

Agri-food Media Content Analysis Monthly Update | February 2012

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February saw an unusually high amount of exposure of agri-food issues in the Chronicle Herald for a winter month, led by the agri-business theme. General articles about business start-ups, year-end performance, new markets and expansion drove coverage for this theme.

A proposal by a Scottish aquaculture company to develop sites in three Eastern Shore bays re-ignited the aquaculture development debate, and gave that theme the second highest exposure score for the month. While stakeholders on both sides of the debate had their voices heard, the coverage was decidedly anti-development.

Local food maintained its third place standing for the second straight month. Local food in restaurant reviews, wine-related articles (including a reduction or elimination of corkage fees for local wines in some Halifax restaurants), and low weekday attendance at the Seaport Farmers' market were the primary sub-themes.

February has historically seen an uptick in seal industry coverage and 2012 was no different, leading coverage in the industry spotlight theme. The industry continues to be decimated by

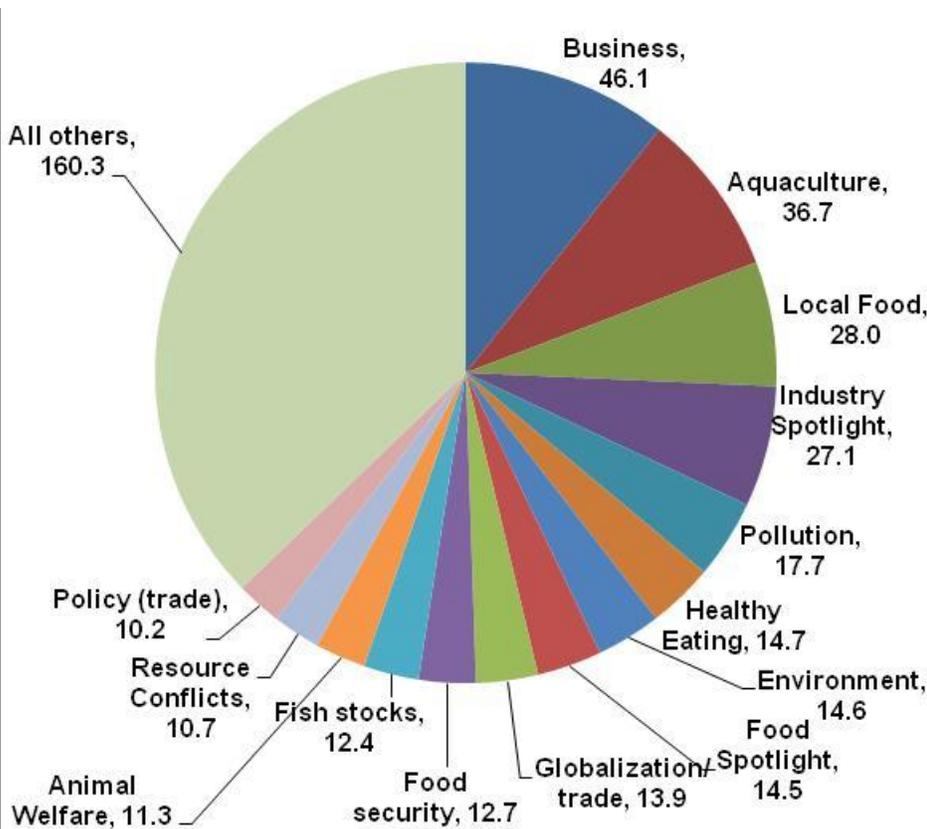
animal welfare activists and popular opinion, resulting in trade bans in historically important markets, despite industry claims of a humane, sustainable and culturally and economically important industry.

The pollution theme rounds out the top five agri-food themes in terms of media exposure score. Pollution was primarily a secondary theme in articles related to aquaculture.

Agri-food themes with media exposure scores above 10, and the relation to the total agri-food exposure score, are displayed in the chart.

The top five agriculture and fisheries themes are listed separately in the tables below.

