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Spring 2010

The Lobster Bulletin, Spring 2010

Lobster Institute, University of Maine

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Repository Citation

Lobster Institute, University of Maine, "The Lobster Bulletin, Spring 2010" (2010). *Lobster Bulletin*. 20. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/lobster_bulletin/20

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Spring 2010

“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.”

Record Turnout at the Lobster Institute’s 2010 Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen’s Town Meeting

Attendance was at an all-time high as over 120 lobstermen and industry members from both Canada and the United States gathered at the Regency Hotel in Portland, Maine on March 26 & 27 for the Lobster Institute’s seventh annual Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen’s Town Meeting. The day and a half Town Meeting is designed as an industry-wide gathering of lobstermen, lobster dealers and distributors, scientists and other interested parties coming together to discuss topics of direct concern to the fishery and the lobster industry.

Following up on the 2008 and 2009 Town Meetings, which focused on the economic situations influencing the lobster industry, the 2010 Town Meeting focused on the question, “Where do we go from here?” Discussion centered on ways to secure the economic viability of the lobster industry moving into the future.

On Friday, Michael Gardner of Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists gave a keynote presentation; building upon the landmark study his firm conducted in 2006 entitled “Benchmark Study on Canadian Lobster” – a comparative analysis of the Canadian and Maine lobster industries. Several other presentations were scattered throughout the day, with true town meeting-style discussion following each. Presenters included:

- Deb Neuman from Target Technology Center in Orono, Maine – discussing value-added products
 - Geoff Irvine of the Lobster Council of Canada, and Dane Somers of the Maine Lobster Promotion Council – discussing market trends
 - Bernie Feeny, President of the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association – discussing “marketing your own product”
 - Michael Tourkistas from East Coast Seafood/Paturel International and Ed McFarland from Ed’s Lobster Bar in New York City – discussing pricing from boat to plate
 - Yvette Jamison from the Transportation Security Administration discussing Certified Cargo Screening
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Lobster Institute Begins Strategic Planning Process

The Lobster Institute’s will be working throughout 2010 to update its Strategic Plan to guide the Institute’s activities through 2015. In order to make the Institute most effective in helping to sustain the lobster resource and vital lobstering communities, the Institute will be seeking input from fishermen and others throughout the process.

Dr. Sue Estler is assisting the Institute’s Board of Advisors in the planning effort. Dr. Estler is an associate professor emerita of higher education at the University of Maine where she served eleven years as Director of Equal Opportunity and as the Title IX Coordinator. She has spearheaded strategic planning for a number of non-profit organizations. This summer, the Institute will be gather information on priorities from fishermen and those in the lobster industry. All are invited and encouraged to complete a survey on priorities that will be available in various lobstermen’s association newsletters and the *Summer 2010 Lobster Bulletin*. The survey is also currently on the Lobster Institute’s Web site www.lobsterinstitute.org and can be printed and mailed to the Institute. ☘

The **Lobster Bulletin**
published by the



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A unit of the Maine Agricultural & Forest Experiment Station



A member of the University of Maine System

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Made possible through an endowed gift by Helene & Frank Crohn.

2010 Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen's Town Meeting

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Discussions on marketing lobsters effectively consumed a great deal of the discussion. A call for exploring a joint marketing effort between the U.S. and Canada was raised, as it had been at the 2008 and 2009 Town Meetings.

The following morning, talk turned to sustainability certification. With representatives from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and the New England Aquarium at the meeting, the discussions were informative and fruitful. During the course of discussion, all agreed that being able to claim that the lobster fishery is sustainable would be a valuable and almost necessary marketing tool. How to substantiate that claim and label the product triggered considerably more debate. The push for third-party certification seemed to be taking hold, however, caution was urged by several to ensure that all possibilities for such certification be explored before any decisions or commitments are made.

Most agreed that at a minimum, the lobster fishery should “tell its own story” -- promoting all of the conservation measures and fishing regulations, historically and currently, which have kept the commercial lobster fishery vital for nearly 150 years. It was noted that these regulations, by design, are based on the “best available science”, and references for pertinent scientific studies could be cited as part of the self-promotion efforts. [As a follow up action to this discussion, the Lobster Institute has posted a special section, “Sustainable Lobster Fishing”, on its Web site.]

