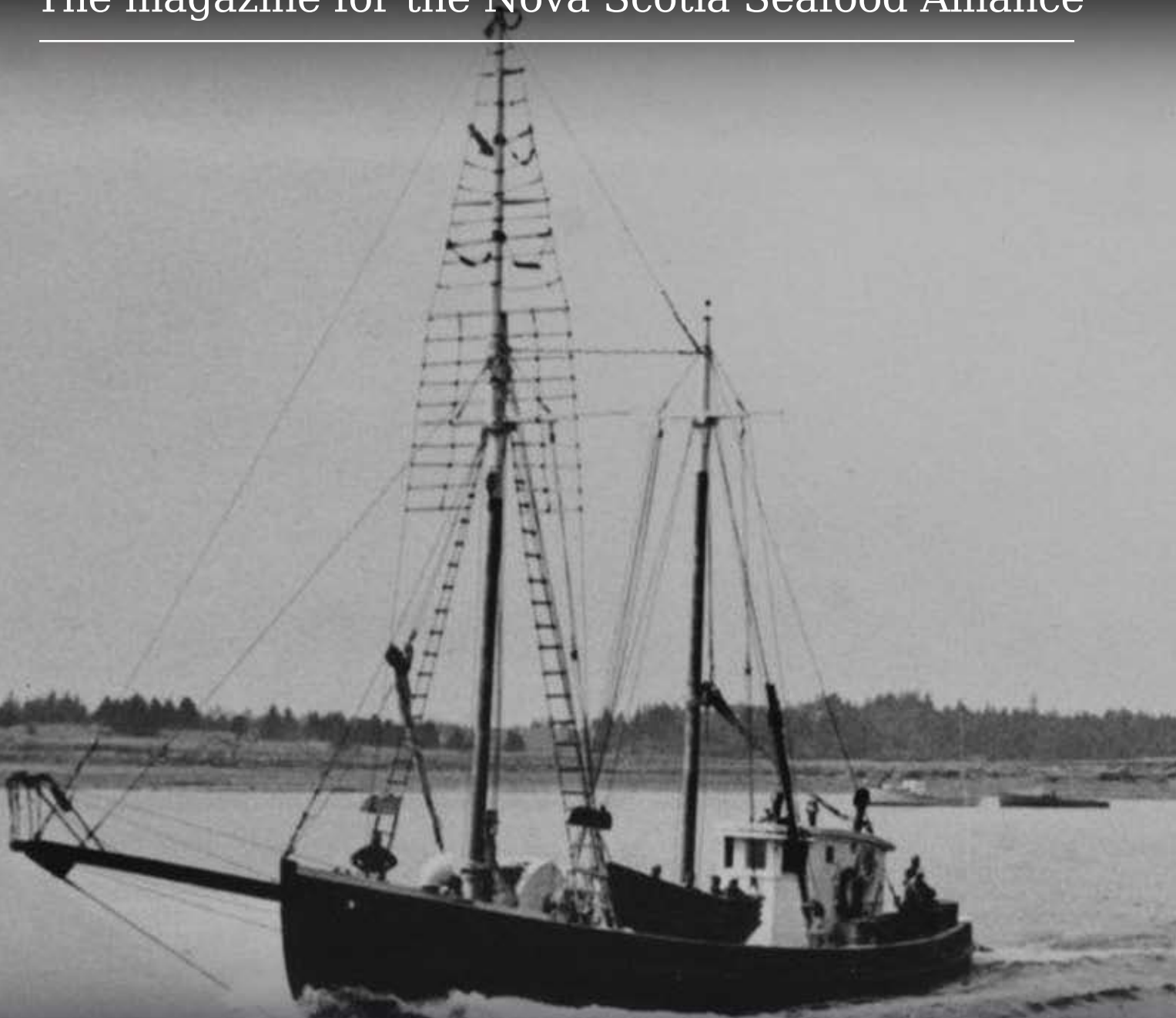


WINTER 2017

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The magazine for the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance

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On November 8th, staff from member companies of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance and local lobster harvesters met at the Oyster Pond Fire Hall to complete the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Lobster Quality Handling training. Pictured above from left to right: Janette Faulkner, Bakers Point Fisheries; Crystal Kent, Harvester; Michelle Theriault, Instructor; Stewart Lamont, Tangier Lobster Company, review best practices for handling lobsters from the boat to the customer."

