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Lobster Institute

Fall 2009

The Lobster Bulletin, Fall 2009

Lobster Institute, University of Maine

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Fall 2009

“News, research updates, and information on lobsters and the lobster industry.”

Published by the Lobster Institute

“Protecting and conserving the lobster resource, and enhancing lobstering as an industry...and a way of life.”

Lobster Council of Canada Has Great Potential

NOTE: The following is an op-ed piece by Provincial Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Sterling Belliveau.

Establishing the Lobster Council of Canada gives us an exciting opportunity to improve and strengthen the lobster sector in Nova Scotia, and all the Atlantic provinces.

The industry employs about 30,000 people in Atlantic Canada and is worth more than \$1 billion in exports. In Nova Scotia, it generates substantial economic activity and is worth \$400 million each year in export value to our province. Nova Scotia is the leading lobster fishing province in Atlantic Canada. As provincial minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, I am pleased that the council will be based in Nova Scotia.

The lobster industry is complex and intimately interconnected in many ways. Lobster has many markets and products and all players affect each other in various ways. In the past year, the industry felt the effects of low market prices, negative currency exchange rates, high operating costs, demands for a sustainable approach to fishing and management and increased health and safety measures.

It is obvious that in these times and conditions, a coordinated and collaborative approach is critical for everyone in the lobster sector. The Lobster Council of Canada is well placed to achieve this by including all segments of the industry, from harvesters, processors, buyers and union representatives to First Nations and input from the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

We must move forward with a united effort, if we are to strengthen the image of our lobster and make it available as a top-quality product sold in high-end markets throughout the world.

The council will receive input and advice from a large cross-section of the industry, and will be guided by a board of directors and professionally supported by an executive director and office staff. It can build trust and help everyone involved strive for a common goal to build and strengthen their industry. **— cont on page 4**

Lobster Institute Events of Interest

LOBSTER ACADEMY: The Lobster Institute participated in the inaugural Lobster Academy, hosted by East Coast Seafood/Paturel October 15-17, 2009 in St. Andrews and Deer Island, New Brunswick. Institute Executive Director Dr. Bob Bayer served as “academic dean” and Cathy Billings as one of the “faculty”. A select group of international buyers from the U.S., Canada, France, Italy and elsewhere came to have hands-on experience in the lobster industry, and to receive an overview of lobster biology, culture, marketing, and other topics from a panel of experts. Attendees had a chance to tour the processing facility on Deer Island, and take part in sorting, picking, and packing on the processing line. Owner of East Coast Seafood/Paturel, Michael Tourkistas, conceived of the concept of Lobster Academy to increase the transparency between his company and its customers. He hopes to devote more resources to educational programming in the future, and to continue and expand Lobster Academy.

LOBSTER INSTITUTE’S HOLIDAY LOBSTER & WINE FEAST: The Lobster Institute honored the 2009 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year, MacKenzie

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The **Lobster Bulletin**
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2010 CANADIAN/U.S.



LOBSTERMEN'S TOWN MEETING



Hosted by the

LOBSTER INSTITUTE

**This year's focus is: Where do we go from here?
Discussing steps to secure the economic future of the lobster industry.**

- > Trade & Tariff Issues
- > Certification
- > Role of Co-ops
- > Value-added products
- > Pricing
- > Traceability

**Friday – March 26, 9:00 - 4:00
&
Saturday – March 27, 9:00 - 11:30**

Regency Hotel Portland, Maine

\$25.00 (U.S.) Meeting Registration Fee

(a nominal fee to help cover the cost of breaks and lunch)

Pre-registration requested

**Credit card may be used for pre-payment. Lunch provided only to those who pre-register.
For those who don't pre-register, cash payment of \$15.00 U.S. accepted at the door.
(covers breaks only)**

**A limited number of rooms are available at the Regency with special rates starting at \$119.00.
Parking fee waived. Reserve rooms early.**

Call the Regency at 1-800-727-3436- ask for reservations and mention Lobstermen's Town Meeting.

**Call the Lobster Institute at 207-581-1443 or visit our website at
www.lobsterinstitute.org for registration form**

***Please remember the Lobster Institute in your
holiday and year-end giving. We rely on friends like
our Lobster Bulletin readers to help keep the
Institute's doors open and phones ringing.***



***You can give by calling 207-581-1443 or online via
<http://www.lobsterinstitute.org/index.php?page=41>***



**Check out the Lobster Institute website at
www.lobsterinstitute.org,
providing the definitive site for lobster
information with nearly 200 links.**





Contact us at 207-581-2751 if you would like to sponsor our "Research Report" and see your logo here!

RESEARCH REPORT

Readers may contact the Lobster Institute for more detailed information on any of these projects.