As the event concluded, attendees were asked to list one or two key action items they felt were of highest priorities that emerged as a result of the discussions throughout the Town Meeting. Most noted items included:

- Increase and find a way to fund marketing efforts - particularly joint marketing
- Price adjusting
- Educate the general public about sustainability practices and healthful qualities of lobster
- Explore all certification possibilities

As always, the Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen's Town Meeting was recorded, and the Lobster Institute will make a CD or written reports available to interested parties. In addition, a summary report and full

CORRECTION CORNER:

Please note that Frank & Carolyn Wills were inadvertently not listed in the recognition of 2009 Friends of the Lobster Institute, published in the Winter 2010 *Lobster Bulletin*. The Wills should have been listed as Shoal Society level donors. The Lobster Institute thanks them for their support.

transcript will be made available on the Lobster Institute's Web site at www.lobsterinstitute.org as soon as they are compiled. For more information, people can contact Deb Seekins at 207-581-1443 or deb.seekins@maine.edu

Darden Restaurants and Fisheries Products International/Highliner Foods were both recognized at the meeting for their continuous sponsorship of the Lobster Institute's Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen's Town Meeting every year since its introduction in 2004. Other sponsors recognized included: Downeast Lobstermen's Association; East Coast/Paturel, Inc.; Maine Import/Export Lobster Dealers Association; Riverdale Mills; and Ruby Tuesday Restaurants. ¶

Certified Cargo Screening Program

The letter below is sent on behalf of Marc Rossi, Branch Chief, Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

Dear Stakeholders:

As you may be aware, the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 mandates that all cargo transported on a passenger aircraft be screened at 100% beginning in August 2010. In preparation for 100% by August 1st, the TSA is requiring passenger air carriers to attain 75% by May 1st. We are writing to ensure that you are aware of the potential impact on your members' operations and that they have assessed all options for complying to reduce risks. To assist industry in achieving the 100% requirement, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) established the Certified Cargo Screening Program (CCSP), which enables shippers to pre-screen cargo, avoiding the risk of time delays due to screening, or the risk of screening being performed in a non-temperature controlled environment. Most perishable product shippers who have joined the CCSP to date have been able to readily incorporate physical search into their packing/shipping operation at minimal cost.

We recognize that most of your members work with freight forwarders specializing in cold chain transport,

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**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.

- ❖ **Hard Plastics Decompose in Oceans, Releasing Endocrine Disruptor BPA** – (Excerpts from *ScienceDaily* March 24, 2010. Retrieved May 6, 2010, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100323184607.htm>) Scientists have reported widespread global contamination of sea sand and sea water with the endocrine disruptor bisphenol A (BPA) and said that the BPA probably originated from a surprising source: Hard plastic trash discarded in the oceans and the epoxy plastic paint used to seal the hulls of ships.

"We were quite surprised to find that polycarbonate plastic biodegrades in the environment," said Katsuhiko Saido, Ph.D. He reported on the discovery March 23 at the 239th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society, being held in San Francisco.

Saido and Hideto Sato, and colleagues are with Nihon University, Chiba, Japan. "Polycarbonates are very hard plastics, so hard they are used to make screwdriver handles, shatter-proof eyeglass lenses, and other very durable products. This finding challenges the wide public belief that hard plastics remain unchanged in the environment for decades or centuries. Biodegradation, of course, releases BPA to the environment."

The team analyzed sand and seawater from more than 200 sites in 20 countries, mainly in Southeast Asia and North America. All contained what Saido described as a "significant" amount of BPA, ranging from 0.01 parts per million (ppm) to 50 ppm. They concluded that polycarbonates and epoxy resin coatings and paints were the main source.

In the new report, Saido's group now has added hard plastics and hard epoxy resins -- to the plastics that decompose under conditions commonly found in the oceans. Millions of gallons of epoxy resins are used each year to seal the hulls of ships, protecting them from rust and fouling with barnacles and other deposits.

"When epoxy resin breaks down, it releases BPA, a typical endocrine disruptor," Saido explained. "This new finding clearly demonstrates the instability of epoxy, and shows that BPA emissions from epoxy do reach the ocean. Recent studies have shown that molluscs, crustaceans and amphibians could be affected by BPA, even in low concentrations."

Each year as much as 150,000 tons of plastic

debris wash up on the shores of Japan alone, Saido said. Plastics are, in fact, the main source of garbage in marine debris, according to Saito.

