

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

NEWS

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Over the course of the last few weeks, I've had the pleasure of promoting a very interesting project put into action by the lobster harvesters of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands. The Québec lobster traceability project seeks to inform consumers about the provenance of the lobster they've just purchased.



This project is in line with the stated Ministry policy to increase the sales of Québec biofood products on the domestic market.

On May 4 and 5, I was on the islands in the company of Magdalen Islanders and their lobster harvesters to watch the boats take the water to begin the 137th lobster harvesting season. At the time, I had the opportunity to speak with the people representing the Islands' fish and seafood harvesters. The visit also gave me the opportunity to announce that the *Financial support program for young aspiring fishers* program would be extended for an extra year until March 31, 2013. I notice with satisfaction that this program has been truly successful since its inception, helping 87 young harvesters in maritime regions to establish their businesses in the fisheries.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

While I was on the Islands, I also proceeded to inaugurate the new Cap-sur-Mer facilities. It was the start of a new venture for the owners and workers who had been waiting five years for their new plant.

The coming months will be very busy, notably in aquaculture where work is underway to draw up a first framework agreement on aquaculture development (*cadre de développement aquacole* - CDA). The CDA is the means chosen together by Ministry and industry to foster the structured and ordered development of mariculture in Québec. In fact, in implementing the CDA, the goal is essentially to encourage the harmonious cohabitation of marine resource users and the other users of inshore areas. It is important to point out that the CDA project is a priority set out in the *Commercial aquaculture sector development plan* made public in 2010. Since then, the Ministry has worked to implement this plan in close collaboration with aquaculture industry actors. For more information about this matter, I invite you to read the article on page 4.

I can see that the fisheries and aquaculture industry in Québec is more dynamic than ever and would like to point out that this translates into figures. In fact, the

value of fish and seafood exports from Québec has risen by 8 percent so obviously marketing efforts are paying off. Also, Asian markets are expanding and our exports to American markets are stable despite that country's economic uncertainties. We need to continue efforts to diversify our products and markets. A visit to Montréal's SIAL last May confirmed to me that competition remains tough, as evidenced by the growing number of biofood products introduced year after year. So it's important for our industry to remain abreast of new trends to maintain its market access. Above all, don't hesitate to share and promote your ideas!

Now that the fine weather has arrived, I wish you all an excellent summer and once again, a wonderful fishing season!

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, responsible for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec regions and MNA for Abitibi-Est,

Pierre Corbeil

MINISTER PIERRE CORBEIL ON THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS



Photo: Marnel Leblanc, L'Île magazine

Pierre Corbeil presents a souvenir plaque to new skipper Jean-François Bénard to salute his contribution to the next generation of Islanders involved in a trade that is of capital importance to the region's economy.



Photo: Marnel Leblanc, L'Île magazine

Minister Corbeil inaugurates the Cap sur Mer plant. From left to right: Joël Arseneau, Mayor of Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Jonathan Lapierre, municipal councillor, Germain Chevarie, Magdalen Islands MNA, Pierre Corbeil, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Jacques Chevarie, Cap sur Mer president.



Photo: Marnel Leblanc, L'Île magazine

The minister joined Islanders to watch the boats leave the Grande-Entrée wharf.

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Québec

REPORT ON THE *FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ASPIRING FISHERS*

By Jean-Michel Poulin,
Analyses and Policies Directorate

Like the agrifood industry, the commercial fisheries have to deal with the challenge of an aging work force composed of fishers and assistant fishers. Today's fishers average about 50 years of age.

Announced when the *Ministerial action plan for the commercial fisheries and aquaculture industry* was implemented in 2008, the *Financial support program for young aspiring fishers* aims to encourage young people to become involved in professional activities associated with the catch sector and to acquire their first fishing enterprise.

It is important to point out that the high value of fishing-related assets is a major obstacle for young people who want to take up this activity. Considerable capital is needed to acquire the assets of a fishing enterprise (licence, boat, equipment and gear). This makes it hard to obtain the required funding but also hinders ownership.

The *Financial support program for young aspiring fishers* offers fish harvesters under the age of 40 financial aid corresponding to 20 percent of the total cost of their purchase, to a maximum of \$25,000, to help them acquire their first fishing enterprise.

Since the Program was launched, 87 young fishers have received financial aid from the Ministry. As of March 31, 2012, the aid granted totalled \$2.1 million. The Program has been most successful on the Magdalen Islands, home to nearly 70 percent of the next generation of fishers.