Agri-food theme exposure- February 2012

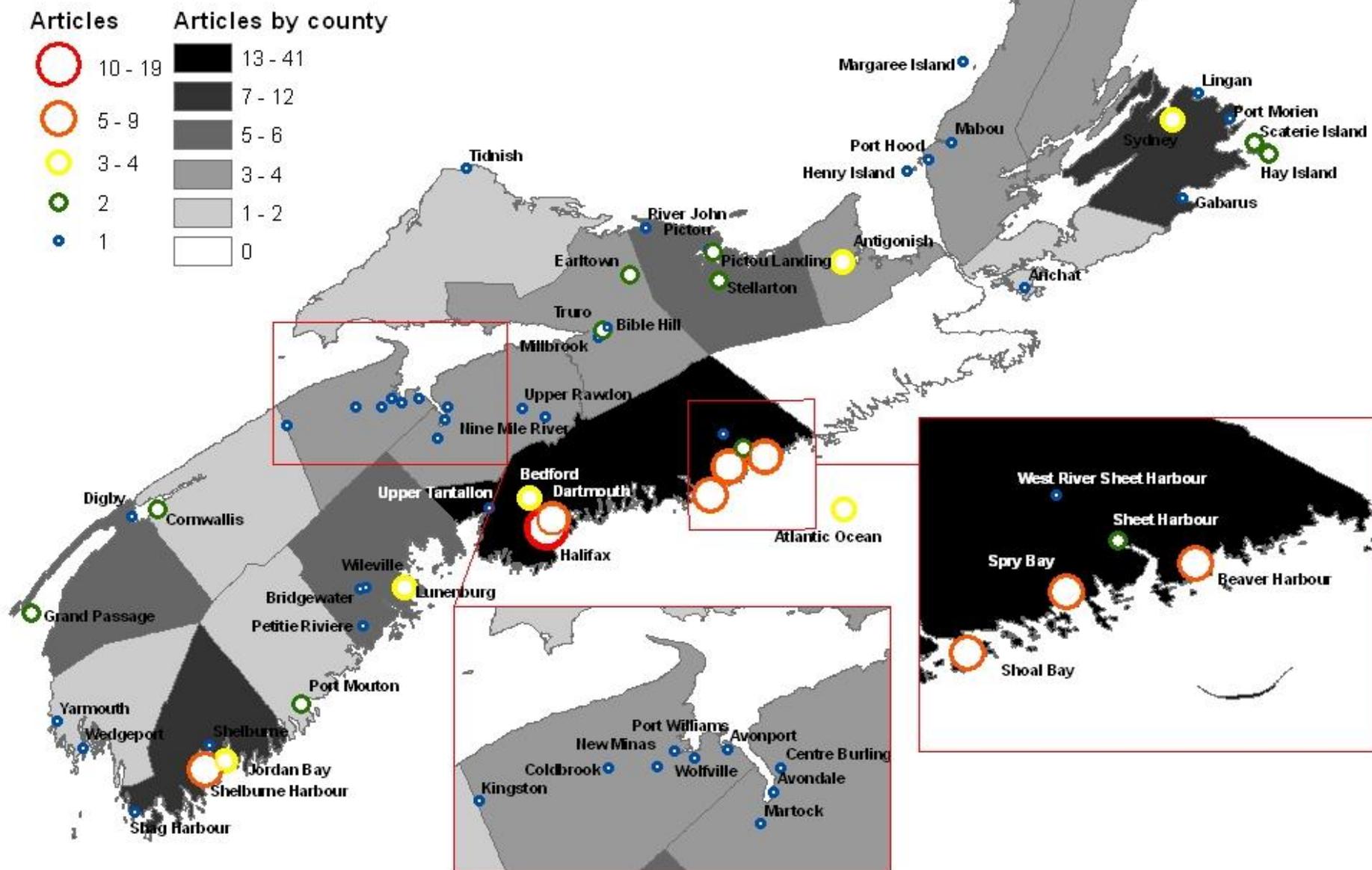


Total exposure score = 431.1
Prev 12 month avg = 331.4
Feb 2011 score = 297.0

AGRICULTURE THEME	EXPOSUREⁱ	SLANTⁱⁱ	TOP ISSUE
Business	25.5	Positive	Spotlight articles on agri-businesses
Local food	24.7	Highly positive	Local food in restaurant reviews/ attendance at Seaport FM
Food spotlight	12.4	Highly positive	Wine
Healthy eating	10.3	Positive	No dominant sub-theme
Industry spotlight	9.7		Secondary theme
<p><i>Note: A slant score is only given to a theme in articles where that theme is the main topic of the article. No slant is given to a theme when it is secondary to an article.</i></p>			

