

Minutes

A meeting of the ISSC Executive Board was held virtually.

I. Attendance

Board Members Present

Michael Bott	Chair
Shannon Jenkins	Vice Chair
Keith Skiles	Executive Director
Eric Hickey	Region 1 Regulatory
Lori Howell	Region 1 Industry
Debra Barnes	Region 2 Regulatory
Steve Fleetwood	Region 2 Industry
Danielle Schools	Region 3 Regulatory
Gary Hill	Region 3 Industry
Portia Sapp	Region 4 Regulatory
Barry Hurt	Region 4 Industry
Steve Pollack	Region 5 Industry
Todd Phillips	Region 6 Regulatory
Miranda Ries	Region 6 Industry (alternate)
Bruce Flippens	Non-Producing
Blake Millett	Non-Producing
Jonathan Gerhardt	Non-Producing
Melissa Abbott	FDA
Laurie Farmer	FDA/ORA
Laurice Churchill	NOAA
Mike Hughes	CDC
Bill Kramer	EPA
David Fyfe	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Kohl Kanwit	Past Chair
AJ Erskine	VMC Chair
Keith Jackson	Retail Advisory
Kathy Brohawn	Lab Chair

Board Members Absent

Erik Broussard

Region 5 Regulatory

II. Minutes

Motion made to accept previous two draft minutes. Motion seconded.

Change proposed to language in the October 19th minutes to now read “FDA is developing a SOP for illness outbreak response that will address stakeholder concerns for consumer advisories.”

Motion made to adopt meeting minutes as amended. Motion seconded and carried by a voice vote.

III. Introductory Comments

FDA

CFSAN Staffing

The Microbiological Hazards Science branch of the Division of Seafood and Science Technology is currently operating with an acting branch chief after the of Dr. Jessica Jones left to become the chief of the Shellfish and Aquaculture Policy Branch.

The Chemical Hazards Science Branch chief position was recently filled by Dr. Kirk Gaston.

Steve Bloodgood was elected the permanent director of the Division of Seafood Safety in 2023.

International

In 2023 the FDA completed an evaluation of all of South Korea’s shellfish sanitation program and renewed their memorandum of understanding with South Korea.

The FDA's MOU with Mexico was also renewed in December of 2023.

FDA is in the planning stages of conducting an evaluation in Canada later this year.

Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and the UAE have also expressed interest in exported shellfish to the USA

Maine, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have submitted packages for review to the EU.

Federal Waters

FDA sent a letter to NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service in September 2023 requesting the original larger closed area of Georgia's bank be changed and put into the controlled access status.

FDA is in the process of developing marine biotoxin training for federal waters.

PFAS

FDA is still planning to pursue sample collections of shellfish for PFAS. Parts of the review have had to be restarted, but the final review will be underway later in the Spring.

ORA Staffing

The division of Shellfish Sanitation is now fully staffed with sixteen specialists.

2024 Work Plan Projection

10 SSO Shellfish Standardization Officer certifications.
22 Plant Processing and Shipping evaluations.
15 Growing Area Classification Evaluations
23 Risk Assessment and Risk Management evaluations.
15 Control fo Harvest Evaluations
5 national training courses.

Outreach

FDA has made it a goal to reach out to non-participating states to gauge the interest in working with the ISSC. They have met with Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota,

Missouri, and Nebraska, to discuss an overview of the NSSP, the importance of membership, and identify barriers to possible membership.

The FDA has also been reaching out to retail regulators and Epis to help in the determination of outbreaks and traceability.

Shellfish Illness Outbreak Investigation SOP

The FDA has been working to define their internal illness response procedures and has developed shared tools for illness advisories and recalls.

Proposal for Unified Human Foods Program

There has been a recommendation for a new office of regulatory affairs model as well as other modernization efforts.

The proposed structure would create a new Human Foods Program. Jim Jones has been hired as the new Deputy Commissioner for Human Foods.

This FDA reorganization completed internal review in December of 2023, and is now undergoing external review and clearance.

NOAA

Australia's foreign government certificate for bivalve mollusks was supposed to start in November 2023 but has faced delays. There is further information available on the NOAA website.

EPA

Handout provided to the board to describe how various parts of the EPA work to support the program.

IV. Regional Updates

Region 1 Regulatory

In March 2023 New Hampshire Shellfish authority successfully updated their regulations to adopt the latest NSSP model ordinance. They've also incorporated a vibrio control plan into their updated regulations. They've also updated their health and human services website to make it more user friendly. They are

experiencing some emerging issues involving birds and are considering potential mitigation for that issue.

