

CATEGORY 2 TECHNICAL REVIEW GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held 8th May 2008, Brampton National Fisheries Office

Attendees

Environment Agency:

Phil Hickley, Fisheries Technical Manager (Secretary)
Nigel Hewlett, Technical Advisor (Acting Chairman)
Chris Williams, Senior Fisheries Scientist

Independent Advisors ("The Group"):

Dr Ruth Kirk, Parasitologist, Kingston University
Dr Steve Feist, Pathologist, Cefas
Bernice Brewster, Independent Practitioner, Aquatic Consultancy

Guest speaker:

Demetra Andreou, PhD student, Bournemouth University

Apologies

Environment Agency:

Adrian Taylor, Policy Manager (Chairman)

Independent Advisor

Prof. Jimmy Turnbull, Epidemiologist, Stirling University

Update on actions from previous meeting

Points to note were:

- The removal of *Paraergasilus longidigitus* and *Atractolytocestus huronensis* had been well received by the industry.
- Chris Williams had successfully gained his PhD.
- The restructuring of the Fish Health Team at Brampton had worked well, notwithstanding limited criticism regarding movement of Section 30 health checks to private health consultants.

Recent parasite findings and disease investigations

Chris Williams gave a presentation on novel disease investigations and new parasite findings from freshwater fisheries in England. The Group were asked to comment on how the Environment Agency have handled, managed and communicated the detection of these findings. Reference should be made to the supporting paper 'Cat2/3/New' (attached). The group supported the Environment Agency's actions on this work and recognised that the changes made to the Fish Health Team has greatly assisted in this.

It was hoped to establish a 'Members Only' area on the 'efishbusiness' site for fish health professionals who do health checks in support of Section 30 applications. This has been delayed by wider changes to this web site.

Meanwhile most information is sent to the industry in the form of communication notes. A note on *Eustrongylides* sp. is to be sent to the independent fish health consultants. The group ask for a general principle to be adopted that information notes should be passed to the Group for comment prior to being sent out. **Action: CW**

It was requested that it be investigated as to whether the link to efishbusiness on the Environment Agency website could be made more obvious. **Action: PH**

The early publication of the Environment Agency's framework for the risk assessment of new and emerging parasite was encouraged. **Action: NH/CW**

Chris Williams presented possible future research projects for bidding into the Environment Agency Science programme. These were:

- Effect of climate change on occurrence, distribution and severity of diseases in freshwater fisheries;
- Disease status of European eels in England and Wales

These proposals were supported by the group.

RK offered to contribute to the drafting of the climate change project proposal as a collaborative project bid to NERC. **Action: CW & RK**

3. Forward look on Category 2 parasite work

The group were asked to comment of the Environment Agency's proposal to remove *Neoergasilus japonicus* from its Category 2 Parasite list of controlled parasites and to conduct further studies on *Ergasilus briani* to improve understanding of impact to freshwater fisheries. Reference should be made to the supporting paper 'Cat2/3/Cat 2 general' (attached).

It was agreed that further studies were required on *Ergasilus briani* before a recommendation for its removal from the Category 2 Parasite list could be made. It was necessary to be clear as to the key area of focus and CW is to produce a work plan for comment. **Action: CW**

It was recommended to the Environment Agency that *Neoergasilus japonicus* be removed from its Category 2 Parasite list from 1st September 2008. NH to arrange ratification and release a press briefing with justification for the decision. **Action: NH**

Rosette Like Agent

Demetra Andreou, PhD student, Bournemouth University gave a presentation on her work on the Rosette Like Agent (RLA). Reference should be made to the supporting paper 'Cat2/3/RLA' (attached).

The group concluded that, although the work and RLA should be of interest to the Environment Agency, the studies were not sufficiently advanced to recommend controls. It was noted that access to previous TMG sites might be

useful for furthering the PhD study. The Group commented that it was reasonable to allow controlled movements where evidence is available but otherwise to await further evidence and interpretation. NH offered to make samples from Environment Agency fish disease investigations available to the project. **Action NH**

It was suggested that reference material be provided to Brampton by Cefas to enable spotting of pathology during fish mortality investigations. **Action: SF**

UK parasite list

The group was updated on the nature and progress of BB's PhD work. This aims to produce a database of parasites for the UK and to produce a range of keys. The output will be a web-based management information system with various user levels. The Environment Agency has contributed £3k to the development of this database.

Any other business

Most people had received a letter from Ian Wellby promoting the establishment of an email discussion group. The Group noted the potential but it would need to be properly structured and managed so as not to become simply another chat forum. A Group response was thought not to be necessary but individuals would reply as they saw fit.

Subsequent meetings

Most communication with the Group should be by email but it was agreed that an annual (May) liaison meeting was useful and should continue to be held, with any other meetings to be called on an *ad hoc* basis. **Action: PH**