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#### **Publication Information**

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COVER IMAGE "Fishing in the good old days"  
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## Investing to Support our Fisheries in Nova Scotia

*The Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.  
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture*

It's a very exciting time to be a part of the fishing industry in Nova Scotia. There has been a tremendous amount of growth in the past three years, which has resulted in many new businesses and career opportunities for young Nova Scotians in our rural communities.

Thanks to your hard work, exports reached an all-time high of \$1.8 billion last year and we are now Canada's leading exporter of seafood. We now have 9,400 people working in the fisheries sector, up from 6,900 in 2010.

The provincial and federal governments are committed to helping the fisheries sector in Atlantic Canada grow and remain strong. Last March, the federal government announced a jointly funded seven-year Atlantic Fisheries Fund investment (AFF), worth over \$400 million, that will be cost shared 70/30 with the provincial governments.

Our government's 2017-18 provincial budget delivers on our platform commitments to grow exports to create more jobs here at home. That commitment includes a \$2.5 million investment in the current fiscal year for the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, with a total investment of \$38 million over the seven-year lifespan of the program.

This significant investment in one of our most important economic sectors will help you continue to meet the growing market demands around the world for products that are high quality, value added and sustainably sourced. It also supports innovation and science in your industry, helping you find ways to source, process and deliver the highest quality and sustainably sourced seafood products from the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

The Atlantic Fisheries Fund is now open for business and accepting applications. Application forms, along with more information on eligibility and project criteria can be found at <http://atlanticfisheriesfund.ca>. Cyril Boudreau, a senior fisheries strategist with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, is available to answer any questions relating to the fund. He can be reached at 902-722-1426 or by email at [aff@novascotia.ca](mailto:aff@novascotia.ca).

With the fund open for business, you are now able to take advantage of this wonderful and historic opportunity to position our seafood sector for even greater success by supporting infrastructure development, innovation, and science and research projects that will lead to more economic opportunities for your businesses and our coastal and rural communities.





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## Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance: A Year of Growth and Engagement

*By: Leo Muise, Executive Director  
Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance*

When the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance (NSSA) was formed on March 1st, its founders were all members of the Nova Scotia Fish Packers Association. With such a solid history to build upon, the new alliance immediately went on a recruiting drive under the leadership of the Board of Directors.

NSSA is focused on shore-based seafood companies, and inclusivity is one of our core values. The alliance covers all regions of the province, and is representative of all commercial seafood species. Included in NSSA is a strong core of associate members who, while not directly involved in the industry, support a strong seafood sector in Nova Scotia. The numbers are impressive: Last March NSSA represented 41 seafood buying or processing companies; today there are 62 members. In March we had seven associate members; today there are 18.

By any measure, our recruitment efforts have been successful. Transparency and equality are two additional core values of NSSA. Our membership list is known to the world. Each member has an individual page on our terrific website [www.novascotiaseafoodalliance.ca](http://www.novascotiaseafoodalliance.ca), listing their products, principal contact information and an

easy link for connectivity. Information flows to our members daily through an internal email link to every company and their key employees.

So, what does 2018 look like for NSSA? Our immediate goal is to have 100 members

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before March 1st. That's not to say we will be satisfied at that level; our door is open to anyone in the industry who sees value in becoming a member. Next up will be a governance document establishing our bylaws. We are focused on developing strategic alliances within the community, because in the end our mantra remains very straightforward: Working together works.

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# Efficiency Nova Scotia Helps Lobster Industry Become More Competitive

By: *Efficiency Nova Scotia*

People travel great distances to enjoy the amazing things Nova Scotia has to offer, one of those being our beloved food of the land and sea. Many foods are locally grown, harvested, and enjoyed. Fondly referred to as Canada's Ocean Playground, we are celebrated for our lobster and seafood, vital industries within our communities generating more than 7,800 jobs. Efficiency Nova Scotia recognizes the value of the seafood industry to Nova Scotia and how its significance holds a special place in our hearts. Efficiency Nova Scotia has helped a number of lobster facilities with energy savings.

