

Findings and Decision- Renewal Application of Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited for AQ#0112

1. Overview:

On January 6, 2018, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (NSDFA) received an application from Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited to renew Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0112 (AQ#0112), as described below:

Table 1. Description of Aquaculture Licence and Lease #0112

Type: Marine Shellfish	Size: 20.08 HA
Number: AQ#0112	Cultivation Method: Suspended shellfish cultivation
Applicant: Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited	Species: Blue mussel and Giant sea scallop
Location: Ship Harbour, Halifax County	Proposed Term: 10 year Licence/20 year Lease

2. History

AQ#0112 was first issued to Guysboro Aquatic Ventures Limited on September 2, 1987 for a ten year term (October 1, 1987 to September 30, 1997). AQ#0112 was assigned on March 5, 1990 from Guysboro Aquatic Ventures Limited to Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited. AQ#0112 was amended on June 18, 1993 to authorize the cultivation of Giant sea scallop. AQ#0112 was renewed on September 30, 1997 for a five year term (September 30, 1997 to September 30, 2002). AQ#0112 was renewed for a five year term (January 2, 2003 to January 1, 2008). AQ#0112 was renewed on October 14, 2008 for a five year term (January 1, 2008 to January 1, 2013). AQ#0112 was renewed on November 26, 2013 for a five year term (January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2018).

3. Procedure

3.1 Performance Review

A performance review of the information submitted by the operator in support of their renewal application was completed. This review recommended that the site be renewed based on the technical and biological assessment. This performance review is required pursuant to Subsection 72(c) of the Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations.

3.2 Public Comment Period

Notice of the application for the renewal of AQ#0112 for the 30-day public comment period was published on NSDFA's website (<http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/public-information/>) for the period of January 25, 2018 to February 23, 2018. Notice of the application was also published in the Royal Gazette Part I on January 24, 31, and February 7, 14, 2018.

3.3 Submissions

Zero submissions were received by NSDFA during the 30-day public comment period.

4. Factors to be considered

AQ#0112 is one of seven shellfish aquaculture sites currently held by Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited. Records indicate consistent production and resultant employment. The renewal plan was submitted in conjunction with an assignment application to have the sites assigned to new ownership. The plan indicates contributions to the local economy through a processing and shipping facility. Should the site not be operated as indicated, the Department's site utilization review procedures will be triggered.

The performance review and subsequent public comment period did not note the presence of other fishery activities in the area of the site. There were no ecological concerns identified in the past performance of this site with respect to negative impacts on other fisheries. Records indicate impacts of invasive species and duck predation, with mitigation efforts on-going to address these challenges. AQ#0112 is licensed to cultivate shellfish species, and as such there is no evidence that shellfish aquaculture has impacts on the sustainability of wild salmon. The successful growth of blue mussels in Ship Harbour is proven. The information reviewed during the performance review did not indicate adverse impacts on the surrounding public waters.

There are no recorded instances on file of AQ#0112 interfering with other users of the public waters surrounding the operation. AQ#0112 is authorized to cultivate shellfish using suspended gear, and as such the gear must remain within the geographic boundaries of the site. Section 55 of the *Licence and Lease Regulations* requires an aquaculture licence holder to mark each of their sites in a manner determined by the Minister and keep each site marked during the term of their licence.

AQ#0112 is located near the mouth of Newcombe Brook, approximately 100 metres from the shoreline at its nearest point. The nearest aquaculture site to AQ#0112 is approximately 100 metres away (AQ#1071, also issued to Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited). The physical separation of AQ#0112 from the shoreline and neighbouring aquaculture sites provides for multiple corridors within the harbour. There is no evidence to suggest that the extent of existing aquaculture in the harbour has exceeded the carrying capacity of the harbour.

5. Decision

Based on the considerations above, Aquaculture Licence #0112 shall be renewed for a period of 10 years (January 1, 2018 to January 1, 2028) and Aquaculture Lease #0112 shall be renewed for a period of 20 years (January 1, 2018 to January 1, 2038).

The Licence and Lease documents shall be prepared in accordance with the standard operating documents of NSDFA, and shall be made publically available subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6. Conditions

In addition, the following condition shall apply:

Aquaprime Mussel Ranch Limited shall adhere to the following site marking requirements:

- a) mark all corners of the leased site with cautionary yellow buoys of a minimum of 60 cm in diameter;
- b) mark all corners of the leased bottom with a cement block or similar device of a weight sufficient to ensure the cement block or device remains in place at all times; and
- c) display the licence or lease number at 1 corner of the licensed or leased area.

Brennan Goreham

Brennan Goreham
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3/16/18

Date