Fact Sheet for Oyster Licence Holders

PIRSA and the South Australian Oyster Growers Association (SAOGA) continue to work closely together on disease prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies for the industry. For further information, visit: www.pir.sa.gov.au/poms

Port River POMS Outbreak

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) has again occurred this summer in the containment zone of the Port Adelaide River system. As a result, PIRSA have increased their communication and awareness campaign, targeting the public and key stakeholders (in particular, vessel owners) with a focus on good vessel biofouling and ballast water management. Other strategies aimed at containing POMS to the Port Adelaide area have included: destroying oysters at key locations, imposing a ban on taking bivalve shellfish, and providing advice to dredging projects.

Prevention and Preparedness in the Commercial Growing Regions

Feral Oyster Monitoring and Management

Feral oyster populations within, and adjacent to, growing regions pose a potential disease risk. The oyster industry have previously implemented Pacific oyster knockdown events. Contact your SAOGA Bay Rep for more details on organised knockdown events in your area.

If mortalities in feral oyster populations in the regions are observed, it should be immediately reported to PIRSA on 24-hour Fishwatch hotline 1800 065 522 or contact PIRSA directly on the below contact details. If you come in contact with any feral oysters suspected to have disease, do not visit a commercial oyster farm that same day. Please follow decontamination protocols outlined on PIRSA’s website, see:


Early Detection of POMS

Early detection of POMS when the virus may be present but not causing mortalities (generally between 16-20°C) could significantly reduce the impact to industry (e.g. rapid response, containment, emergency harvest). The State-wide POMS surveillance program was funded by government again this season (2019/20).
The spring 2019 early detection surveillance - across all oyster farming regions and hatcheries - did not detect the virus prior to water temperatures increasing. Warmer water is associated with disease outbreaks if the virus is present. In autumn 2020, PIRSA will undertake another early detection surveillance, however, as previously communicated, it will be up to industry to fund the program thereafter. PIRSA and SAOGA thank those growers who have provided oysters for the surveillance program to date.

PIRSA will continue to provide rapid investigation and response to mortality events to rule out the POMS virus. To date, the virus that causes POMS has not been detected in the commercial growing areas. Growers are urged to remain vigilant and familiarise themselves with the following advice on identifying and reporting any unexplained oyster mortalities.

What should you do if you experience unusually high or unexplained mortality?

In accordance with the Aquaculture Regulations 2016, unusually high and unexplained mortality or suspected or confirmed disease must be reported to PIRSA. If you are unsure, guidelines to assist you in determining an unusually high mortality are as follows:

- Spat <2mm: report >40% mortality at first grading or within 4 weeks, or
- Spat >2mm: report >20% mortality at first grading, or
- Other oysters: report >10% mortality at grading.

These guidelines have been sourced from PIRSA’s Disease Response Plan (Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome) or as advice from SAOGA.

Oyster growers who need to report a mortality event can follow these simple steps:

1) **Determine the extent of the mortality** - determine the percentage of oysters that have died (e.g. 10%, 15%, 30% etc.).

2) **Collect samples**
   1. 40 live oysters (minimum) from the mortality site (e.g. from the same baskets).
   2. If you have immediate access to another batch of oysters, collect 40 live oysters from a site where there are no mortalities (e.g. at the grader or from another vessel out tending to another site).
   3. Separate the samples, do not cross contaminate. Bag, label and place samples on ice ready for lab courier collection (within 24 hours). PIRSA will cover costs associated with couriers and laboratory testing with the aim to rule out POMS or other infectious disease.

3) **Notify**
   1. PIRSA immediately on 24-hour Fishwatch hotline 1800 065 522 or contact PIRSA directly on the below contact details.
   2. Your Bay Representative (or SAOGA).
## KEY CONTACTS

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