

Sealer information workshop schedule

Charlottetown – March 14 – Recreation Centre
 Mary's Harbour – March 15 – River Lodge Hotel
 West St. Modeste – March 16 – Ocean View Motel
 Forteau – March 17 – Fireman's Hall
 Noddy Bay – March 14 – Fire Hall
 St. Anthony – March 15 – Lions Club
 Flowers Cove – March 16 – Lions Club
 Plum Point – March 17 – Plum Point Motel
 Roddickton – March 18 – May Flower Motel
 Hawkes Bay – March 14 – Torrent River Inn
 Port aux Choix – March 15 – Sea Echo Motel
 Cow Head – March 16 – Shallow Bay Motel
 Deer Lake – March 17 – Deer Lake Motel
 Baie Verte – March 18 – Baie Vista Inn
 La Scie (1) – March 21 – Fire Hall
 La Scie (2) – March 22 – Fire Hall
 Springdale – March 23 – Pelley's Inn
 Triton – March 24 – Town Hall
 Botwood – March 25 – Canadian Legion

Virgin Arm (1) – March 21 – Lions Club
 Virgin Arm (2) – March 23 – Lions Club
 Twillingate – March 22 – Lions Club
 Fogo – March 24 – Iceberg Arena
 Lumsden – March 21 – Fire Hall
 Wesleyville – March 22 – United Church Hall
 Glovertown – March 23 – Fire Hall
 Clarenville – March 24 – Clarenville Inn
 Bonavista – March 25 – Lions Club
 Dildo – March 24 – Lions Club
 Carbonear – March 25 – Knights of Columbus

Humane Harvesting Workshops

start at 9 a.m.

Quality/Health/Handling Workshops

start at 1 p.m.

Quality a key part of agreement with China

the department has undertaken to oversee the development and delivery of training to all sealers in the province to have them certified in the recognition and identification of healthy seals and to further promote quality awareness. This commitment will be achieved through a series of workshops and supported by conducting inspections of seals onboard vessels at landing sites throughout the province and the transportation of the raw material to licensed seal processing establishments.

While the details have not been finalized, training modules delivered to sealers on health certification will be developed in collaboration with Dr. Pierre Yves Daoust, an expert in marine mammal pathology, of the University of Prince Edward Island. An initial pilot session will serve to "train the trainers" with a series of comprehensive workshops proposed in partnership with the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board.

Understanding the Quality/Health/Handling Practices, coupled with the humane harvesting of seals, is essential in promoting the provinces sealing industry as a humane, sustainable and economically important industry. Complying with the food safety and hygiene controls prescribed by the Chinese from the initial harvest to final product form is a



crucial step in establishing this market opportunity and a welcome challenge for all industry stakeholders.

— Article submitted by the
 Department of Fisheries & Aquaculture

2011 SEALING NEWS

Humane harvesting key to future

Throughout the course of history seals have been an important resource for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Aboriginal people relied heavily on seals for food, fuel and clothing for thousands of years.

While much has changed with respect to how the commercial harvest is conducted, today's seal fishery provides significant revenues and employment to coastal communities at a time of the year when economic alternatives from the fishery are practically non-existent.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for managing this important resource and works in close partnership with stakeholders to achieve a harvest that is well managed, sustainable and humane.

To ensure that the seal harvest continues to develop and thrive, it is important that there is continued support for the seal harvest and a ready market for the products it produces.

An industry where the participants are well trained, highly skilled and professional will help secure this support.

To this end Fisheries and Oceans Canada intends to implement a mandatory requirement that sealers receive appropriate training in humane harvesting methods.

This training could be mandatory as early as 2012.

The sealing industry has been asking for mandatory training and under the leadership of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB) training workshops have been developed for seal harvesters, which are fully endorsed by DFO.

Seal harvesters who have attended these workshops will be recognized by the department as having the required training in humane harvesting when it becomes mandatory. The PFHCB will be conducting more workshops in March 2011.

These workshops are free of charge. Seal harvesters who have not

participated in similar workshops in either 2009 or 2010 are strongly encouraged to attend in 2011.