- ❖ **Fishing industry worried about possible threats of seismic testing on lucrative Georges Bank fishing grounds** – According to a recent press release from the Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council of Ontario, Canada, the most recent published report on the effects of seismic testing, used for oil and gas exploration, does not bode well for the effects on ground fish or lobsters. The study just released by the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research showed that "the sound waves from the seismic guns put the fish under some stress..." and appeared to cause fish to retreat from the seismic gun blasts. Both the drop in catches for longline fishers and catches being "chased" into nets were considered negative consequences of the seismic blasting.

The most recent report by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the effects of seismic testing on lobster shows that "cumulative" and "sub-lethal" effects were present and could be just as important as short term exposure to louder noises. "Toxic stresses" and physiological and neurological disturbances were cited, some of which appear to affect feeding and egg-laying. That other species might be subject to the same results was also raised. Recent studies on whales also point to disturbing "cumulative" effects of seismic testing. Professor Linda Weigart of Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia is a noted authority on whales and noise pollution. "There is no reason to believe that damage done to whales and lobsters by seismic testing would not harm groundfish also," Dr. Weigart said.

The U.S. portion of Georges Bank has been under a defacto oil and gas moratorium for decades and the current moratorium on the Canadian portion is being reconsidered now, with a decision on next steps due by June 30, 2010.

Fishermen operating in waters near exploration for oil and gas off the coast of Newfoundland have seen disturbances in cod schools during periods when seismic testing was occurring nearby. Captain Ernest Symes and notes that "a standard trawl tow of up to 30,000 pounds was consistently reduced

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Possible threats from seismic testing - cont. from page 3

to less than 500 pounds in the wake of a seismic run.”

Adding to the possible threat from seismic testing is the recent revelation that the current technology for exploration and production of offshore oil and gas is not as safe as many have been alleging – as evidenced by the recent oil spill from the West Atlas Montara exploration platform off the coast of Australia, and the ongoing flow of oil from BP’s MC252 well in the Gulf of Mexico.

Georges Bank is one of the most productive marine environments and fishing grounds between Cape Cod and Labrador. The Canadian portion of approximately one-sixth of the bank has generated \$2 billion over the last decade and it is estimated that catches from the U.S. portion may exceed \$8 billion in that time period.

For more information on this issue, contact Bruce Chapman, Executive Director of the Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council at 613-692-8249, or bchapman@sympatico.ca. ❀

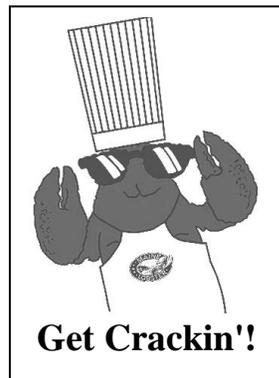
Cargo Screening - cont from page 2

and many of those forwarders are equipped and have become certified to screen perishables. We strongly encourage you to have your members contact their forwarders as soon as possible to determine the impact of both the 75% and 100% screening requirements on their products this year. TSA will continue to assist airlines in screening whenever possible with canine teams. However, since the 75% and 100% levels impact all cities equally, TSA will be unable to redeploy the teams as we did through much of the summer perishable season last year. We encourage you and your members to visit our web site at www.tsa.gov/ccsp for more information, or you may contact us directly at CCSP@dhs.gov. We look forward to helping navigate

this complex issue in any way possible. Thank you.

*Marc Rossi, Transportation Security Administration
Certified Cargo Screening Program Branch Chief*

Maine Lobster Promotion Council soliciting recipes for the 2010 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year Competition



The prestigious title is up for grabs! Chefs and culinary professionals are invited to submit a Lobster Harvest recipe to the Maine Lobster Promotion Council. Three finalists will be chosen to compete in a cook-off at Harvest on the Harbor - Maine's premier wine and food event. An audience of 200 lobster enthusiasts, journalists, and lobster industry representatives will determine the People's Choice Grand Prize winner. Extended deadline for recipe submission: June 30, 2010. To Submit: e-mail recipe(s), your name, and contact info to: info@lobsterfrommaine.com ❀

HELP US GO GREEN!

If you would prefer to receive your copy of the *Lobster Bulletin* via email, please let us know.

Email Deb Seekins at deb.seekins@maine.edu

This will not only cut down on paper, it will save the Lobster Institute the cost of printing and mailing. It's a win, win!