

Background

BG-PR-10-004e

December 10, 2010

AQUACULTURE LICENCES AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

Marine finfish, shellfish and freshwater aquaculture operations will require a new federal aquaculture licence in order to legally operate on December 18, 2010. Application packages for new federal aquaculture licences were sent to aquaculture licence holders in November. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has already begun to issue federal licences to applicants, and is making it a priority to process the applications of all existing facilities currently holding provincial aquaculture licences.

Under the new B.C. Aquaculture Regulatory Program, there are currently four federal aquaculture licence categories:

- marine finfish,
- shellfish,
- freshwater, and
- enhancement facilities (hatcheries).

Although all DFO-run enhancement facilities will be licensed by December 18, additional consultation with community-run enhancement operations is required to develop a licensing approach that suits the unique nature of their operations. Licensing approaches for these operations are expected to be in place in early 2011.

DFO has established the licence conditions that will be used, in conjunction with the *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations*, to regulate and govern the aquaculture industry in B.C. The licence conditions, which may vary as needed, set out requirements that must be compliant with, and will be enforced under, the *Fisheries Act*. This approach is consistent with the licensing of wild fisheries, which imposes different licence conditions for different fisheries.

The licence conditions for aquaculture set specific requirements that support the effective regulation of the different types of aquaculture operations that exist in B.C., such as shellfish and finfish production, as well as specific management requirements for operators including the need for management plans, escape prevention measures, habitat mitigation measures, record keeping, and reporting. Species-specific and site-specific licence requirements under the licence conditions are still being developed, and will be addressed through supporting appendices to the general licence conditions.

Aquaculture operations in B.C. will be managed in coordination with key environmental and health legislation such as the *Health of Animals Act*, *Food and Drugs Act*, *Pest Control Products Act*, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and *Species at Risk Act*.