FISHERIES THEME	EXPOSUREⁱ	SLANTⁱⁱ	TOP ISSUE
Aquaculture	36.7	Negative	Proposed Eastern Shore development and debate
Industry spotlight	17.9	Neutral	Sealing
Pollution	16.3		Secondary theme to aquaculture
Local food	13.9	Highly positive	Local food in restaurant reviews
Fish stocks	12.4	Negative	Cod stocks and impact of seals
<p><i>Note: A slant score is only given to a theme in articles where that theme is the main topic of the article. No slant is given to a theme when it is secondary to an article.</i></p>			

Places referenced in February articles

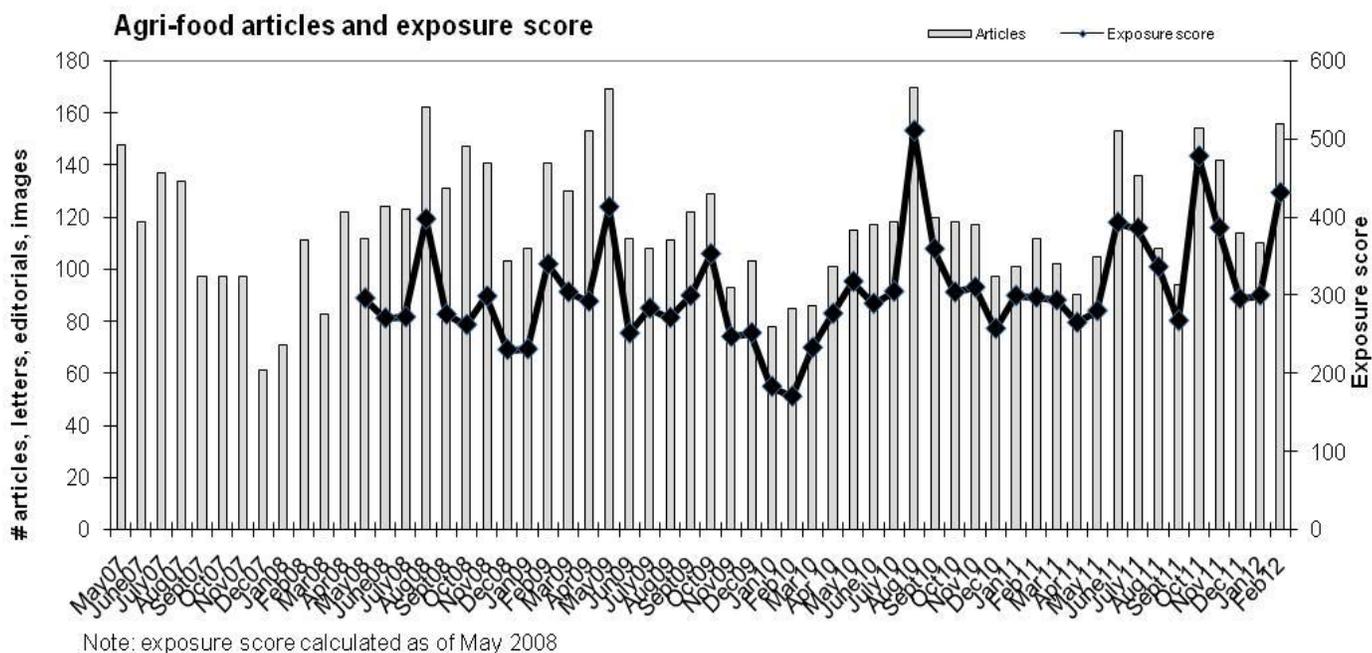


Halifax County had the most agri-food coverage in February. Halifax (local food and contract negotiations at Oland's Brewery) had the most coverage of specific cities/towns/areas, followed by Shelburne Harbour (aquaculture issues) and Beaver Harbour, Spry Bay and Shoal Bay (proposed aquaculture development).

