

General information to prevent spread of Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome

Aquatic Biosecurity and Risk Management Unit

Handout prepared to assist oyster receivers to minimise aquatic disease risks.

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) is a disease caused by a virus that causes rapid and extensive mortalities in Pacific Oysters. There is no evidence that POMS impacts Sydney Rock Oysters or has any effect on human health.

POMS is known to occur in three NSW oyster farming estuaries and was recently confirmed in Tasmania. While POMS continues to cause considerable losses to oyster farms in affected areas, there are healthy, harvestable size Pacific Oysters (not affected by POMS) that continue to be sold for human consumption from these waterways.

To prevent the spread of POMS, it is important that to follow these simple steps to reduce disease risks associated with the sale of live (un-opened) oysters:

- It is illegal to buy, sell, process or possess a live (unopened) Pacific Oyster without a permit. If you are dealing with live Pacific Oysters in your business, ensure that you have a permit
- Permits can be attained by contacting the NSW DPI Aquaculture Permits Officer on (02) 4982 1232
- Do not return live oysters to our waterways, either to discard them or 'give them a drink' to keep them fresh. **It is illegal**, as it can spread disease or subject the oyster to contaminants that make the oyster harmful to eat
- Ensure any waste, including uneaten oysters or leftover shells, are disposed of in the bin and not into waterways. Please pass on this important information to your customers
- Dispose of any water associated with the processing of live oysters direct to the sewer
- Wash hands and/or gloves thoroughly with warm soapy water after handling oysters

Help protect the NSW oyster industry

POMS can devastate entire crops of cultivated oysters within days. It can be spread by contact with any part of an infected oyster or in the water held inside the shells of live (unopened) oysters.

If you observe sick or dying Pacific Oysters, contact NSW DPI Fishers Watch Hotline on 1800 043 536 for advice on what to do with the oysters



Unprocessed Pacific Oyster

For more information on POMS

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/pests-diseases/animal-health/aquaculture/poms>

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