this program for over two years, ever since a smaller pilot involving 11 harvesters from Lobster Fishing Area 11 with “ThisFish” traceability tags ended in 2011-12.

Over the course of the winter, NL Seafood Traceability team members have met with harvesters throughout the Northern Peninsula, West and

Southwest Coasts to discuss the program and help individuals set up profile pages on the “ThisFish” website. The response has been overwhelmingly positive up to this magazine’s deadline with over 80 per cent of all eligible harvesters indicating they want to be a part of the program.

Also interested in the program is the Restaurant Association of Newfoundland and Labrador which has requested buyer contact information so their members can purchase some fresh, traceable, sustainable lobster and Atlantic halibut this spring and summer and promote the traceability factor in their restaurants.

Buyers who are interested can also have an online profile for their business, promoting their products to retailers and consumers.

The program doesn’t require any extra work by harvesters. A team of three individuals are in place to help create profile pages and the traceability tags will be delivered by mail before the fishing season begins. However, harvesters are encouraged to develop their own profile pages if they prefer it. Once the special lobster bands and halibut tags arrive, harvesters place the claw bands on the lobster and placing the tags on the halibut.

The first tags to go into the marketplace will be halibut tags from fishing area 3Pn around the beginning of April. Based on the 2011 pilot project, it will likely take two to three weeks before harvesters can see where their traces are coming from. After that, the first lobster season opens on April 18 and the first round of traceability tags will go on lobster at that time.

If you purchase a lobster this spring or summer that has an orange “ThisFish” tag attached to it, go to [www.“ThisFish”.info](http://www.ThisFish.info) and enter the traceability code and find out who caught your lobster!

If you would like more information about this program, please contact Mandy Ryan Francis, mfrancis@ffaw.net at 660-3265 or Brenda Pieroway, bpieroway@ffaw.net at 632-6861.

Fracking update

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FFAW-Unifor Petroleum Industry Liaison

Over the past 18 months there has been a lot information in the public space about fracking, particularly pertaining to the west coast of the island portion of the province. As time passes, there are a few updates that are worthwhile sharing.

- Our national union, Unifor, took a position in opposition to non-conventional fracking
- The provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced a moratorium on fracking in November
- A company looking to utilize fracking as a way to get access to hydro-carbons failed to get an extension to their Exploration Licence 1097R which covers the area from the Bay of Islands to north of Daniel's Harbour

- Most recent conversations about petroleum exploration on the west coast of the island have been looking at using conventional directional drilling. This significantly decreases the cost for the companies and involves drilling from onshore locations into the offshore

FFAW-Unifor has been trying to have a presence at all sessions about petroleum exploration, but it is likely that we are not aware of every session that takes place. The objective is for us to be able to provide members with the best possible information when there are concerns raised by the membership. There was also an article on fracking in *The Union Forum, Summer 2013, Volume 10 Issue 3*.

If you have any questions or comments pertaining to the petroleum exploration or production in Newfoundland & Labrador feel free to contact the Petroleum Industry Liaison at the FFAW - Jóhan Joensen at 576-7276 or jjjoensen@ffaw.net

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DFO online licensing system

As the 2014 season approaches, fish harvesters are reminded that they are required to register for the National Online Licensing System (NOLS). Through this system, fishers can renew licences, pay licence fees, print licences and licence conditions, as well as renew vessel registrations. They can also appoint a representative to perform licensing transactions on their behalf. Note that the GC Key and the NOLS log-ins are not the same.

If you do not have internet access, public access to the Internet is available at kiosks in libraries and Internet cafes. To find out if your community (or a nearby community) has access to the Internet fishers can call 1-877-535-7307. Once you have registered on the system for the first time, you may also appoint a representative to handle licensing transactions on your behalf. This includes renewing your licence, paying the associated fees, and/or printing documents.

Licensing personnel are available to provide

licensing services that are not yet available through the licensing system and can be reached by calling 1-877-535-7307 or via e-mail to fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

For questions and answers regarding the National Online Licensing System visit <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/sdc-cps/eng-comm/faq/new-nouveau-eng.htm#c1>

For an online tutorial of the registration process for the National Online Licensing System please visit <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/sdc-cps/index-eng.htm>

Step-by-step guides are also available. To have these documents or website links emailed to you, please contact Courtney Pelley at cpelley@ffaw.net.

You may also visit your detachment office for assistance with the registration process. Buddyup licences are done through the detachment offices as well.

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FLASHBACKS



Do you recognize these people? Who are they? What are they doing? What was the name of the group they were a part of? If you know the answers please send them to cpelley@ffaw.net and your name will be entered for a prize. The winner will be announced in the next issue of **The Union Forum**.



Last issue's Flashbacks (Folk of the Sea) was correctly identified by McKenzie Babstock. Congratulations McKenzie. Thanks to everyone for your entries.



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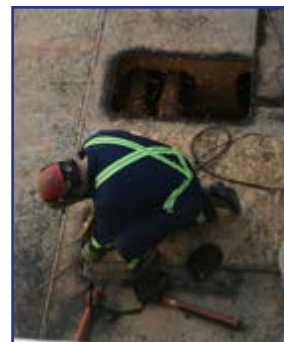
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