

LOUISIANA SHRIMP TASK FORCE

MINUTES

November 16, 2009

ROBERT BARHAM  
CHAIRMAN

LOUISIANA ROOM  
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES  
2000 QUAIL DRIVE  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

## AGENDA

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of 10.26.09 Minutes
- IV. CDBG Disaster Program Update, Kris Van Orsdel, LRA
- V. Update on Voluntary Inspection Program, Carrie Castille, LDAF
- VI. Individual Agency Assignments
- VII. Agency Updates
- VIII. Set Next Meeting Date
- IX. Public Comment\*

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

## THE LOUISIANA SHRIMP TASK FORCE

Monday, November 16, 2009, 1:30 PM

Randy Pausina, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, presiding.

Dr. Mike Strain – Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry  
David Helveston sitting in for Cathy Breaux – Louisiana Workforce Commission  
Stacie Deblieux – Louisiana Attorney General’s Office  
David Guilbeau – Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals  
Kris Van Orsdel – Louisiana Recovery Authority  
Danny Babin – Representative of Shrimp Processor Advisory Panel  
Rene LeBreton sitting in for Ewell Smith – LA Seafood Marketing and Promotion Board  
Dr. John Finley – LSU Department of Food Science  
Mark Schexnayder – Louisiana Sea Grant

Randy Pausina called the meeting to order and roll.

Clint Guidry, Jody Montelaro, Kelsey Short, and Mike Travis absent; all other members or their representatives were present.

**Danny Babin moved to approve minutes from previous meeting.  
Motion seconded by Dr. John Finley. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Pausina began the meeting by reviewing the motions from the previous Task Force meeting.

Mr. Pausina mentioned that the Louisiana Seafood Promotion Board has been working with Milling and Associates on developing a shrimp certification program.

Rene LeBreton said the Board has been working on getting the funding necessary to create such program.

Mr. Pausina asked Mr. LeBreton about an upcoming traceability meeting that the Board is holding on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. LeBreton said that he was not aware of the meeting, but would send a confirmation email to the members of the Task Force after he verified the meeting.

Mr. Pausina also said that the LDWF is acting on a definition of Louisiana shrimp and a draft rule is being developed by the legal section.

Mr. Pausina stated LDWF will be setting up a joint meeting with the Attorney General's Office, LDHH, LSPMB and LDAF to review existing statutes, regulations and agency roles to identify what modifications are needed to allow LDWF to conduct seafood testing.

Mr. Pausina also stated that at the next meeting Kelsey Short will provide information on the status of the funding necessary to allow improvements for packaging facilities and value added processing facilities.

Mr. Pausina stated that LDWF is in the process of setting up a meeting with the Louisiana Restaurant Association.

Mr. Pausina informed the Task Force that LDWF has developed a draft bill that would establish a new Shrimp Task Force patterned after the Oyster Task Force under the LSPMB. He stated the the Harvester and Processor Advisory Panels would be asked to review the draft bill and offer comments at their next meetings.

Mr. Pausina stated that at the next meeting he will provide a document that provides more detail concerning remaining disaster assistance funds.

Kris Van Orsdel with the Louisiana Recovery Authority gave an update on the CDBG Disaster Program. He said the funds are allocated into four programs, separated into three categories. He said there is a \$9 million parish wide program that will look at resources based on landings and storm damage. He said that by November 22 the parishes would have to have submitted information on how the parish would use the funding. He mentioned that throughout the month of December, the LRA and LDWF will be hosting outreach meetings throughout these areas, asking for input on how to allocate the resources through either a grant and loan program or a gear modification program. He said there is also the creation of a specific subset of \$8.3 million to go toward wholesalers, dealers and processors for equipment updates or compliance issues. The program is scheduled to launch in January.

Representative Harrison asked Mr. Van Orsdel if there is any possibility of CDBG funds being allocated to inspections.

Mr. Van Orsdel responded since these are HUD funds, it is not likely.

Dr. Strain stated that an inspection program would need to be a two prong approach assessing the issues of compliance and antibiotic/chemical checks.

Mr. Van Orsdel said that the difficulty in determining if disaster funds could be used for inspections is finding a way to create a tie of how it's going to bring a benefit to the industry.

Rep. Harrison mentioned that in looking at European Union standards, inspections are very stringent and are paid for by the importers and if the product is determined to be tainted it is destroyed on site. Rep Harrison also provided members with a list of 5 House bill numbers with authors and 5 Senate Bill numbers with authors which are directly related to imported shrimp.

Dr. Finley said the preliminary data of verifying shrimp using mineral profiles looks good, but there is a need for funding.

Dr. Strain told Dr. Finley that the funding would come from a pool of money allocated to residue testing.

Mr. Van Orsdel said that we can try to achieve some of the ideas mentioned, but a lot of this is hard to allocate CDBG funds towards and that the meetings will be used to allow the shrimpers to determine what are the best options for use of the funding.

Mark Schexnayder asked Dr. Finley if the mineral testing he has been working on would be used to check for re-boxing issues.

Dr. Finley said the testing would provide a fingerprint using 5 to 7 minerals. He said that shrimp have shown to be susceptible to the minerals present in the water they live in, providing a fingerprint of their region of origin.

