

Terms of Reference

Fish Health Advisory Committee Updated July, 2003

Objective

The Fish Health Advisory Committee (FHAC) will serve as an independent body tasked with acquiring and synthesizing information to advise government and other organizations involved in fish management or culture on standards, goals and procedures to protect and promote the health of wild and farmed fish.

Core Function #1: Develop and maintain a generic fish health management plan that can be applied by private and public fish culture facilities so that site specific management plans can be developed to address existing and emerging fish health issues in an effective and timely manner.

Core Function #2: To provide evidence-based recommendations and expert-opinion on how to best measure and manage emerging fish health issues, especially, but not exclusively related to fish health management plans.

Core Function #3: To identify and advise government and the academic community on key unknowns, uncertainties, and resource limits that inhibit the committees ability to address core functions #1 and #2.

Composition of the Committee

Committee members must have experience and expert knowledge of fish health issues as they pertain to problems arising in British Columbia fishes.

The committee will be composed of:

- Permanent members
 - 2 representative from each of (i) the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO); (ii) Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF); (iii) Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP) and (iv) the BC Salmon Farmers Association (BCSFA)
 - agencies will be asked to supply FHAC representatives
 - 2 members-at-large who are not employees of any of the four groups listed above.
 - Members-at-large are invited to permanent membership by the remaining permanent members.
 - A member-at-large will chair the committee
- Ad hoc members
 - The permanent members of the committee will reserve the ability to invite external experts to consult on issues on a case-by-case basis.
 - Sub-committees may be struck to deal with specific issues

Reporting

Reports or other products of the FHAC will be shared with the relevant programs within DFO, MAFF, MWLAP and BCSFA as well as delivered to stakeholders affected by the FHAC research or management recommendations.

Operations

The FHAC will not have any regulatory power or responsibilities.

The FHAC will adopt a best-evidence model for generating advice. Products of the committee will be based on consensus of the members. Where disagreement exists, the FHAC will be required to articulate the basis for disagreement on issues and suggest a strategy for resolving the disagreement.

Their role will be to advise on best practices, standards, procedures or objectives for fish health management. Issues will be brought to the committee by agencies or organizations tasked with managing or culturing wild or farmed fish health. Issues for consideration will be presented to the Chair of the committee.

For the purpose of this committee, fish health includes the biotic and abiotic factors that influence the distribution and abundance of disease in fish as well as factors that limit the capacity of fish populations to meet social and ecological expectations for productivity and sustainability. The FHAC will consider other social and ecological effects only as they pertain to specific fish health issues.

The FHAC will focus on synthesizing and evaluating data and reports from government, academia and others to develop a single coherent view on fish health issues.

The committee will utilize its budgeted resources to ensure their responsibilities are completed in a timely fashion and to help fill gaps in knowledge that limit their ability to assess an issue. Allocation of resources will be by consensus of a quorum of the committee (quorum =5 members including 1 representative from each group providing permanent members).

The FHAC will be concerned primarily with issues that transcend individual sites or cases, but will examine site/case specific issues if they highlight emerging issues.