Efficiency Nova Scotia worked with these companies to complete projects such as retrofitting chillers to be more efficiently used. Chillers, which are used to achieve optimum water temperatures for lobster holding tanks, are often the biggest energy consumer for the lobster industry. Because lobster is a commodity product, these facilities are necessary in order to sell stock at optimal times. Other projects have included adding new intake water lines to reduce the

***continued on page 21***

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# Sounds Fishy

*By: Albert d'Entremont*

To many people, if an animal lives in water then it must be a type of fish. However, according to biology, a fish is specifically a cold-blooded, aquatic vertebrate typically with gills, fins and scales. Of course, 500 million years of evolution has produced many exceptions. Some fishes have no scales and some can survive extended periods of time out of water. A few species are considered “regionally warm-blooded” because a network of blood vessels that acts like a heat exchanger and keeps certain parts of their bodies warmer than the surrounding water. This allows them to be more efficient predators in colder water. These include the opah (moonfish) and certain species of mackerel sharks, billfishes and tunas.

To avoid confusion, I should point out that the plural of fish is fish if you have only one species, so one hundred herring is one hundred fish. But if you have different species, you have fishes e.g. ichthyology is the biology of fishes. Ichthyologists categorize fishes into three classes of vertebrates; the jawless fishes, the cartilaginous fishes and the bony fishes.

The jawless fishes, the hagfishes and lampreys, are the oldest and most primitive of the fishes. They have cartilaginous skeletons and have no scales but it's the pouch-like gills, the single nostril and the lack of jaws and paired fins that completely separate them from all other fishes. Only about 120 species exist today. The Atlantic hagfish (slime eel) and the sea lamprey are found in Canadian Atlantic waters.

The cartilaginous fishes, the sharks, rays and chimaeras, are represented throughout the world by some 1000 species. Although vast majority are marine, about thirty species of stingrays and three species of river sharks are truly freshwater. Also bull sharks that frequent estuaries regularly venture up into freshwater rivers. Cartilaginous fishes are characterized by teeth-like scales (dermal denticles), 5 to 7 pairs of gill slits, claspers on males and of course a cartilaginous skeleton. Nineteen species of sharks have been reported in Canadian Atlantic waters. Many are summer visitors. Over a dozen species of rays are found in our waters, most are skates. Also three species of chimaeras

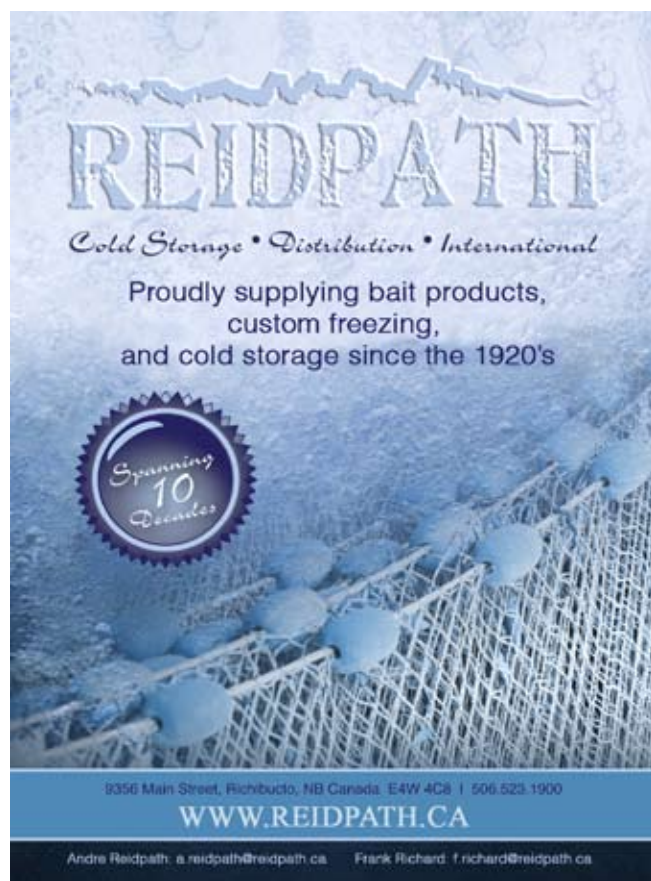
(ratfish or ghost shark) live along our continental slope.

