



Paving the way for a New Common Fisheries Policy





A sustainable Common Fisheries Policy should aim at the highest long term economic yield of fish stocks at the lowest impact cost on stocks and environment

This goal must be reached by

- **An incentive for the active involvement of fishers**
- **Obtaining reliable catch figures**
- **Development of selective fishing methods**
- **Phasing out of discards**
- **Improved and uniform control**

A new policy

Fishery is complex. It has become clear that the distance between the fisherman and the management of his fishery is causing an unacceptable waste of resources and a poor economy.

To achieve an optimal utilization of the resource the fisherman should have the choice of method in conducting his fishery according to the variability of the circumstances at sea. This freedom must be exercised within a clear impact limit. First and foremost in the form of the total outtake of stocks that he can take. The individual fisherman should be accountable for his total catches, not just his landings at port.

With the right to plan his fishery, comes the responsibility of documenting, that the given catch quota is respected.

The transfer of responsibility should be established gradually as an offer for voluntary participation in a "second management track", where fishermen who wish to accept the responsibility and to document their fishery are submitted to reduced control, exempted of effort regulation and given increased catch quotas that reflect that all fish caught are accounted for.

Fishermen not participating in this alternative management option will have to submit to the present detailed public management. Consequently it is still necessary to improve the efficiency of the present CPF. Here priority must be given to the improvement of the control a more efficient effort management and reduction of discards

The prerequisite for the new policy approach is the establishment of a voluntary and reliable documentation of all catches.

In September Denmark launched an experiment with six vessels being equipped with cameras and sensors. The coming twelve months will show whether it is possible to use camera monitoring as a tool for the fishermen to give a reliable documentation of their catches.

The experiment can be followed at www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish. The results of the experiment and the perspectives in relation to a New Common Fisheries Policy will be presented 7.-9. October 2009 at the DanFish International Exhibition in Aalborg, Denmark.



Photo: Archipelago

On the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

Diagnosis of the CFP

The effects and problems of the CFP have been diagnosed in a number of papers and discussions. The following are core problems of the CFP.

1. A further development of management along the known path of rules and controls is likely to bring about a sustainable fishery in the end. The cost of administration, loss of optimal food potential and reduced economic performance of the fishery is likely to be high however.
2. EU top-down fisheries management is not able to take account of the variability of the circumstances at sea. The choice of planning and method should be left with fishermen in order to obtain maximum yield and minimal impact.
3. The problem of the CFP is accentuated by the overcapacity in fishing fleets. An overcapacity stemming from lack of adherence to community rules and a national fleet management that does not manage fishery as an economic activity.

A new approach

It is not possible to accomplish a fundamental shift of the CFP over night. An improved performance of present management principles must be addressed. Initiatives to reduce discards should be given priority, control must be improved, requirements for selective fishing should be more efficient and effort management has to change in order to improve efficiency and flexibility at the same time.

In the process of bringing a New Common Fisheries Policy about, the following principles should apply:

- EU has the responsibility of fixing the optimal outtake (TAC's based on MSY). Catches should be defined as such and not as "fish landed" after discards has taken place.
- Optimal utilization of the TAC's require that the decision regarding time, place and method of harvesting the fish must be taken by the person who is qualified by his presence and his experience – the fisherman. He will make sure to get the highest value at the lowest impact cost as the impact in the form of the catch quota is the limiting factor of his economy.
- When the fisherman obtains this right to harvest the way he sees best he must assume the responsibility of proving that his catches are within his quota allocation. He must do so by effective and non disputable methods e.g. in the form of observers on board or by camera documentation.

Transforming the CFP

The new policy should be introduced gradually as a "second management track" – an option for fishermen to choose.

The second track should

- Define the conditions in relation to fishers documentation of catches- e.g. CCTV cameras
- Allow vessels to use vessel catch quotas instead of landing quotas
- Use a simplified control e.g. in the form of a traceability chain concept that relates to market demands

Fishermen who can provide reliable documentation of their fishery are given a "vessel catch quota". This quota will be increased in order to reflect the fact that all catches are counted and accounted for.

Involvement of stakeholders

Stakeholders should be involved at 2 levels:

- In order to ensure legitimacy and quality in the CFP framework, stakeholders (RAC's - Regional Advisory Committees) must participate in the legislative work.
- Data from fishermen should be a more vital part of the biological advice. And the quality of advice should be improved by developing participatory research methods where fishermen's qualitative experience can be integrated into advice.

Effects

The benefits of a second management track would be:

- A correct registration of catches.
- Precise data for biological advice resulting in better advice and management and a more uniform perception of the stock situation between biologists and fishers.
- All catches are counted against the quota, with the effect, that the fisherman cannot optimize his economy by discarding. He has to optimize by developing selective fishing methods.
- Simplification of rules. The complex machinery of rules and controls do not have to apply. Why impose days at sea, when all catches are documented and accounted for.
- Discards can be abandoned.

From the fisherman's perspective:

- He will get additional fishing possibilities, and his perception of planning and optimizing his economic performance will change.
- Electronic documentation may replace a number of control rules
- His catches will gain access to markets for "sustainable products"

Allocation of fishing rights is a national prerogative and national policy has a strong role in supporting the present CFP and the implementation of new principles as well

- National management should consider an allocation of fisheries rights that is transparent with regard to allocation on vessel level. Furthermore it should facilitate fleet adaptation by allowing allocations to be pooled, swapped or traded between vessels. The Danish overcapacity of 30% in the demersal fleet disappeared in less than 2 years after introducing transferable rights.

EU should not set standards for national management of the fleet – besides the capacity reference ceiling, but member states should meet the consequences of their failure to ensure a proper balance between fleet and catch possibilities.

Conclusion

The individual fisherman must have an incentive to take responsibility. This can only be done by defining his responsibility in relation to his share of the outtake of the stock – by giving him catch quotas instead of landing quotas. It must be done on a gradual voluntary basis, and under the clear condition that the documentation of catches is reliable. Fishermen not able or willing to change to "the second management track" will have to submit to the present management regime.

Vessels equipped with camera observation. See all the vessels at www.fvm.dk/yieldoffish

