

Minutes: Sustainable Seafood Coalition Feed Working Group

1st March, 14:00-16:00.

19 Participants (10 FWG members, 8 certification standard representatives, 1 Secretariat).

SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS:

- FWG to invite aquaculture feed manufacturers to present on the decision-making processes which influence the sources and ingredients used by their sector (discussion point 2.3 below).
- FWG members with further feedback on the draft Objectives document to share/discuss directly with Secretariat, who will incorporate recommended updates (2.2-2.5).
- Next FWG meeting to be held in a month's time. The agenda will feature presentations from feed manufacturers and time for further review of the FWG Objectives.

1. PRESENTATIONS FROM CERTIFICATION STANDARD HOLDERS

1.1 The Secretariat set out the purpose of this session. Major aquaculture certification standard holders have been invited to present to the FWG, with a specific focus on the feed components of their programmes. This session aims to build FWG knowledge of existing initiatives in feed. The group is eager to avoid duplication of efforts and to only make productive and valuable interventions. Each of the four schemes invited were given twenty minutes to provide an overview of their work.

1.2 A representative from the MarinTrust programme presented to the FWG. They gave an overview of the scope, global reach and governance structure of the organisation, which provides a business-to-business certification programme for marine ingredients. The Unit of Certification (UoC) is the marine ingredient production facility. MarinTrust assessments are composed of desktop fishery assessments and on-site factory assessments. The representative explained the sections of the MarinTrust Standard V3.0, and introduced the MarinTrust's chain of custody certification and its improver programme. They explained how the MarinTrust engages with other Standards, regulators and assessment bodies. FWG members asked the MarinTrust representative about the rationale for their UoC, and about any common misconceptions around marine ingredients in fish feed.

1.3 A representative from the Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) presented their Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) standard. They explained the BAP Feed Mill Standard 3.0's requirements for sourcing feed ingredients, which include: declarations on species and fishery origins; having no IUU raw material; and percentage requirements for MSC or MarinTrust certified sources. These percentage requirements will be raised in 2025 and 2030. BAP includes requirements for the efficient utilisation of marine ingredients (including FIFO limits for all species and additional FFDR limits in the new BAP Salmon Farm Standard). Finally, the GAA representative introduced the 'BAP Vanguard Standard for Sustainable Feed Ingredients'. These are targeted add-ons to existing BAP standards. FWG Members asked the GAA representative about BAP's integration of FEFAC and RSPO requirements. They also asked about the rationale for including efficiency metrics such as FFDR and FIFO. A final question raised the topic of 'sustainably sourced' ingredient sourcing within the Vanguard standard, and the intended audience for this claim.

1.4 A representative from the Aquaculture Stewardship Council outlined the major feed components of their programme and plans for future developments. They explained the ASC assurance process from Feed Standard, Farm Standards, Chain of Custody certification to product approval. They outlined the governance structure for the Feed Standard development. They stressed that from an impacts perspective, supply-chain management and traceability are both key, complex factors. Metrics are gathered for the feed mill operations and for the raw materials. ASC figures show the following balance of global aquafeed ingredients: Plant (71%), Animal (12%), Marine (12%) and Other (5%), and that one third of marine ingredients are by-product from processing. The representative stressed the importance of taking a holistic approach to ingredient sourcing, to avoid replacing one ingredient type with another which might have its own environmental challenges. The ASC has an 'improvement ladder' model in place for marine ingredient sourcing, with four levels. The ASC representative explained their timelines for the implementation of the Feed Standard, which should be live in the first half of 2022. As part of this process, the ASC

will be establishing a Technical Working Group to assess specific ingredient risks. Members asked about participation in this working group, the trend for additional scrutiny of marine ingredients, and on any possible resistance from the feed sector on restrictions in usage of certain ingredient sources.

1.5 Two representatives from GLOBALG.A.P. explained their revised 'Compound Feed Manufacturer Standard', which will be released in September 2021. They explained that this has been reviewed following a public stakeholder consultation process. It includes requirements on the use of certified or FIP fishmeal and fish oil, which is currently set at 60% and will increase to 75% in 2025. GLOBALG.A.P standards also reference the FEFAC soy sourcing guidelines, with different percentage requirements depending on the farming practice seeking certification (e.g. 50% for terrestrial animals, 75% for most aquaculture and 100% for salmon). Members asked about the rationale for different expectations for different farmed species.

2. DISCUSSION OF FWG OBJECTIVES

2.1 The Secretariat presented a draft Objectives document and reminded FWG members of its purpose. It was drafted in order to provide focus to the FWG's next steps, but with the understanding that information gathering conducted by the FWG might necessitate further development or amendment of the group's objectives. The Secretariat also explained that the Objectives document draws from the overarching SSC Strategic Plan currently in development by the Steering Group. This has led to a simplification of proposed interventions from the FWG, and clarity on the specific role of the SSC within the wider sustainable seafood movement. The Secretariat invited the FWG to provide feedback on the overall structure of the document and on individual objectives.

2.2 FWG members were supportive of the overall direction of the Objectives document, and the clear link it draws between the FWG's work and the SSC's vision and aims. One member found the 'out of scope' section particularly helpful for focussing the group's discussions, whilst another appreciated the recognition that technical expertise will sit within the upstream supply chain and certification standard holders. Other members recognised that by defining a limited role for the SSC, the FWG can develop a holistic position on ingredient sourcing rather than feeling restricted to marine ingredients only. One member defined the FWG's overall driver as being able to have confidence that feed ingredients are being sourced in a responsible way. Another reflected that this would include recognition of the various 'improver' initiatives developed by the certification standard holders.

2.3 On the information-gathering objective (Objective 1): members found the session with certification schemes very informative, and would welcome further sessions in this style. A member pointed out that this objective will be an essential component of the FWG's work, and will be ongoing throughout the process. In future sessions, the FWG would like to hear from the feed formulators and then from the farming companies which buy from them. Both should be asked to focus on the ingredient risk assessment processes and how these influence buying decisions. They should also be invited to reflect on the unintended consequences of any constraints imposed by sourcing policies or certification standards (e.g. on the health and welfare of fish). One member cautioned that the FWG's research, and these presentations, should not have an imbalanced focus on salmon farming. As experts, presenters should be invited to explain their own understandings of aspirational best practice in feed sourcing.

2.4 On the external engagement objective (Objective 2): a member highlighted the importance of recognising the technical expertise of other organisations. It was suggested that a useful role for the SSC will be identifying which stakeholders have authority over our intended outcomes, and advocating for these stakeholders to make the desired changes. A member suggested that an overarching intention for the FWG could be to ensure that risk-based decisions are codified into upstream supply chains. The mitigation of these risks by the stakeholders closest to the issues was seen as a valuable objective. A member pointed out that some elements of this objective are achieved by inviting relevant stakeholders to present to the FWG.

2.5 On the objective to align SSC sourcing practices (Objective 3): it was recognised that whilst there is existing interest in feed within the FWG, the wider SSC membership will need simpler, actionable guidance to meet responsible sourcing expectations for feed in their supply chains. One member highlighted potential misalignments between existing SSC member commitments (e.g. specific soy/palm requirements) and the lower bar set by some certification standards. This should be considered when referencing external organisations in any Code or Guidance updates. Another member highlighted the benefits of encouraging alignment of member sourcing policies in relation to feed, which this objective would support.