YEAR	NUMBER	TOTAL VALUE (\$)
2008-2009	18	450,000
2009-2010	22	537,900
2010-2011	28	659,000
2011-2012	19	439,400
TOTAL	87	2,086,300

During his visit to the Magdalen Islands last May 5, Pierre Corbeil, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food announced that the program would be extended for the 2012-2013 fiscal year to continue to support young aspiring fishers.

MAPAQ BURSARY PRESENTED TO FLORENCE BOUCHER BOISCLAIR



By Julie Boyer,
Gaspé Peninsula
Regional Directorate

Every year, via the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) Foundation, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food presents a bursary for excellence to a student enrolled in the Master's program in Maritime Resource Manage-

ment. Worth \$5,000, this year's bursary was awarded to Florence Boucher Boisclair.

A Master's student in Maritime Resource Management and holder of a B.Sc. in Biology from UQAR, Florence Boucher Boisclair has acquired excellent aptitudes along her academic path. Determined and committed to her community, she served as vice president of the Biology Students' Association in 2010 and also sat on the board of the Biology Module from 2009 to 2011. Florence Boucher Boisclair will soon be back from an internship in Tromsø, Norway, funded by a bursary she received via the *Fellowship Programme for Studies in the High North*, supported by Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This summer, she will be working in Sept-Îles in a field that fascinates her: the fisheries.

MARITIME RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: A NEW PROGRAM STARTING THIS FALL

For more than 25 years, UQAR has offered a graduate program in Maritime Resource Management. This purpose of this program is to train professionals and managers able to contribute effectively to decision making in the maritime sector. Of the program's 400 some graduates, a good number work in Québec and elsewhere for a range of

organisations active in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Last spring, the program was comprehensively revised to better address the needs of employers and the student clientele. The new program will notably provide instruction in the use of decision-making tools to help in the management of businesses active in the aquatic or aquaculture sector, in marine resource valorisation or in maritime activities. In addition, students will be able to participate in on-the-job training internships, some of which will be paid positions.

The graduates and employers who were consulted during the review operation pointed to one of the strong points of the graduate program offered in Rimouski – its multidisciplinary and multisector nature that together help build the versatility of its graduates.

Long-time partners, UQAR and MAPAQ implement an internship program in the maritime regions that has been very popular with all of its beneficiaries.

For more information about the Maritime Resource Management program, please contact Claude Rioux by phone at 418-723-1986, ext. 1564, or by e-mail at clauder_rioux@uqar.ca.



Photo: Courtesy of Florence Boucher Boisclair

The winner of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Bursary of Excellence in Maritime Resources, Florence Boucher Boisclair.

RECOGNISING AND CHOOSING QUÉBEC LOBSTER: AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION FOR CONSUMERS

By **Françoise Nicol**,
Analyses and Policies Directorate

The lobster harvesters of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands conducted a pilot traceability project in 2011 with positive results warranting the pursuit of the project for another year. Consequently, each live lobster sold this year will have a tag attached to one of its claws so consumers can see where the lobster they're buying came from. In fact, the promoters of the traceability project hope to ultimately see 100 percent of the lobster caught on the Gaspé Peninsula and 25 percent of the Magdalen Islands lobster catch identified by origin within three years – about 1,800 tonnes of lobster.

The tagging system used to identify freshly landed live lobster provides valuable commercial marketing support. For instance, fish stores and grocery chains can use it to grab the attention of consumers.



Photo: Éric Labonté, MAPAQ

Each lobster caught on the Magdalen Islands or the Gaspé Peninsula has a tag on one of its claws bearing an engraved alphanumeric code and the Aliments du Québec logo.

Each lobster harvester initially has a series of tags bearing his own, unique alphanumeric code and the name of his fishing region. The Aliments du Québec logo is printed on the back of these tags. Consumers can then check the provenance of the lobster they buy at the fish store by entering the code engraved on the tag at one of the following websites: www.homardsdesilesdelamadeleine.com or www.monhomard.ca.

Québec lobster: Always the right choice!



Photo: Éric Labonté, MAPAQ

Pierre Corbeil was at the Marché du Vieux-Port in Québec City last May 8 to salute the arrival of the first Québec lobster. He used the opportunity to demonstrate the traceability system that allows consumers to see where the lobster they purchase was caught. In the photo with Minister Corbeil, on the right, are Germain Chevarie, Magdalen Islands MNA, on the left, and Gaspé MNA Georges Mamelonet, in the middle.