By far the most successful of the fishes are the bony fishes. An estimated 28 000 species swim the lakes, rivers and oceans of the world. Although they exhibit a multitude of colours, shapes and sizes, they share basic traits such as bony-ridged scales, bony skeletons and five gills on each side of the head covered by an operculum (gill cover). So, if it's not a lamprey, a hagfish, a shark, a ray or a chimaera, then it must be a bony fish.

Although as a rule females tend to be a little bigger than the males, most species of fishes show little sexual dimorphism. An extreme example of size differential between the sexes is a species of deepsea anglerfish where the female is a sixty times longer and a half a million times heavier than the male. The tiny male will latch on to a female and live as a parasite for the rest of his life. It is also easy to sex sharks and rays. Sharks and

rays do not spawn, they use internal fertilization. To accommodate mating, males have an extension on their pelvic fins called claspers. Another well-known example of sexual dimorphism is the common dolphinfish (dorado or mahi-mahi), where the males have a domed forehead and the females do not.

Fishes are commonly thought of as either freshwater or saltwater. A true freshwater species cannot survive in salt water and vice versa. One of the many physiological problems for a fish in the wrong environment is the result of osmosis. A fish in fresh water has an overhydration problem. There is a higher concentration of dissolved materials inside the fish than outside the fish and osmosis causes water to diffuse into the fish. A limp celery stick gets crispy when soaked in fresh water for the same reason. Consequently, a freshwater fish doesn't drink water and excretes a lot. A saltwater fish has a dehydration problem because the saline environment that it lives in draws water



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out of the fish. This is the same process that causes plants to wilt when you put salt around their roots. Therefore, a saltwater fish must drink water and excrete little. The expression “drinks like a fish” should be changed to “drinks like a saltwater fish”.

Diadromous fishes have evolved to move from one environment to the other. Fishes, such as the alewife and the Atlantic salmon, that spend their adult life in the sea and return to fresh water to spawn, are said to be anadromous. The term literally means “up running” because they swim up the rivers to spawn. The American eel is catadromous. It matures in fresh water and swims down the rivers and migrates to the Sargasso Sea where it spawns and dies. The term catadromous literally means “down running”.

Fishes can also be classified according to where they live and feed. Pelagic species are fishes found at or near the surface of the open ocean such as herring, mackerel, swordfish and the tunas. Demersal or groundfish species include cod, haddock, cusk, hake, redfish and the flatfishes. They are found on or near the ocean bottom.

Flatfishes are fascinating. They begin life like a normal fish fry with an eye on each side of the head. Soon the skull begins to twist until both eyes are on the same side and that side becomes pigmented. A flatfish lays on its side not its belly. Winter flounder (blackback), witch flounder (grey sole), plaice (sand dab), yellowtail flounder and halibut are called right-eyed flounders because the pigmented side is the right side. The fourspot flounder, summer flounder (fluke) and windowpane are left-eyed flounders.

Many invertebrates are given the name fish but they are not fish. Jellyfishes are cnidarians, “nettle-animals” that kill prey with poisonous stinging capsules. Starfishes are echinoderms, animals with “spiny skins”. Cuttlefishes are mollusks, animals with “soft bodies”.

The term shellfish is regularly used in the culinary world but it has no place in biology. It encompasses a wide range of edible invertebrates. Lobsters, crabs and shrimp are arthropods called crustaceans. Scallops, oysters, clams, quahogs and mussels are bivalve mollusks. Periwinkles, snails, conchs, whelks and escargot are gastropod mollusks. Various sections of the fisheries also use the term shellfish. One often hears about shellfish harvesting closures and the terms shellfish and finfish are used to describe the two main types of marine aquaculture.