Dr. Strain said the inspections would be carried out by a single group with two divisions, Department of Health and Hospitals looking at antibodies, residues, and trace-minerals, in conjunction with a Louisiana Department of Ag and Forestry team of voluntary inspectors that would be able to inspect all seafood. He mentioned that it would initially take 7 to 10 personnel to get the program started, operating as one team with multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Babin said he feels the same as Rep. Harrison, the need of getting the federal government to test at the point of entry of imports. He said we don't want to put Louisiana at an economic disadvantage. He also said that looking at excise taxes will provide a list of where shrimp that have been taxed have come from.

Dr. Finley stated that we need to show the federal government that we have the technology to sufficiently administer the inspections.

Mr. Van Orsdel mentioned that there is an advantage of Louisiana being the lead state, but we can oversee it to where it will jump to other states.

David Guilbeau responded by stating that the FDA has an inspection program in place and suggested the possibility of adding seafood inspections provided the FDA funds this.

Rep. Harrison said that in Washington dealing with the oyster issue there were 7 states working together, and brought a big front forth on the issue. He said that the Byrd money is there for dealing with issues such as port shopping. He said these funds are not really being used at this time.

Mr. Pausina said we are likely to see errors in mineral testing, much like the errors found in evaluating stable isotopes in fish stocks.

Dr. Finley said that the mineral testing will provide more of a yes or no answer on the country of origin. He mentioned that the accuracy will increase with the amount of different chemicals being tested for.

Mr. Pausina called for Dr. Carrie Castille to give her presentation on the Louisiana Voluntary Shrimp Harvester/Processor Program.

Dr. Castille said that the presentation was the result of the work of the subcommittee that was set up to create voluntary certification guidelines. She said the main goal is to look at safety and quality. She said that through past experiences it has been proven that voluntary programs and self imposed regulations work.

Presentation:

- Creation of a voluntary certification program based on sound science
- Based on state and federal programs including the Master Farmer Program
- Available to both harvesters and processors
- Follows Best Handling Practices (BHP's)
- Working with LDAF, LDWF, LDHH, LSU AgCenter, and SeaGrant
- Provides a Selective Harvester Program and a Selective Processor Program
- Implemented in 4 phases:
  - 1) Classroom training
  - 2) Business certification plan development
  - 3) Plan implementation, inspection, testing, and traceability (12 main areas)
  - 4) Certification, marketing, and branding
- Immediate tie into Trade Adjustment Assistance Program

**Mr. Van Orsdel moved that the Task Force consider adopting the recommendations set up in the LA Voluntary Shrimp Harvester/Processor Program as a system that can benefit the shrimp industry from harvesters through the state's processing system. Motion seconded by Mr. Babin. Motion carried unanimously.**

David Guilbeau asked Dr. Castille what is the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.

Dr. Castille said it began in 03-04 in an effort to relieve any monetary burdens imposed by imports and to develop business planning and development.

Mr. LeBreton asked Dr. Castille if the Promotion Board could work together in developing a trademark and if LSU is working on specifics on the amount of allowable additives in shrimp.

Dr. Castille welcomed the assistance of the Promotion Board in developing a trademark and stated that the specifics on additives have not been developed, but a protocol will be a key component in the program.

Mr. Schexnayder asked Dr. Strain about the current inspectors with his department.

Dr. Strain said that the inspectors currently in the beef industry are paid for by both state and federal funds and hourly fees that are charged to the plants that they are inspecting.

Dr. Castille said that getting LRA to endorse the program would be great.

Mr. Pausina asked Dr. Finley if he is currently doing his own work on the testing program. Dr. Finley said yes, he is primarily developing the testing program at LSU.

**Mr. Van Orsdel moved that as part of the LA voluntary inspection program, the state's commodity market programs including the LSPMB and LDAF play key roles in defining marketing strategies which benefit the shrimp industry. Motion seconded by Mr. Guilbeau. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Pausina called for a presentation by Lee Buckner, economist with LDWF.

Mr. Buckner presented slides outlining "The Revenue Generated by Shrimp Excise Tax". He showed that there is currently a downward trend in the amount of shrimp being taxed and the decline in the annual revenue from shrimp excise tax. He presented a slide showing the rate at which the funds generated would increase based on incremental 5 cent increases in the shrimp excise tax.

Mr. Pausina next reviewed the recommendations from the Advisory Panels. He proceeded to table some recommendations until the next meeting and others were put into categories currently under discussion in subcommittees.

**Danny Babin moved to request that LDWF take the Shrimp Processor recommendations and develop a list of actions for the Task Force to consider. Seconded by Dr. Strain. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Dr. Strain moved to ask for \$1 million in state general funds for an inspection/certification program for seafood. Seconded by Mr. Van Orsdel. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Dr. Strain moved to draft a response letter to the Wall Street Journal before the next meeting of the Task Force and allow the draft to circulate between Task Force members via e-mail. Seconded by Mr. Van Orsdel. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Schexnayder said that he has been looking at possible solutions that could be carried out on the fisheries management side such as a cap on licenses, restrictions on night shrimping, etc. He said he is also working on pursuing Federal disaster loan forgiveness to benefit the industry.

The next meeting of the Taskforce was set for 1:30 pm on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

**Danny Babin moved to adjourn. Seconded by David Guilbeau. Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.