— Article submitted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Sealer info workshops

The Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, will be holding 30 sealer information workshops throughout the province between March 14 and 25.

These workshops will focus on humane harvesting practices, including the regulatory requirements of the three-step process, as well as the new quality/health/handling requirements related to the recent agreement between Canada and China on the exportation of edible seal products. Sealing activity that is conducted in a humane and professional manner, ensuring the highest possible quality standards, is critical to rebuilding our international markets and reputation.

It appears that these workshops will become a mandatory requirement, and sealers are strongly encouraged to attend. Please refer to the attached schedule for workshop times and locations.

Complete workshop schedule on Page 4



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Fair treatment for sealers now!

Defeating the EU Seal Products Ban at the European General Court

The European Union's ban on seal products calls Canadians immoral for our commercial seal hunt – no matter how we do it, and no matter how many seals are in our waters. Yet throughout the 27 nations that make up the EU, there are some 7 million hunters, and hunting contributes almost \$22 billion annually to the European economy.

It's time to eliminate this double standard. We are fighting a Court battle in the European Union to overturn the ban, and we are raising funds to have our arguments heard. We are fighting for fair treatment – and we need your help!

Background

The Fur Institute of Canada (FIC) is working together with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and other plaintiffs throughout Canada, Greenland, Norway, the United Kingdom and Namibia in a legal effort to overturn the European Union's ban on seal products. The ban, passed in 2009, was placed on

the books in October of the same year. In August 2010, rules for enforcing this ban were also published.

Our case before the European General Court challenges both the ban and its implementing regulations. The effort is distinct from Canada's World Trade Organization (WTO) challenge against the law. A WTO victory helps Canada's trade interests, but it will not overturn the ban. But a victory at the EU General Court will force the Europeans to repeal their law. This would be a major victory for sealers, the sealing industry and rural Canadians in general.

Raising Support

Various levels of trade and government have made contributions to help cover our legal fees. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board for a recent contribution of \$5000. Other financial supporters from Newfoundland and Labrador include the Provincial

Government, G.C. Rieber, NuTan Furs and the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union.

This support adds to significant contributions from ITK's fundraising efforts, other Provincial and Territorial Governments, the Canadian Federal Government, and other Canadian and international trade and hunting representatives. In order to continue the effort, the FIC is launching a public fundraising campaign in the very near future, both at local and national levels.

If you want to help overturn the ban, please donate by visiting www.seal-sandsealing.net and going to "Lend Your Support", or mail a cheque or money order to Fur Institute of Canada, 331 Cooper St., Suite 701, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0G5. Please also look for our Facebook page under the heading "Fair Treatment for Sealers" – coming soon!

Thank you for your support.

— Article submitted by the
Fur Institute of Canada

A 'new and improved' sealers' association

The Canadian Sealers Association (CSA) is very pleased to advise members that through assistance by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture we have contracted the services of a consulting firm, Gardner Pinfold Consulting Ltd., to complete a reorganization of your Association. This will also include the preparation of a business strategy and work plan together with a financial proposal. We are hopeful that this will create a new and improved Association which is economically viable and positioned so that it can meet the needs and objectives of its members as we move forward and develop a viable industry.

This review is nearing completion and we are hopeful that we will have options to discuss with our members as we undertake our regional consultations at various locations around the province. These

regional meetings will commence the second week of March on the Northern Peninsula and Labrador. Sealers will be advised via local media and The Fisheries Broadcast. Members should also note that at these meetings we will be selecting delegates to attend the next Annual Meeting at which time a new Board will be selected, representing each fleet category in each of the 8 sealing regions of the province.

The CSA has fully endorsed the 3-step process and it is requesting all those participating in the annual seal harvest to ensure that they have taken part in the information workshops being offered, and that proper care will be exercised to prevent any infractions when harvesting seals. Just last year, the number of infractions was considerable and as we try to build and develop the sealing industry, the onus is on sealers to

harvest seals in the manner that has been prescribed by the International Veterinarian Working Group (IVWG) and is being enforced by the Department of Fisheries and Ocean.