Even a few marine mammals are called fish. In Moby Dick, the second mate of the Pequod said, “If God ever wanted to be a fish, believe me, He’d be a whale”. The grey whale often attacked the whalers who hunted them and were referred to as “devil fish” and the pilot whale, a large oceanic dolphin, is commonly called “blackfish”.



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# Fishery

## - Critical to our Economy and Pride of Place

For the land lover, our communities must appear quite peculiar. Why would scores of people of French and English heritage choose to live so far away from the “centre”, spread far away on the geographic fingers of South West Nova. Of course, for the fishermen, the answer is obvious.

The South West Nova economy has always been centered on the fishery. Our retail outlets, our homes, any investment at all in fact rises and falls with the price of lobster and other species. As municipal leaders we can have a hundred conversations to search for ways to grow the local economy, but in reality the largest single economic performance measure in our region is the price of lobster. If this is fact, any effort to increase the demand for our unique product(s) should be welcome news to municipalities, fishermen and buyers alike.

Fiscally, the fishing economy effects towns and rural municipalities differently. For instance, the Municipality of Argyle may not always be graced by major commercial investment in retail or other larger box stores. Its commercial growth has traditionally been centered on fishing (holding tanks, fish processing, boat shops). The Town of Yarmouth is often the primary beneficiary of retail growth and boasts a cluster of restaurants, shops and car dealerships. Our municipal revenue is primarily driven by residential homes; the town not as much. Both exist and prosper from the fishing economy: the town

primarily boasts entrepreneurship on land, while we boast entrepreneurship at sea.

The reality is, the success of the fishing industry benefits both town and county. Our residents may live in Argyle and work in town, or vice versa. The economy doesn't follow traditional municipal boundaries; the rising tide certainly lifts all boats, as the expression goes. Much like in the fishing

industry, municipalities should remind themselves of the benefits of working together to enrich our collective regions.

Our communities were built around a life on the sea. Each community has its own cul-

ture and joie de vivre that they call their own. We raise our daughters and sons in a region that is rich in beauty and bounty, and in a way that allows for them to enjoy what nature has to offer on land or sea. We are enriched by generations of stories. Most are humorous, but some are tragic; a reminder of the risks our fishermen take each day, and the sacrifice and burden carried for those at home.

Fishing is not just our economic lifeline, it is our way of life. It makes our municipality, in my view, a place we're proud to call home.

Alain D. Muise, CPA, CA  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Municipality of the District of Argyle



# Holds it's 1st Annual General Meeting

By: *Leo Muise*

On October 28th, the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance (NSSA) held its first-ever Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Halifax at the Prince George Hotel. The event featured a combination business meeting and educational workshop. Prior to the meeting, many members who were in town took advantage of the opportunity to meet for a debrief of the 2017 lobster seasons and look forward toward 2018.

The AGM was chaired by NSSA President Osborne Burke. The President's Report highlighted the 2017 achievements, including the establishment of the new organization in March, development of a professional web site by Sara Rankin, an extremely successful membership drive (over 30 new members) and, most importantly, the recognition by governments and others that the NSSA is the go-to organization when it comes to issues affecting small

and medium shore-based seafood buying and processing business in Nova Scotia. Our growing membership, improving finances and a strong and active Board of Directors points to a bright future for the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance.

NSSA replied to the province's License Policy Review document by putting forward ideas like championing profitability by matching onshore capacity to resource levels, working with harvesters to safeguard access to raw materials and meeting world demand for sustainably caught, high-quality seafood. Our members worked closely with the province to improve and promote the Lobster Quality Training Program to meet industry needs. We opened lines of communication with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency by meeting twice yearly with senior provincial staff. We developed and promoted alliances with

industry groups who are supportive of our goals, such as the NS Fisheries Sector Council, the Lobster Council of Canada, the Western Regional Enterprise Network, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Fisheries Council of Canada, Perennia and the Halifax Stanfield International Airport.

Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Keith Colwell joined us to express his thanks to the members for their contribution to growing Nova Scotia's seafood economy to \$1.8 billion. The minister is optimistic for the future, and believes that producing the highest-quality seafood is key to maintaining Nova Scotia's position as Canada's number one fisheries province. Minister Colwell pointed out that to date over 800 industry workers have successfully completed the Lobster Quality Training Program.

Those in attendance talked about NSSA priorities for 2018, like establishing species specific sub-committees, developing a governance document for the organization, documenting the economic contribution

of NSSA member companies to the province, expanding relationships with like-minded and supportive organizations, and community outreach.

The afternoon focused on educational workshops for members. With changes to the laws allowing the recreational use of cannabis scheduled to come into force on April 1, 2018, members received instruction from Nadine Wentzell, an occupational health and safety expert, on the responsibilities and rights of employers focused on safety in the workplace - specifically, in relation to substance abuse and medical marijuana usage.

Many seafood processing facilities in Nova Scotia are contemplating facility upgrades. Saving money by becoming energy efficient benefits the bottom line, and contributes to a healthier environment and a more comfortable workplace. Sara Mitchell of Efficiency Nova Scotia explained to the members the advantages of carefully planning facility upgrades, and pointed out some possible areas where Efficiency Nova Scotia would like to contribute.

The recently announced Atlantic Fisheries Innovation Fund is now accepting project proposals. Robert MacDonald and Mel Coombs of

DFO and Geordie McLaughlin of the province explained to those in attendance how the program would work, and asked for suggestions from the audience about the direction industry would like to see the program take.

This generational investment can be a game-changer, taking the industry into and beyond the 21st century in terms of innovation, knowledge and support of the next generation of industry leadership; embracing world-class thinking in support of a world-class industry.

We closed an informative afternoon with Simeon Roberts telling the group about his work with the NS Fisheries Sector Council. Simeon is an expert in people development. He spoke about the human resource challenges faced by the seafood buying and processing sector, and shared with everyone best practices successful businesses use to address these inevitable challenges. Recruitment and retention of highly effective employees is the single-most important task a business owner does on a daily basis. Simeon referred to employers he has met throughout his career who shared with him practical ways to inspire employees to feel positive about their careers.

The day ended fittingly with a social gathering at Hama-chi House on the Halifax

waterfront, where old friendships were renewed, new friendships were made and the fellowship of belonging to a group like the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance was in full display.

Member companies of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance are energized as we move into what may be the Golden Age of seafood production in Nova Scotia. The rest of the world recognizes the potential Nova Scotia has to provide the highest-quality, safest and healthiest food to local, national and international customers. Working together, we will achieve the full potential of the riches we have been blessed with.



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# GFSI - What Are the Components of an Accredited Food Safety System?

To serve as a refresher, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is an industry/retailer-driven initiative to provide leadership and guidance on Food Safety Management Systems, providing assurance for food safety along the supply chain. The GFSI has been developed and is managed through collaboration among the world's food safety experts from the retail, processing and manufacturing industries; governments, science leaders and service providers. It allows food businesses to select a food safety management system or scheme that is recognized by leading retailers and manufacturers internationally.

There are several Food Safety programs that are recognized by the GFSI, with the three more popular ones being:

- **BRC Global Standards**
- **FSSC22000**
- **SQF Institute**

Even though there are different food safety programs, they are all functionally very similar in content and requirements. For this article the BRC standard will be used to outline the components of the program, and what is needed to meet the standard.

There are seven sections that form the body of the BRC Standard, with each having a varying number of sub-sections that outline the specific requirements that must be met. In comparison, a seafood process-

ing plant's Quality Management Program (QMP) has three main components - Regulatory Actions Points (RAPs), HACCP Safety Plan and the Pre-requisite Program (PRP), with each of these sections having specific requirements/sub-sections.