In total there were 156 agri-food articles in February, 65 of which were related to primary agriculture and 68 to fisheries¹. Twenty-one articles related to processing and 34 to the food industry in general. The 156 articles are an increase of 46 articles from January and an increase of 44 articles from February 2011. Agri-food media exposure was the highest in the four year history of the media analysis for the month of February, and also for any winter month during this time period. In fact, February had the 3rd highest exposure of agri-food issues of any month dating back to May 2007.

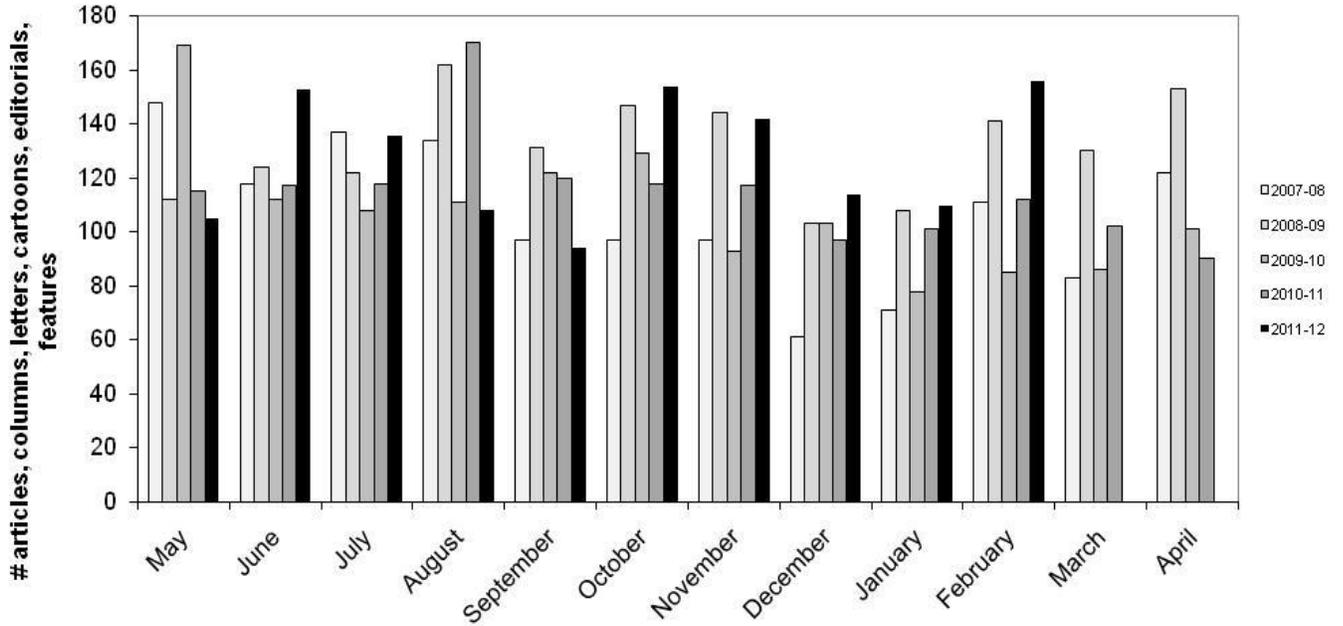
Compared to the average of the previous four months, there were more front page articles (5 compared with 4). Articles were shorter in length (2,037 characters vs 2,141) and had fewer images (0.48/article vs 0.72). The overall media exposure score of 431.1 was an increase of 44 percent over the previous month and was 45 percent higher than in February 2011.

The aquaculture industry had the most sector-specific coverage in February, followed by wine, cod, beer and seals.