We fully support training in the 3-step harvesting process and have requested that it be made mandatory as soon as possible.

All members' renewal applications for 2011 were sent out in early January and we urge you to remit these as soon as possible. The CSA is committed to rebuilding a strong organization that will be the main representative for sealers in this province. In order for us to achieve this goal we need the full support of all those who participate in the industry.

— Article submitted by the
Canadian Sealers Association

Seal markets for 2011: Cautiously optimistic

In 2008 the financial crisis, compounded by negative stigmas created by EU bans and animal rights lobby activities, caused a significant drop in overall volume and value of seal products.

Given the combined stated indications of various buyers, it does not appear that there will be much overall change in the total volume required for the market this season. However, many companies have full intentions to buy mostly under prescribed volume and quality stipulations, to meet their market requirements. It is unrealistic to believe that all market problems would be resolved in one or two seasons following such disruptive influences over the last years, but together "the industry", with Government support, is seen to be making progress toward improving market conditions.

Based on marketing reports and presentations - given primarily at the Regional and Atlantic DFO meetings in December and January - all processors maintain an air of optimism, yet caution, for the market. Various initiatives of individual producers, and efforts of common marketing associations, all report positive indications from mostly Asian and the Russian markets, that buyers are showing increased levels of interest.

Of particular relevance is the increased demand and prices for farmed fur (primarily mink and fox). Local

processors of hides feel that this should have positive influence on demand for seal pelts in the coming months. Additionally, Canada has signed a deal with China to allow export of edible seal products (meat and oil) into mainland China. The deal is heavily weighted toward ensuring high food safety standards for Chinese consumers. To achieve and maintain this market access, Canada must be able to demonstrate that only healthy seals are harvested, in a humane manner, and then handled properly (bled, skinned and stored) on board vessels and in transport to and from processing facilities, all the way to the end customer.

The processing sector sees this agreement as the backbone of the future of trade with China and other emerging markets for edible products. Acceptance by the Chinese of:

- Our harvesting regulations, in part referring to the "Three Step Process," as "humane";

- Our ability to identify healthy animals, referring to the "Quality Workshops and Materials" which will be presented this spring in training sessions; and

- Of the processing sectors proven capabilities regarding ensuring sanitary processing, as they were visited and audited by Chinese Inspectors in June 2010, has allowed establishment of a list

of certified exporters.

All these are positive indications that the Chinese trust Canada's fisheries management and food safety protocols. As an industry we should feel confident that we are well positioned to meet these new market demands. It is not to say that all this will be demonstrated and maintained without commitment and effort by all in the supply chain. In short, the ball is in our court to collectively be better, in terms of our harvesting and processing practices, than ever before.

While at the harvest this season, please remember and understand that non-compliance to the regulations and the code of practice has profound negative impact on the industry as a whole. As such, processors ask that harvesters attend information and training sessions this spring, to ensure everyone is fully informed and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet market demands. The agreement with China refers to all edible products so as the pelts have the fat attached, they must be treated as prescribed in the code. All processors, at least those seeking to access the Chinese market, require that their suppliers, you the sealers, are fully committed to the new Code of Practice.

Please contact your local buyer for more information and to discuss their requirements for this season.

Eyeing the opportunities

Chinese market demands high standards

In January, 2011, the Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, announced that the Government of Canada had achieved an agreement with the People's Republic of China for market opportunities for edible seal products in China. This arrangement between Canada and China represents a tremendous opportunity to promote full utilization and build new markets for the sealing industry.

One key component in the cooperative arrangement between the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of the People's Republic of

China is to ensure seals harvested for human consumption are healthy and meet the highest quality standards.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, through the efforts of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, played a significant role in these negotiations in developing a Code of Practice to address the quarantine and health requirements for those edible seal products destined for China.

Given the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture's longstanding commitment to quality assurance and promoting the province as a leader in producing top quality seafood products,

Please see *QUALITY*, page 4

