



Friday update



Captain's Blog

September 8, 2017

Auckland University still pushing shonky research into QMS

Auckland University academics renewed their efforts this week to discredit the Quota Management System that underpins the country's commercial fisheries.

Also this week, Auckland University tumbled down the list of global rankings, dropping by 27 places to just inside the top 200 at number 192.

Meanwhile Otago, Canterbury and Massey universities maintained their performance and the University of Waikato and Auckland University of Technology jumped a band, according to the global rankings published by Times Higher Education, which are primarily based on research volume, income, reputation and citations.

If the shonky, politically driven research by Auckland University academics into alleged fishing catches over 61 years from 1950 is anything to go by, it is no wonder the institution is on the slide. And the university cannot say it was not warned about the huge discrepancies in a so-called research programme report it has rushed to embrace.

On June 1 last year, law firm Chapman Tripp on behalf of Seafood NZ wrote to Auckland University Vice-Chancellor Prof Stuart McCutcheon raising formal concern about the catch reconstruction report, noting "it is vital that the university's brand and reputation is maintained through research that is undertaken applying the highest ethical

In the Media

Burkhart Fisheries are challenging a Marlborough District Council ruling that denied them resource consent to access a new launch site that runs adjacent to the Chancet Rocks scientific reserve.

Ward's biggest employer said in their notice of appeal, filed in the Environment Court, that the council had failed to account for the adverse impacts on the local community.

Burkhart Fisheries previous location was left unusable after last year's Kaikoura earthquake.

The Blenheim landfill is now home to 220 tonnes of Marlborough Sounds' oysters and related farming equipment in the bid to stop the spread of the deadly parasite *bonamia ostreae*. The removal of farmed oysters in Big Glory Bay and the Sounds was ordered in June by the Ministry for Primary Industries to protect the iconic wild Bluff fishery. Bruce Hearn, who has been farming the delicacy for 30 years, said he now wasn't sure if he would stay in the oyster business.

A new 34-metre trawler will bring 80 new jobs to Hawke's Bay. A 50/50 joint venture between Ngati Kahungunu and Hawke's Bay Seafood saw the purchase of the *Glomfjord* last year. Having previously fished in the North Sea, the vessel arrived in New Zealand five months ago and has since been fishing for hoki off the West Coast of the South Island.

The Ministry for Primary Industries will tag 100,000 snapper over the next three years in SNA1. It will be the first tagging

standards, particularly given the University of Auckland's international reputation and ranking".

There was no response.

On Oct 11, Seafood NZ wrote to Prof McCutcheon pointing out the claim New Zealand's catch was 2.7 times more than that reported to the United Nations Fisheries and Agriculture Organisation could not be substantiated given the report's methodology and data was so unclear.

The claims were damaging to a \$1.8 billion export industry that employed thousands of New Zealanders and were being used in a political campaign to discredit the industry, the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Government.

The report headlined by Auckland University Business School head Prof Nigel Haworth, who is also president of the Labour Party, and colleague Dr Glenn Simmons has been dismissed by international experts and MPI and NIWA scientists.

Seafood NZ urged the university to provide the requisite research material to allow a rigorous, independent evaluation of the report's findings.

The university declined to do so and Prof McCutcheon declined to meet.

Instead it claimed it had no information relating to the project – which is part of an international Sea Around Us project part funded by the US-based Pew Foundation – nor to the catch reconstruction estimates, or to the analyses.

To the extent the university was involved, it refused access to documentation on the grounds of confidentiality.

That is not the way a responsible, publicly-funded institution behaves.

Seafood NZ has complained to the Ombudsman over what it sees as clear breaches of Official Information Act obligations.

The complaint has been acted on and Ombudsman investigators questioned university staff last week.

Dr Simmons and fellow anti-commercial fishing academics resuming their attack this week aimed to "lower the QMS from its undeserved pedestal".

The hysterical arm of the recreational fishing lobby that has aligned with Simmons et al needs to be wary of what it wishes for.

Any genuine, comprehensive review of the QMS – which would hold no fears for the seafood industry – would naturally encompass the missing piece of the jigsaw. That is the size of the recreational catch, which is currently not measured or properly managed.

The Labour Party supports the QMS but advocates an independent review of its operation and also the performance of MPI, according to its fisheries policy

review in SNA1 since 1993 and will cost \$8 million. Initial results are anticipated in 2019 and 2020, with final results due in 2022.

After 37 years, **Southland character Tommy Foggo** is leaving Sanford to try the semi-retired life on for size. After starting his career in Bluff as a Production Manager in 1980 with just six staff, he will leave behind a strong salmon and aquaculture business with 190 employees, farming, and processing around 6,000 metric tonnes of New Zealand Seafood every year. His boss Greg Johansson, Sanford's Chief Operating Officer said Tommy's contribution has been massive and that they will be sad to say goodbye.

Aquaculture Conference 2017

Aquaculture New Zealand will celebrate its bright future at their 2017 conference in Nelson on September 20 and 21.

With over \$530 million in revenue achieved last year, the aquaculture industry is over half way to their \$1 billion goal, and there are many reasons to be optimistic about the future.

They say growing demand for New Zealand's premium and unique products, a burgeoning nutraceutical industry, exciting new farming opportunities, cutting edge research and positive policy changes for consenting, presents them with a platform for a bright future.

The 2017 New Zealand Aquaculture Conference will explore that opportunity with sessions looking at:

- Guarding our waterways: strengthening our sustainability efforts
- Ensuring our growing environment with effective biosecurity systems
- New, high-value applications of our products
- Global economic outlook
- Enabling policies and planning
- Research to support industry goals
- Resilient and innovative farmers

To register [click here](#) or to learn more about the speakers [click here](#).

Whitianga Scallop Festival

Tickets are on sale for the 2017 Whitianga Scallop Festival. The festival is

released yesterday.
But its antagonism towards MPI is revealed in an extraordinary citing of criticism of officials for alleged cover-ups and “misrepresentations to their Minister, journalists and the public”.
That will make for interesting conversations if Labour is elected.
As for the Ombudsman’s report into Auckland University’s conduct, due any day, that could prove highly educational.

[Click here to read our latest magazine](#)



on September 16 and features celebrity chef Nadia Lim, live music all day and scallops cooked in every way imaginable. For more information or to get tickets [click here](#).



Hurricane-trapped seabird scientist receives 2017 Holdaway Award for work in Hauraki Gulf.

Seabird scientist Elizabeth Bell has been announced the winner of the 2017 Holdaway Award for leadership in and around the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The award was conveyed via Skype to the Turks and Caicos Islands where Elizabeth is managing a project to conserve iguana, terns and tropicbirds. She had been evacuated from her field location the previous night due to Hurricane Irma. Hauraki Gulf Forum Chair John Tregidga made the announcement on Wednesday at the annual Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Seminar, hosted by the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

Elizabeth Bell is senior ecologist with Blenheim-based Wildlife Management International Limited and has worked for over two decades on one of the Gulf’s most charismatic residents, the taikō/black petrel.

The black petrel breeds only on Great Barrier and Little Barrier islands. A seabird risk-assessment in 2013 identified it as New Zealand’s most at risk seabird from commercial fishing, with an accidental capture rate potentially fourteen times higher than its population of 2700 breeding pairs can sustain.