

Sustainable Fishery Certification:
MAFAC Recommendations
on a role for NOAA?

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Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

MAFAC

- * Federal advisory committee.
- * Wide range of stakeholder perspectives.
- * National, not regional, in scope.



Assignment: August 2012

- * Can MAFAC agree on a framework for NOAA Fisheries to create a certification mark ?
 - * Acknowledgment of sustainability and origin.
 - * Focus on domestic fishery products meeting US law.
 - * Consider program costs and options.
 - * Identify certification criteria/standards.
 - * Develop a report in 2013.

MAFAC Process

- * Year-long review
- * Solicited range of public input:
 - * Producers, buyers and non-gov't organizations
 - * Personal interviews & surveys
- * Extensive internal deliberations.
 - * Task force and full MAFAC membership.

The status quo



Understanding the Status Quo

- * Certifications already exist.
 - * Dozens of national and international efforts
 - * Modifying existing programs
Developing improved standards

Understanding the Status Quo

- * Many certifications?
 - * Abundance of logos
 - * Diverse standards
 - * Expensive?
 - * Irrelevant?
- * Irony alert

Understanding the Status Quo

- * NOAA Fisheries exists, too.
 - * Federal agency with \$800+ million budget
 - * Authority: scientific, legal, regulatory & enforcement
 - * FishWatch.gov
- * Seafood buyers & vendors common refrain:
 - * Defend the adequacy of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act

Where you stand depends on where you sit

They won't buy my fish!

I'm certified, why aren't you?

They keep changing the standards!

The new standards work for me.

The consumers don't even care!



Where you stand depends on where you sit

Certification is good marketing.

Certification is needless and costly,
and NOAA already has Magnuson.

Certifications earn us money,
and Magnuson not enough.



You can't fix everything...

MAFAC's Recommendation

MAFAC Recommendation: Core concepts.

- * Fee-for-service.
- * Business-to-business, not consumer-based.
- * Rely on the principles in the Magnuson Act.
- * Use existing resources:
 - * Enhance FishWatch.
 - * Seafood Safety Inspection Service
- * Accept limitations on scope: don't solve everything.

MAFAC Recommendation: Comply with U.S. Fisheries Laws

- * “Sustainable U.S.A. seafood”
 - * Wild-caught fishery products
 - * Caught by U.S. fishermen, landed in U.S. ports
 - * in accordance Magnuson Act (and other fisheries laws).
- * AND
 - * fishery stock status is known;
 - * fishery is not overfished;
 - * no overfishing occurs.

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If overfishing or overfished or if rebuilding plans exist, NOAA needs more criteria after receiving feedback from other stakeholders.

MAFAC Recommendation: Traceability

- * Fishery products must be traceable
 - * Sellers must show sustainable, legal, domestic source
- * Traceability mechanisms can be flexible
 - * Credible, audited chain-of-custody program
 - * Paid for by seafood sellers
 - * Can use third-party products
- * NOAA Seafood Safety Inspection Service audits
 - * Evaluates adequacy of traceability documentation
 - * NOAA Fisheries develops policies or rules with criteria



MAFAC Recommendation: Registration, displayed on FishWatch

- * Create a verification process to so buyers can identify products registered as sustainable USA seafood:
 - * Visit and interact with [FishWatch.gov](https://www.fishwatch.gov)
 - * Enter a registration number and confirm status
 - * Search for vendors, processors or dealers
- * Each participant in the chain of custody for a fishery product can seek certification and obtain a registration number.



MAFAC Recommendation: Fee-for-service

- * Business to business, so business pays
- * Start-up costs:
 - * Highest estimate \$500,000, others below \$100,000;
 - * Depends on adequate legal authority (may need rulemaking)

MAFAC Recommendation: Fee-for-service

- * Recurring costs:
 - * Audits
 - * Registration web services
 - * Program-related education and communication expenses
 - * Enforcement and defense of the program from legal challenges.
- * Estimated cost up to \$1.2 million annually
 - * Fee-for-service costs per-participant less than \$1000 per year.
 - * More detailed cost-analysis needed

MAFAC Recommendation: Phased implementation

State waters?

Aquaculture?

Yes, but start with federal waters.



MAFAC: substantial consensus, *but NOT unanimous.*

DATA CONCERNS

- * Cost-benefit?
- * Global non-acceptance?
- * Sufficient participation?
- * Budget constraints?
- * Outcome assessment?

VALUES CRITIQUES

- * Magnuson is unsustainable
- * Impact to other certifications
- * Certification needs 3rd party, not NOAA Fisheries or SSIS
- * Omits other important moral or economic factors
- * What about consumers?

Sustainable Fishery Certification: *MAFAC Recommendations*

The pursuit of progress,
not perfection.