QUÉBEC BUSINESSES PARTICIPATE IN BRUSSELS' EUROPEAN SEAFOOD EXPOSITION AND MONTRÉAL'S SALON INTERNATIONAL DE L'ALIMENTATION

By **Françoise Nicol**,
Analyses and Policies Directorate

The European Seafood Exposition (ESE) was held in Brussels, Belgium from April 24 to 26, 2012. This major international gathering is recognised as one of the world's largest fish and seafood trade shows.

For the seventh consecutive year, Agri-food Export Group Québec-Canada, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, organised the coordination of areas reserved for Québec businesses at the Canadian Pavilion.

Eight of Québec's processing companies were represented at ESE. Gimxport promoted the products offered by six Gaspé Peninsula processing firms that are working to develop new markets for their lobster products. In addition, the firms Crustacés des Monts and Cusimer showcased their products and activities with the assistance of Great Northern Products. It is important to point out that Sogelco International inc., a distributor specialising in the export of fish and seafood, took part in the show again this year.

Industry members participating in ESE were invited to a "round-table breakfast", supported by a financial contribution on the part of the Canadian provinces represented at ESE. The guests heard consultant Christine Montfort's presentation on the promotion of seafood products on the European market as well as the presentation by Karen Galloway, of the Seafish Industry Authority, which dealt with the challenges inherent to marketing seafood products in the United Kingdom.

SIAL Canada took place from May 9 to 11, 2012 at Montréal's Palais des Congrès. Participation in the trade show continues to grow. More than 670 exhibitors from 45 countries took advantage of the event to present their products to the some 13,000 visitors who crossed the threshold of what has become the premier North American venue for food and drink professionals.

Québec's seafood industry was represented by the Purmer group and Unipêche M.D.M. These companies presented their wares at the Aliments du Québec Pavilion, where the Québec companies had their stands. In addition, the Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture General Directorate took the opportunity of its presence at SIAL to promote its service offer; the Directorate was present at the stand organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food where this year's theme was *Donner le goût du Québec*.

The SIAL Canada program featured several presentations, including ones dealing with packaging and with major international and North American food trends.



Photo: Éric Labonté, MAPAQ

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food pavilion at Montréal's Salon international de l'alimentation.

OVERVIEW OF AQUATIC PRODUCT EXPORTS IN 2011

By Jean-Michel Poulin,
Analyses and Policies Directorate

Statistics Canada has published its latest data on international trade, as it does every year. In Canada, fish and seafood exports grew by just over 4.8 percent compared to last year, with a value of nearly \$4.2 billion in 2011. It is important to point out that the export statistics cannot be used to qualify interprovincial trade.

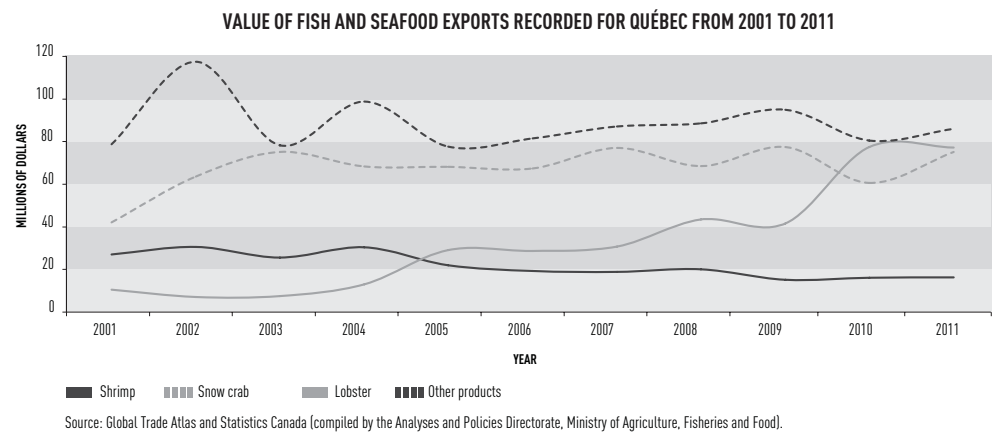
At the end of 2011, the value of Québec exports reached \$258.1 million, an increase of 8.3 percent over 2010. In contrast, the volume of exported products fell by 4.2 percent to 24,900 tonnes compared to the previous year. This variation is due to higher prices on export markets. The United States continues to be Québec's main export market by far since a little over 80 percent of our fish and seafood were exported to that country. It is followed by China (1.9%, including Hong Kong), Japan (1.4%), Italy (1.4%), Australia (1.4%) and Norway (1.1%). Total Québec exports to the European Union were worth \$13.9 million, a drop of 24.5 percent from 2010. This situation is partially due to the financial difficulties in Europe in 2011. A growing trend of exports to Asia, notably to China, was also evident.

