

13 April 2016
Reference: 1

To Phil Pond
Food Safe Queensland



As an organisation The Fishermens Portal Inc. represents many inshore wild harvest operators right along the coast of Queensland.

There are a number of issues we believe that Safe Food Queensland (SFQ) could review now that there has been time for industry to work under and become familiar with the regulations.

It would seem best to partner with SFQ as the regulator working with industry so we encourage you to set up a forum by which we can work through a review that would include (but not be limited to) the following points (briefly):

1. Currently, even though a person or an ACN registered company must be responsible; the accreditation is required for each primary boat licence. And lease arrangements are required to be submitted if the lease is the holder of the accreditation:

Notes from the application guide:

- *An accreditation is required in respect of each commercial fishing boat licence or other boat authority (e.g. commercial harvest authority or Commonwealth boat licence) that you hold.*
- *In cases where a licence is subject to a lease arrangement, an accreditation can be held by either the licence holder or the person to whom it is being leased. For SFPQ to issue an accreditation to a person who is leasing a licence written confirmation must be provided of the lease details including the names of both parties (lessee and lessor) and the start and end dates of the lease.*

This presents problems for us including:

- a. Should a fisher for one of many possible reasons change the Primary Boat Licence (PBL) part way through the year (or simply leases a licence for a small period of the year); a *new* accreditation must be obtained. This means that the fisher actually pays for the new accreditation each time the primary boat licence transfers and potentially, multiple times in the case of where more than one licence is working in the same operation.
- b. A PBL owner is not necessarily in control of how an operation carries out its food handling procedures.
Licence owners don't necessarily understand anything about fishing or handling seafood whereas the master fisher in charge of operations has an intricate knowledge of and control of food safe compliance. The fact that a

licence may be leases should not have any bearing on food safe aspects of an operation.

- c. When vessels change skippers because ownership of the vessel changes and yet the operation doesn't change then rather than have to apply for a new accreditation we see no reason not to allow for the accreditation and food safe plan to be transferred to the new operator

If the accreditation applied to the operation rather than the licence:

- *SFQ would achieve the desired outcome of safe food*
- *Remove a lot of administration and allow a fisher with a vessel to hold his accreditation even if he did not hold a fishing licence.*
- *He would not have to apply for a new accreditation every time he changed the licence as long as he renewed his accreditation every year.*
- *While SFQ may see a reduction in total income, there would also be a reduction in administration*
- *It is likely that SFQ would see a rise in income as many fishers would choose to 'renew when due' rather than apply for a new accreditation each time they wished to go fishing (in the case of operators who lease licenses)*
- *A lesser fee could be applied to register a transfer of vessel and safe food plan amend) to an operator who already has the accreditation on the old vessel.*

2. 'Harvesting' and 'Producing' accreditations cover operations onboard a vessel only when it is in the water but do not cover incidental activities that occur such as transferring seafood from a vessel when it is out of the water. Current regulation requires a person to hold a processing accreditation. The annual fee for this is \$1700.00 (plus the accreditation process and initial application fee). Simple activities such as packing crabs, palletizing frozen boxes, and packing whole fish on ice are very different from changing the form of the product from whole to fillet (or other).

Many regional ports do not have facilities or are not offering services that allow fishers to comply with the current regulations. Many fishers operate in remote areas where ports do not even exist.

Potentially, local Council laws in some areas may need to consider our operations from a town planning perspective but there is no connection between food safety concerns and council by-laws where the below activities take place.

Provided that the product does not change its state we should not require the processing accreditation if a harvesting or producing accreditation included 'packing that is incidental to our operations directly from the vessel when it is out of the water':

- *To a pallet (in the case of frozen fillets)*
- *To a chiller bin (in the case of fresh whole fish on ice)*
- *To boxes (in the case of live crab)*

- *To a freezer in readiness for transport (provided the freezer was included in the Food Safe Plan)*
3. If a fisher operates in the N11 he will need to hold a primary boat licence. The N11 is for bait and therefore does not require Food safe accreditation. However many PBL's have symbols such as the L3 which may not be part of the fisher's operations but be there incidentally. Even though the operator may have no intention of using any symbols other than the N11 they are required to hold the accreditation.
This is a good example of why the accreditation needs to apply to the operation and not the primary boat licence.
4. Lots of operations involve more than one PBL. Product comes back to a central point and is handled under the same food safe plan. Under current law we need to duplicate the food safe plan for each PBL.
This also results in a single operation (as far as food safety goes) having to pay multiple times.

We believe there are easy solutions to these issues and look forward to working through them with an aspiration to implement change so that from the beginning of 2017 the rules are streamlined to reduce your workload and to fit the dynamics of our industry.

Regards

Robert Pender

Chair

The Fishermens Portal Inc.