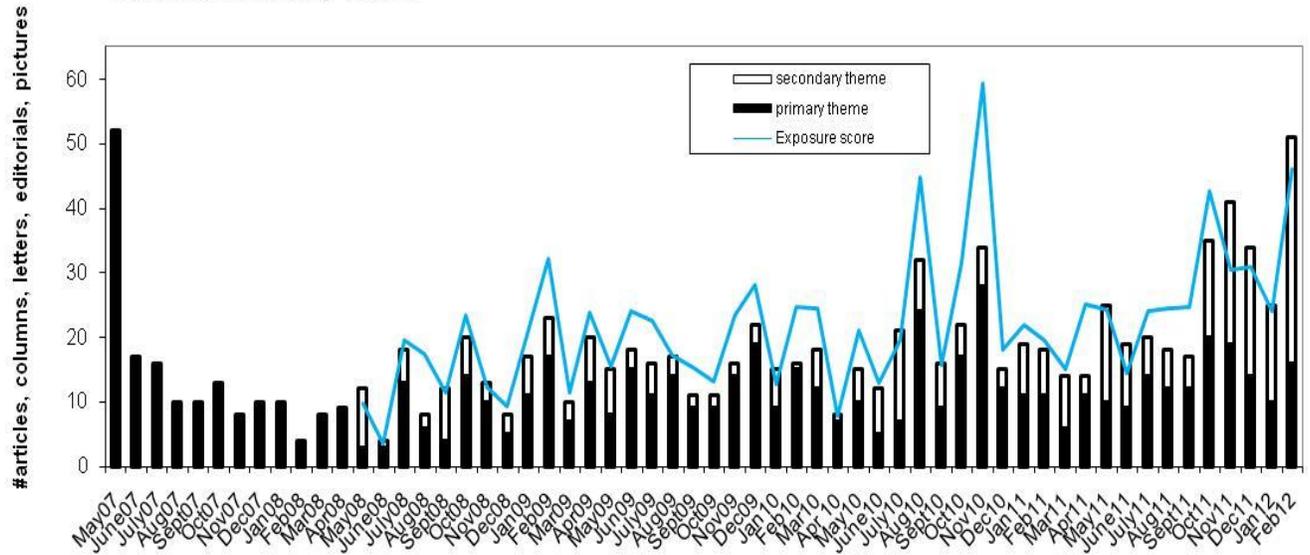


¹ Articles can reference any combination of agriculture, fisheries, processing, and/or the general food industry. For this reason, the sum of these articles will not necessarily equal the total number of articles for the month.

