



AFS-Fish Health Section Business Meeting
MacDonald Ballroom, PEI Convention Centre, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada

Wednesday September 5, 2018
5:16 – 6:12 pm

Meeting opened at 5:16pm.
A quorum was declared.

Members attending

Esteban Soto, Marilyn, Ben LaFrentz, Thomas Loch, Sascha Hallett, Kevin Snekvik, Janet Warg, William Keleher, Cova Arias, Amy Long, John Hawke, Danielle Nelson, Nicolas Phelps, Rod Getchell, Dave Groman, Myron Kebus, David Scarfe, Jerri Bartholomew, Charlie Giesecker, Anna Marie Forest, Linda Rhodes.

2019 FHS national meeting

Marilyn Blair: The 2019 Section national meeting will be held in conjunction with the Western Fish Disease Workshop on June 18-20 in Ogden UT. Wade Cavender is leading the organizational efforts.

Financial

Esteban Soto: The financial report is included with the committee reports submitted to the executive committee. The Section is in good financial shape, showing gains for recent meetings.

Linda Rhodes: Requested authority to issue \$60 for an expense for the Western Fish Disease Workshop (WFDW) that did not have a receipt. The joint WFDW / AADAP workshop had an ~\$3,000 surplus, so this expense would come from that surplus. Linda made the motion, Esteban seconded, motion was approved

Esteban: Dues have not changed in at least 5 years. A modest increase would help cover some routine business expenses, such as the annual cost of the website which has increased 10-fold. Esteban moved that regular membership dues rise from \$15 to \$20 & student/young professional dues rise from \$7 to \$10. Linda seconded & the motion passed.

Esteban: AFS HQ has asked other sections to eliminate the affiliate membership position. But we won't do anything about it until asked by HQ.

Nominating & Balloting Committee

Esteban: Carolyn Richards did an excellent job in recruiting positions for officer elections. Thomas Loch was elected vice president.

Professional standards committee

Esteban: Due to Tom's election, he must step out of this committee, so Mark Lawrence will replace Tom. Other committee members are Wes Baumgartner & Al Camus. Why is Joe Marcino always on the committee? If he is serving as secretary, rather than rotating through the committee, he should be a nonvoting member.

ISAAH8 meeting

Dave Groman: ISAAH8 is the 3rd most-attending ISAAH meeting, with ~425 registrations. As such, the meeting may have outgrown being organized by a single institution. We may need to hire a professional organizer or request assistance from AFS.

Policy & Position Committee

Esteban: It has been difficult to fill this committee, & it has not been active in recent years. No one elected to the committee in 2017, & Esteban asked David Scarfe & Randy McMillan to serve by appointment, & both agreed. Randy also agreed to serve as chair. In 2018, Randy asked to be removed, & none of the members wanted to be chair. Because the vice president & president-elect often do not have many tasks, Esteban suggested that those 2 positions could serve on this committee. One topic of possible interest to FHS is animal welfare. Esteban moved that the president-elect & vice president be added to the Policy & Position Committee, with the president-elect serving as chair. Linda seconded. David Scarfe said it would be beneficial to the incoming presidents. The motion passed.

Technical Standards Committee

See attached statement for an evaluation of the Inspection by Kevin Snekvik & Bill Keleher.

Kevin Snekvik: The statement describes the 3 components of the Blue Book, with a focused concern about the Inspection Manual Section. The Inspection Manual Section is becoming less relevant to the issues & concerns of FHS for multiple reasons. For example, many species not represented such as marine finfish, shellfish, species from other parts of the world. There is possible legal liability because the manual is being used by many states for policy decisions. The recommendation is to assemble an ad hoc committee to review & evaluate Inspection Manual Section to inform the executive committee.

Esteban: The current Technical Standards Committee is composed of several past chairs, so a group with good historical & practical knowledge. What we need to decide is whether to form an ad hoc committee.

Marilyn: The Policy & Position Committee could have a role in formulating an ad hoc committee.

Esteban: Modified Kevin's motion: The Policy & Position Committee will create an ad hoc committee to study changes to the Inspection Manual Section (chapter 2) of the Blue Book. David Scarfe seconded the motion.

Discussion followed about whether the Policy & Position Committee is appropriate to lead the effort. Also, extensive discussion about the impact on states if this section is removed, with examples about the effects on the state of Utah by Anna Marie Forest.

The motion passed.

General comments

Tom Loch is surprised there isn't better attendance at the Business meeting, & wondered whether it should be better advertised.

Meeting adjourned 6:12 pm.

Submitted,
/s/ Linda Rhodes
FHS Secretary-Treasurer

FINAL

A Case for Evaluating the USFWS/AFS-FHS Fish Health Inspection Manual

Introduction – The AFS-FHS Blue Book is divided into three sections, 1) the Diagnostic Procedures for Finfish and Shellfish Pathogens, 2) the USFWS/ AFS-FHS Standard Procedures for Aquatic Animal Health Inspections, and 3) the QA/QC Model for Fish Health Labs. For the USFWS/ AFS-FHS Standard Procedures for Aquatic Animal Health Inspections (Blue Book Inspection Manual) is overseen by the Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee with input regarding specific tests from the Technical Standards Committee. In the United States, aquaculture production is poised for significant growth including major land-based facilities planned in a number of states including Maine, Florida and Wisconsin and the potential development of off-shore aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico and California. A key component of any aquaculture operation is the ability to obtain seed stock to meet anticipated production goals and move their product to markets. The ability to move seed stock and end products to market often requires movement across state and international boundaries. In most cases state regulations reference the American Fisheries Society – Fish Health Section (FHS) Blue Book Inspection Manual and to a lesser extent the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals (Aquatic Manual). Each of these reference documents provides standardized laboratory testing and inspection protocols.

The Issues – Since its publication, the Blue Book Inspection Manual has become the de facto authority when it comes to aquatic animal health inspections in the United States and to a limited extent trading partners. Originally established as a diagnostic manual, in 2003 the 4th Edition of the Blue Book underwent a major revision to include the joint USFWS/ AFS-FHS Inspection Manual. Since many states reference the Blue Book Inspection Manual in statute, it has had the effect of law in many states. Without intervention, the Blue Book Inspection Manual will continue to become less relevant in meeting emerging needs of the US aquaculture industry and resource agencies. There are multiple concerns with the manual including:

1. Limited aquaculture industry representation on the Handbook Revision and Oversight Committee
2. Unbalanced representation on the Inspection Manual Revision and Oversight Committee
3. Primary focus on salmonid pathogens
4. Lack of mollusk and crustacean pathogens
5. Does not address emerging transboundary pathogens that pose a risk to North America
6. The possible liability risk to the Fish Health Section since the manual is referenced in state law

Opportunity – There is an opportunity for the inspection manual to better protect aquaculture production and aquatic natural resources by providing a standard for aquatic animal health which can be referenced by federal and state regulators.

Next Steps – We recommend that the AFS-FHS President, in consultation with the AFS-FHS Executive Committee, establish an ad hoc committee to evaluate and recommend the future role and needed changes to the Blue Book Inspection Manual.

Kevin Snekvik
Bill Keleher