The GFSI Standard with its components is found below. Each includes a brief description of the prescribed objectives, and how QMP compares to the GFSI Standard:

## ***1) Senior Management Commitment***

This section requires senior management demonstrate they are fully committed to the implementation of the requirements of the Global Standard for Food Safety, and to processes that facilitate continual improvement of food safety and quality management. The company must have a clear organizational structure and lines of communication to enable effective management of product safety, legality and quality. Key objectives must be developed, delivered and monitored as part of the continuous improvement of the system. The plant's QMP covers approximately 25% of these requirements.

## ***2) The Food Safety Plan - HACCP***

As with any Food Safety Management System, a company shall have a fully implemented and effective food safety plan, based on Codex Alimentarius, that includes the 7 HACCP principles and a detailed prerequisite program. A seafood

plant's QMP is equitable to the GFSI requirements in this section.

### **3) Food Safety and Quality**

#### **Management System**

This is a very detailed section of the GFSI scheme, with 12 subsections. In it, there is a need to develop and deliver processes and procedures in the areas of documentation and record controls; product specifications, supplier approvals and monitoring; internal audits; product traceability and recalls; controls for non-conforming product; corrective actions; customer complaints and customer focus and communication. Many of the requirements of this section are not fully included under the QMP, with only approximately 25-30% covered.

### **4) Site Standards**

There are 16 sub-sections related to Site Standards. The documented requirements

basically outline the physical dimensions of the programs, such as defining the standards for the outside premises, construction components, bio-security, contamination controls, housekeeping and hygiene, waste controls, pest controls, and storage and transportation controls. QMP covers approximately 30-40% of these requirements.

### **5) Product Controls**

There are seven sub-sections relating to Product Controls. Product design and development procedures shall be in place for new products, or processes and any changes to product, packaging or manufacturing processes to ensure that safe and legal products are produced. As well, the plant must have a system for the management of allergenic materials that minimizes the risk of allergens: Product labeling shall comply with the appropriate legal requirements; systems shall be



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in place to minimize the risk of purchasing fraudulent or adulterated food raw materials; the company shall undertake or subcontract inspection and analyses that are critical to confirm product safety, legality and quality. The components of the QMP once again only cover approximately 50% of these requirements.

#### **6) Process Control**

Through the development of documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the plant must have procedures and/or work instructions that ensure the production of consistently safe and legal product with the desired quality characteristics, in full compliance with the HACCP Food Safety Plan. There is a need for equipment calibration, detailed work instructions, outlined processing parameters, and weight and quantity controls. A plant's QMP covers a significant portion of these requirements.

#### **7) Personnel**

This component provides the details for how personnel are hired, trained, and evaluated. The company must ensure that all personnel performing work that affects product safety, legality and quality are demonstrably competent to carry out their activity through training, work experience or qualification. The processing plant's good manufacturing practices (GMPs) must be developed, delivered and monitored, and must include employee hygiene/employee health and controls for visitors and contractors. The QMP program covers approximately 50% of these requirements.


#### **Summary**

With the above information at hand, it can be seen that the GFSI schemes - whether being BRC, FSSC22000 or SQF - are very comprehensive and detailed. The CFIA modernized inspection program has mirrored many of the GFSI components in its development,


as has the USFDA's Food Safety Modernization Act.


The GFSI worldwide initiative continues to grow at an accelerated rate as more and more retailers are demanding the third-party audit component be part of their supplier certification. Certifying Bodies (CBs) such as NSF International, Silliker Labs, SAE Global and others have more than doubled the number of auditors in the past few years to match the growth of the industry.

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need for chilling water, improving the efficiency of heat exchangers, pumping systems and water filtration.

In 2016, Efficiency Nova Scotia helped 11 different lobster businesses become more efficient, enabling owners to save on energy costs. This provides them the opportunity to become more profitable and put resources back into their business, while protecting the environment in which they work and live.

One of these businesses experiencing great savings as a result of efficient upgrades is Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood, located in Lower L'Ardoise, Cape Breton. Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood was awarded a Rising Star award through the Efficiency Nova Scotia's Bright Business Awards in 2012 for their adoption of energy efficient practices. The company now ships their lobster and fish products globally.