LOBSTER

The value of lobster exports (\$78.0 million) remained relatively stable in 2011. However, the volumes exported increased by nearly 10 percent – almost 3,900 tonnes – due to a greater volume of processed products (as opposed to live lobster) being exported. The main products shipped abroad were frozen shell-on lobster (\$53 million) as well as cooked and frozen lobster (\$18.5 million). Live lobster exports also occupied a not-insignificant place, with a value of \$4.8 million. Most lobster exports (97%) were sold in the United States.

SNOW CRAB

The value of snow crab exports jumped by 24 percent to \$75.9 million spurred by a major increase in market prices. However, the volume exported fell by nearly 13 percent to 6,000 tonnes. Snow crab is primarily exported in cooked and frozen sections or as frozen whole crab. The main market is still the United States, the destination for 96 percent of snow crab exports from Québec.



NORTHERN SHRIMP

As for the value of shrimp exports, it remained stable at \$17.5 million in 2011. In contrast, the volume exported fell by just over 2,050 tonnes, and totalled nearly 1,770 tonnes. Cooked, shelled and frozen shrimp as well as shrimp preparations were the main products exported, and the largest export markets were the United States (66%), Norway (16%) and Sweden (11%).

PROSPECTS FOR 2012

In 2012, the way exports evolve will depend in part on the scope of the economic recovery. Despite the beginnings of a recovery in some countries, notably the United States, there are still many concerns about jobs and the levels of public and private debt. For instance, markets are still jittery about the debt crisis in Europe.

However, food demand in emerging countries will continue to grow, notably in Asia, which will help maintain upward pressure on food prices. We will also have to keep a close eye on exchange rates between the Canadian dollar and the main foreign currencies, especially the American dollar, as well as on fluctuations in energy and raw material prices, parameters that could have an impact on the competitive capacity of companies.

WORK UNDERWAY ON FRAMEWORK FOR AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

By Meggie Desnoyers
and Pascale Lafrance,
Aquaculture and Sustainable
Development Directorate

BACKGROUND

The 2010-2013 Sector development plan for commercial aquaculture was made public in Newport on November 19, 2010. This plan, which brings together Québec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec – MAPAQ) and the main actors in Québec's aquaculture network, aims to establish commercial aquaculture as a major component of sustainable development in Québec. It also addresses the expectations and concerns expressed by aquaculturists at the Commercial Aquaculture Forum in October 2008. This

is the context that led to the MAPAQ commitment to draw up a framework for aquaculture development (*cadre de développement aquacole* – CDA) for areas considered a priority for Québec mariculture. Implementation of the CDA should support mariculture development in Québec in a structured and orderly manner, and foster the harmonious cohabitation of marine resource users and other users of the coastal environment.

WHAT IS AN AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK?

As proposed by MAPAQ, the CDA has two main components. Thus, the "marine component" refers to a mariculture area that is delimited to suit the needs of mariculture, the activities of existing users and the environmental character-

istics of the site itself. The "land component" refers to the establishment of a land-based mariculture park that could include, for instance, areas that are shared by mariculturists or related wharf-side services. Three sites were studied for the first CDA: Gaspé Bay (Gaspé Peninsula), Cascapédia and Tracadigache bays (Gaspé Peninsula) and the Magdalen Islands.

LOCATION OF THE FIRST CDA

Since fall 2010, numerous partners and stakeholders with an interest in the project have been consulted to identify their needs and concerns. By compiling the information gathered during this consultation, the project team was able to draw up a realistic portrait of mariculture in Québec and determine the criteria that would serve to decide where a first CDA is to be established. The Magdalen

Islands have been designated as the sector with the greatest potential for successful implementation of the first CDA.

The project is currently underway on the Islands, with the team proceeding to delimit the mariculture area that will make up the CDA. Since the latter is being established with an eye to the sustainable development of mariculture, the plan is to have the oceanographic conditions of the selected area characterised and to monitor the biological indicators to determine the quality of rearing environments. Additional meetings will have to be held to present the proposed delimitation of the mariculture area and to consult those involved in making the CDA project on the Magdalen Islands a reality.