Agri-food articles, monthly comparison

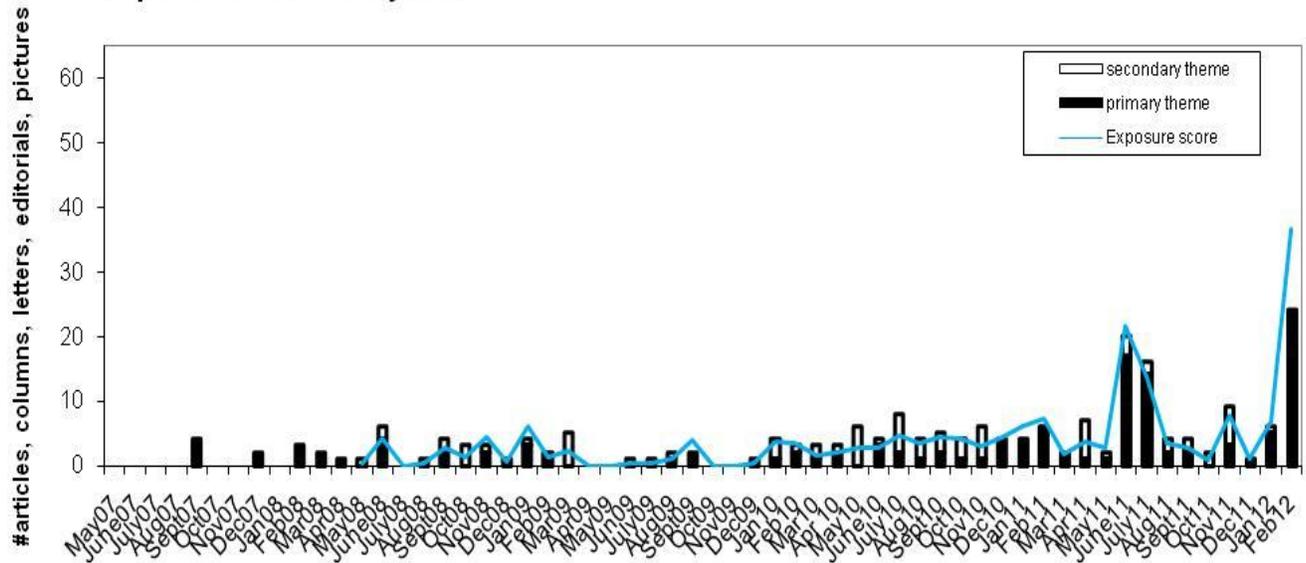


Business articles by month



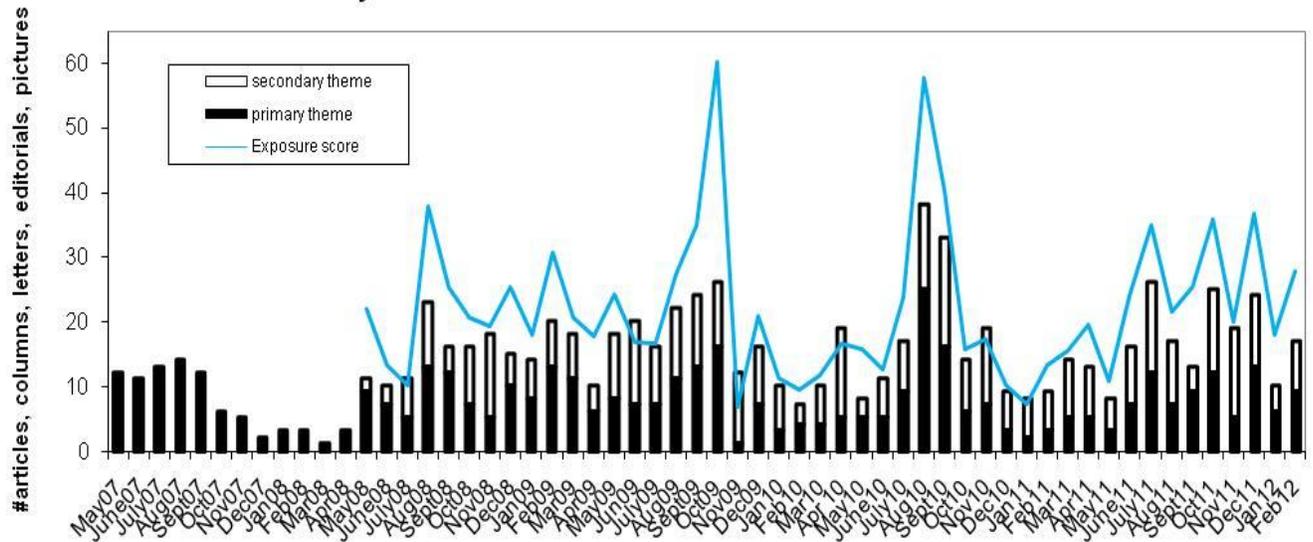
Note: Secondary theme and exposure score data collected since May 2008

Aquaculture articles by month



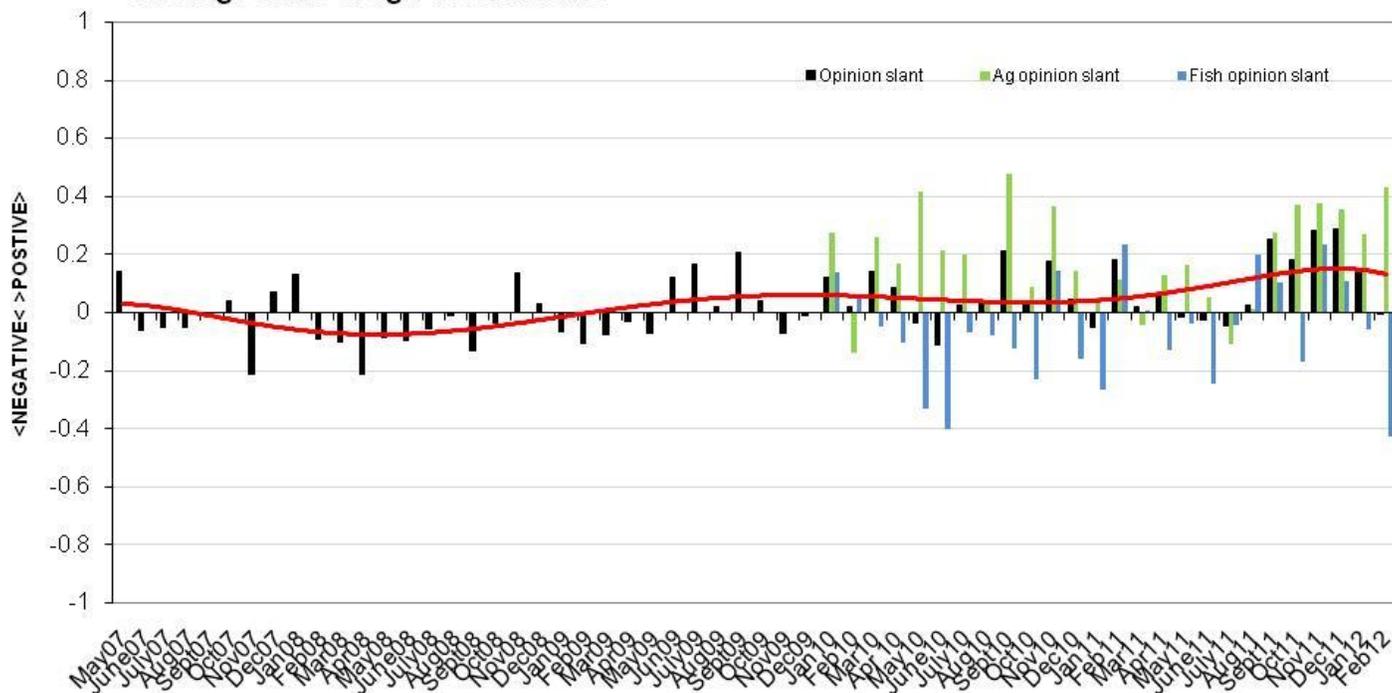
Note: Secondary theme and exposure score data available from May 2008

