Background

On 1 February 2016, the Tasmanian Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) advised the NSW CVO of a suspected detection of the virus that causes Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) in farmed Pacific Oysters from Pitt Water on Tasmania’s south east coast. Confirmation of the detection is currently underway at the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) at Geelong.

This is the first detection of POMS in Tasmania, and it is as a result of laboratory testing following the investigation of significant mortality in farmed Pacific Oysters in one grow out area. The geographic limit of the POMS infection in Tasmania is yet unknown and the Tasmanian authorities are undertaking further tracing and surveillance to determine the extent of this incident.

NSW DPI is progressing immediate import restrictions to prohibit the movement of any bivalves and equipment out of Tasmania into NSW for aquaculture purposes.

NSW Pacific Oyster growers should keep an eye on their stock and report any unexplained or unusual mortality. This report should be made as soon as possible and no later than 24-hours from discovery to a Fisheries Officer or the Aquatic Biosecurity group on 02 49821232.

Have the NSW inter-estuary movement restrictions changed?

No. Existing POMS quarantine movement controls will remain in place over Georges River, Hawkesbury River and Brisbane Water.

All other QX and Pacific Oyster movement controls remain the same and the existing shipment notification, log book and IVR requirements remain in force.

Where can I source spat?

Under the new import restrictions placed on Tasmania, farmers are not able to import Triploid Pacific Oysters (TPO) from Tasmania.

Southern Cross Shellfish at Port Stephens has the capacity to produce TPO. However, stock from their last run in September 2015 has been allocated. Their tetraploid broodstock are not expected to be in condition for any further runs until May 2016. Call Greg Kent (0488 224 927) for further information.

Southern Cross Shellfish is currently not permitted to export to Tasmania or South Australia.

Sydney Rock Oyster spat from SOCo's selected lines is available now. Call Emma Wilkie on 0402 677 534.

Can the NSW DPI Hatchery at Port Stephens produce TPO spat?

No. The NSW DPI hatchery does not have tetraploid broodstock and therefore cannot produce TPO. The hatchery is also fully committed for research activities.

Can I grow Diploid Pacific Oysters?

No. Not without a specific approval from NSW DPI. Port Stephens is the only estuary currently approved.
Research

NSW DPI has been assisting Australian Seafood Industries to develop POMS resistance in their Pacific Oyster families since 2011. ASI has subsequently made substantial gains in POMS resistance. The recent detection of POMS in Tasmania has significant ramifications for the Pacific Oyster breeding program itself and the way future research is structured to continue to breed for increased resistance.

More information

- Contact Aquatic Biosecurity or Aquaculture Management on 02 4982 1232.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (February 2016). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user’s independent adviser.

Published by the Department of Primary Industries.