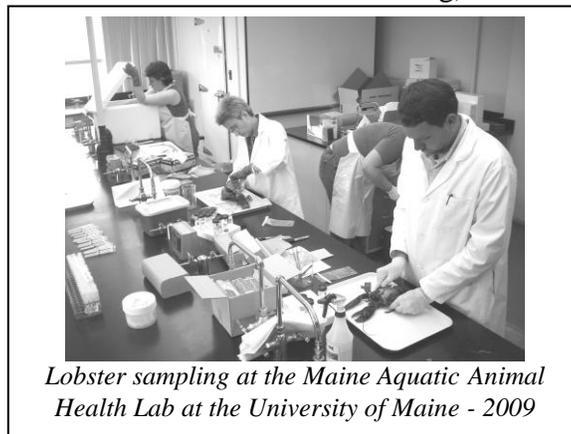
- **Lobster Health Coalition Makes Progress on Baseline Health Data** – The Lobster Institute was able to make the Lobster Health Coalition a reality in 2009 thanks to a modest federal appropriation of \$178,000 received through NOAA. The objectives are "To form a Lobster Health Coalition with membership to include scientists and industry representatives from throughout the lobster fishing regions of the Northeast U.S. and Atlantic Canada. The Coalition will work to collect baseline lobster health data, and encourage a logical progression of research to address lobster health issues – bringing together and building upon work already done or in progress, thus avoiding duplication and proceeding as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Deborah Bouchard, manager of the Maine Aquatic Animal Health Lab at the University of Maine and an experienced microbiologist, has been tapped as the director of the Lobster Health Coalition. "A successful Coalition will be instrumental in helping us learn about current and rapidly emerging diseases. Knowing what they are and how they spread may provide industry management tools to lessen the impact, thus helping secure the future viability of the lobster fishery," said Bouchard. "The intent is to link scientists involved with lobster health research with one another, and with the industry. The Coalition will serve as a communications channel to keep each other up-to-date on one another's research – to help build collaborative efforts and share resources."

In addition to forging the Coalition, a small amount of research funding was made available to obtain baseline data on the microbial health of lobsters throughout the region. The following research experts lent their talents to this project: Together with Bouchard, Dr. Anne Lichtenwalner, Director of the Maine Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory; Dr. Mark Fast of Stony Brook University – representing the Long Island Sound area; Dr. Roxanna Smolowitz – representing the Massachusetts area; and Dr. Kathleen Castro of the University of Rhode Island Sea Grant.

During the summer months, a regional lobster pathogen survey was conducted. Over 900 lobsters were sampled from all geographic regions represented. An update on the survey

will be presented at the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association Annual Weekend, January 29-30 (for registration information go to <http://www.lobstermen.com>) and at the Maine Fishermen's Forum, March 4-6 (for registration see www.maine fishermen forum.org)



Lobster sampling at the Maine Aquatic Animal Health Lab at the University of Maine - 2009

- **LFA 33/34 Lobster Moulting Timing & Quality Monitoring Project Update** -- Lobster harvesters, buyers, dealers, processors, and scientists have been participating in developing a collaborative research program designed to better document and understand the annual changes in moulting-timing and lobster quality in LFAs 33/34 in Southwest Nova Scotia. The AVC Lobster Science Centre has been coordinating this project. Monitoring of lobster blood protein levels, shell hardness and moulting stage has now been ongoing since the summer 2004 with pre-season, during and post-season sampling. The monitoring currently includes 15 areas in LFAs 33/34 with more than 81,500 lobsters sampled to date. The information collected for this project is available on the Internet and allows people to look at lobster sex, size, blood protein, moulting stage and shell hardness by sampling location or dates. Based on 2009 pre-season sampling, the monitoring project predicted "lobsters landed at the start of the season in Southwest Nova Scotia could be of a lower quality compared to what was seen over the last couple of years. While there could be less soft-shell lobsters at the start of the season this year compared to last year, mean blood protein levels could be lower than in previous years." The data can be accessed at <http://www.lobsterscience.ca/moult>. ☞



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Fisheries On-Line Forum Launched

Nova Scotia's Coastal Communities Network (CCN) has launched an on-line forum. CCN has been following the lobster crisis in the Maritimes for months and feels that it is time to put a communication plan into action.

"The problem is that people don't have the opportunity to talk to each other and find common ground," says CCN Chair Jackie Race, adding, "We sought and received funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries to start an on-line forum as a way to get dialogue going. Over the last 16 years, CCN has played an important role in helping fishing organizations work together to look for solutions. In today's world, the funding is just not there for face-to-face meetings, so we looked toward the next best thing."

Talk will range from building co-ops to government policies, from sustainable fisheries to working together and looking for solutions. The Coastal Communities Network invites all involved in the fishery and people in their communities to join them on their blog to discuss the future of the inshore fishery at www.coastalcommunities.ns.ca For more information call Ishbel Munro at (902)752-9529, or email coastalnet@ns.sympatico.ca ☘

Lobster Council of Canada

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To achieve its substantial potential, the council will focus on critical issues, objectives and activities. Because of the size and importance of the industry, the challenges it faces, and the potential for the sector, government concluded that start-up funding was a worthy investment. Nova Scotia has committed \$100,000 to the council over the next two years. ☘

Please note that editorial commentary does not necessarily reflect the views of the Lobster Institute.
We invite your feedback.

Lobster Institute Events

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Arrington; and his mother, Margaret McLellan, who just happens to be the 2008 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year, at a Holiday Lobster and Wine Feast on December 3. This special dinner featured the award winning lobster dishes created by Margaret and Mac, and prepared by University of Maine Catering Services. Each chef shared with the audience the inspiration behind their recipes, and some tips about cooking with lobster. Delicious seafood appetizers were donated by Fishery Products/Highliner Foods, and lobster was donated by the Maine Import/Export Lobster Dealers Association.

Big Claw wine was also introduced at the event. This white wine was specifically designed to pair with lobster and was just released this year. A portion of the sales from Big Claw's inaugural release were donated to the Lobster Institute to support its work in sustaining the lobster resource and lobstering communities. Steve Melchiskey and Tim Wissemann, creators of Big Claw, were on hand to present a check for \$2,500 to Lobster Institute Executive Director, Dr. Bob Bayer. Melchiskey noted that they, "hope to add another zero to the end of that check next year."

The evening was capped off with a musical finale by Renaissance, the University of Maine's premier all-female a capella singing group. ☘

2008 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year, Margaret McLellan (l) and her son Mackenzie Arrington (r), 2009 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year.