Local food articles by month



Note: Secondary theme and exposure score data collected since May 2008

Average slant of agri-food articles



The slant of agri-food articles was essentially neutral in February, due to very positive agriculture articles and very negative fisheries articles.

The slant of agriculture themes was the second highest ever, led by articles highlighting local food, positive articles on agri-business (such as the expansion of the Cornwallis Acadia Seaplants plant), and a proposed bill that would allow transportation of wine across provincial boundaries for personal consumption. The small amount of negative coverage was led by the drought in the Sahel region of Africa and worries about impending famine, mirroring that seen in the Horn of Africa last year.

There were a few local food articles related to fisheries that received positive coverage in February but these were far outweighed by negative coverage. In fact, February fishery coverage was the most negative of any month in the 58-month history of the media analysis project. Letters and editorials written by open-pen aquaculture critics represented the most negative coverage.

ⁱ Exposure score takes into account # of articles, size of article, # of images, theme appearing as an underlying theme in another article, and front page articles. Full methodology is available from the author.

ⁱⁱ A score between -100 and 100 is assigned to each article in an attempt to assess how positive or negative the issue is presented. There is no implication of a bias simply whether the issue would seem “good” or “bad” to a reader. Highly negative= -100 to -75. Negative= -74 to -25. Neutral= -24 to +24. Positive= +25 to +74. Highly positive= +75 to +100.

List of agri-food topics, by exposure score and number of articles- February 2012

RANK	TOPIC	# OF ARTICLES		EXPOSURE SCORE	PREV MONTH RANK	CHANGE
		Primary	Secondary			
1	Business	16	35	46.1	2	(+1)
2	Aquaculture	24	0	36.7	15	(+13)
3	Local food	9	8	28.0	3	--
4	Industry spotlight	7	27	27.1	1	(-3)
5	Pollution	5	21	17.7	4	(-1)
6	Healthy eating	9	3	14.7	5	(-1)
7	Environment	1	29	14.6	11	(+4)
8	Food spotlight	7	0	14.5	14	(+6)
9	Globalization/trade	0	30	13.9	18	(+9)
10	Food security	7	5	12.7	23	(+13)
11	Fish stocks	3	14	12.4	13	(+2)
12	Animal welfare	5	12	11.3	45	(+33)
13	Resource conflicts	3	17	10.7	16	(+3)
14	Policy (trade)	4	7	10.2	29	(+15)
15	Labour	6	1	9.9	48	(+33)
16	Policy (fish)	6	3	9.6	32	(+16)
17	Sustainability	2	17	9.4	24	(+7)
18	Agri-tourism/travel	1	11	7.7	T50	(+32)
19	Funding	2	7	7.6	T36	(+17)

Notes:

Only agri-food topics with exposure scores greater than 7.5 are listed