Rhode Island has completed a MOU agreement which has been signed by the various state agencies outlining their responsibilities. They have also been completing peer evaluations. They are scheduled for growing area classification evaluations in 2024.

Maine is seeing an increase in certified dealers. Maine has also expanded their vibrio control program, and it will be statewide as of June 1st 2024.

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries has experienced some staff turn over in recent months. All vacant positions have been filled.

Region 1 Industry

There is concern about press coverage in regard to recalls that have been contained or fully retrieved.

There is also concern regarding the bird issue, and industry is looking forward to the ISSC convening a panel of experts for invested parties to ask questions on the matter.

Region 2 Regulatory

New York Industry is still reporting depressed sales connected to misleading press coverage regarding outbreaks. New York has made major changes to shellfish tagging designations to break up some of the larger harvest areas.

New Jersey will be hosting the Interstate Seafood Seminar meeting in October of 2024. They also continue to work with aquaculture growers on bird deterrent issues.

Region 2 Industry

A New Jersey webinar was recently hosted to address outreach for various interested entities across the state and was well attended.

Business has overall been down significantly.

Region 3 Regulatory

Maryland is still waiting for an FDA response on their unresolved issue.

Delaware is in a good position to continue to comply with NSSP requirements. There are currently 19 certified dealers in Delaware.

Virginia is continuing to work with the marina program that has been added. Oyster numbers in the state are continuing to increase. They are also in the process of beginning regulatory review and incorporation of the model ordinance in a different format than used previously.

Region 3 Industry

Market sales have been down but are slowly picking up.

Region 4 Regulatory

As of July 1st, South Carolina's department of Health and Environmental will be split into two agencies; the Department of Environmental Services and the Department of Public Health.

North Carolina has opened a new shellfish lab that went live in February.

Region 4 Industry

2023 Hurricanes still have an impact on industry in the area.

Aquaculture has been growing significantly in every state.

Florida is experiencing success in their restoration efforts.

Region 5 Industry

The industry has been experiencing issues with public perception and unfair media coverage.

Smaller operations are being bought by larger organizations.

Region 6 Regulatory

Washington is working on separating peer reviews from standardizing officer evaluations, to not undergo both at the same time. They have also been asked by the legislature to pause rulemaking and have been given funding to hire consultants to perform evaluations on fees.

Region 6 Industry

PCSGA has hired a new executive director, Margaret Pilaro.

Industry has been continuing to navigate the west coast wind project.

Industry anticipates productive dialogue regarding the potential fee increase in Washington.

California hosted the PACRIM conference in February 2024.

The West coast has been impacted by illnesses originating from products from other countries, and is working on messaging regarding these foreign illness issues and market confusion.

V. Program Chairman's Report

Fall 2024 Board Meeting

There are two scheduled board meetings between now and the next ISSC Conference. Board members expressed a preference for the next board meeting to be held either hybrid or entirely virtual as travel funding is not always guaranteed.

Motion was made to table the vote on hosting the ISSC Fall Board meeting virtually or in person until later in the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried by a voice vote.

2025 ISSC Biennial Meeting

The Executive Office has received responses from Nashville, Knoxville, Louisville, Detroit, Denver, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe from their inquiries about hosting the 2025 ISSC Biennial meeting. They are currently working on narrowing this list down and planning to conduct site visits.

VI. Regional Meeting Updates

PACRIM

Meeting was held in February 2024, in California, with sixty attendees. The talks were well received and informative.

Interstate Seafood Seminar

Will be hosted in New Jersey from October 8th - 10th. Information on registration will be forthcoming.

NESSA

The 2024 NESSA meeting was held in April 2024 in Connecticut. Discussions included press coverage and CDC messaging, shellfish restoration in prohibited waters, and concerns with the FDA advisories falling recalls in Connecticut.

VII. Executive Committee Report

Grant Updates

The 2024 public agreement grant is in the middle of its five year cycle, and is unchanged.

The AFDO Milk and Shellfish cooperative agreement grant is open for new entities to apply.

2023 Tax Return & Audit

The firm handling the tax return has filed an extension and will complete the tax return by the fall.

The audit committee will recommend a firm to handle the audit later this year.

The 2022 Audit is complete and on the ISSC website.

2024 Budget

The 2024 Budget was provided to the board. A motion was made to approve the budget as written. The motion was seconded and carried by a voice vote.

VIII. Old Business

Strategic Planning

Plan in place to hire a facilitator, John Marcello, to address the executive committee.

IX. New Business

NSSP Guide Revision

Revision is with the FDA waiting for final review.

X. Recess.

The meeting was recessed until the following day.