"Our facility allows us to hold our product in ideal conditions at a lower cost," says Blair Martell, owner of Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood. "You can hold the product in the old facilities for four to six months as well but it is going to cost you a fortune to do it." Martell also explained how Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood pays roughly \$4,200 every two months for power, and estimates competitors who are less energy efficient may be spending over \$8,000 a month. Through partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia, Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood saved roughly \$90,000 annually in electricity costs compared to using a standard system. Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood was able to lower their prices by 20-25 cents per pound by improving the efficiency of their plant. The cost savings has allowed them to be more competitive in the global market.

Efficiency Nova Scotia has been successful in helping lobster facilities see a collec-

tive savings of three gigawatt hours (GwH), translating to \$5 million in electricity costs annually. Several businesses within the industry have taken part in energy efficient upgrades over the past two years, including Capital Seafood International (Eastern Passage), Captains Choice Lobster (Lower West Pubnico), Fisherman's Pal (North East Point), Love Me Fish and Lobster (Bayfield), Nautical Seafoods (Annapolis Royal), Nova-Can Live Seafood (Arichat), and R.I. Smith Lobster (Shag Harbour).

Energy efficiency has both economic and environmental benefits that assist everyone - those working in or outside the industry. With the help of Efficiency Nova Scotia, businesses - big or small - like Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood can employ those in the community while also lowering harmful emissions. Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood provides nine full-time and 45 seasonal jobs in an area of the province that has faced economic challenges. With the use of energy efficiency, less money goes toward paying power bills and more can be used to employ additional workers.

"We are trying to create employment," says Martell. "At the end of the day, that's the ultimate goal for our whole community to be strong."

Many businesses like Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood are enjoying the good things efficiency brings. Efficiency Nova Scotia makes energy projects easy to implement by working with businesses directly to provide technical expertise. This empowers business owners to learn more about efficiency while cutting costs and reducing their carbon footprint.

For more information about how your business can enjoy the good things efficiency brings, contact [efficiencyns.ca/business](http://efficiencyns.ca/business)

# Improving Our Client Experience

## - A Priority for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Did you know that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) responds to more than 100,000 telephone inquiries and processes over 300,000 export certificates every year? That's not all. Every day, our employees connect with our clients from coast to coast to help them meet their regulatory requirements.

Through these connections and a series of industry surveys, we've heard the call for online services and access to CFIA experts, and we've responded with two services—My CFIA and Ask CFIA.

My CFIA is a web portal that offers access to secure online services for clients to conduct business transactions with the CFIA. Whether it's an individual, small business or large producer doing business with us, a My CFIA account offers secure and convenient access to CFIA services.

To develop a good client experience, access to online services is being phased in progressively. By the end of December 2017, most businesses will have access to several services online including licences, permits, registrations and export certificates. Once enrolled, transactions can be managed anytime, anywhere.

To find out what services will be available over the coming months and to enrol for a My CFIA account, visit the My CFIA portal. Online help and information is available.

With new regulations such as the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) expected to be published in spring 2018, My CFIA will enable businesses to apply for a licence online.

Ask CFIA responds to the call for access to CFIA experts. Regulations can sometimes be difficult to understand and apply. In an effort to help alleviate this, the CFIA is committed to providing plain language guidance and information to clients.

Still have a question? Ask CFIA provides industry with one point of entry to ask questions to understand and comply with CFIA's regulatory requirements. By completing an online form, questions will be triaged and routed to the appropriate CFIA expert.

The CFIA has answered more than 400 questions from the fish and seafood sector since the service was first launched in July 2016. There are now seven other sectors in scope, with plans to make the comprehensive service available to all food businesses by spring 2018.

My CFIA and Ask CFIA are the first electronic services in the agency's agenda. We will continue to foster a culture of service excellence for our clients through the balance of education, awareness and enforcement for the protection of Canada's plant and animal health, and the safeguarding of Canada's food supply.

If you have any comments or questions about these services, email [CFIA-Modernisation-ACIA@inspection.gc.ca](mailto:CFIA-Modernisation-ACIA@inspection.gc.ca).

For more information on the proposed SFCR, visit [inspection.gc.ca/SafeFood](http://inspection.gc.ca/SafeFood).



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