



SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

H O T L I N E S

NOVEMBER 2006

SFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MEET

SFA's Board will meet in Titusville on December 7, 2006 to discuss a wide variety of issues facing the industry. Resolutions pertaining to RED TIDE, ILLEGAL SALE OF SEAFOOD, PRODUCT SUBSTITUTION, FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR STATE MARKETING AND GOLIATH GROUPEL will be discussed in order to set policy for the coming year. Presentations by Major Calvin Adams, FWC, Nils Stolpe, Joe O'Hopp, FWRI, Joanne McNeely, DACS and other invited guests will be available for detailed discussions on all information presented. There will be a **closed** Board Session from 8:00 am to 9:00 am and then the meeting will be open to all. The night before at 6:30 pm, everyone will enjoy a Seafood Feast at Dixie Crossroads Restaurant. Be there.

VIETNAMESE FISH ADDED TO STATE'S DNA PROFILES

In an update report distributed at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS) *Food Safety Task*

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

Force meeting on November 17th, the following statement was presented:

"The Division of Food Safety laboratories (DACCS) has acquired and authenticated two (2) Pangasius hypophthalmus (common name Swai, Sutchi catfish or Tra) which is the fish commonly misbranded for economic reasons for grouper, snapper, sole, even basa and tilapia etc. The Division is in the process of authenticating a Pangasius bocourti which was recently received from Vietnam. P. bocourti is the



true basa, is considered a higher quality fish than Swai, and is more expensive. The Division has added the capability to determine species by DNA sequencing along with protein profiles. DNA can be used on cooked

foods where protein profile cannot be used due to protein denaturation. The Division believes that misbranding of seafood in commercial food establishments has increased and is increasing the level of sampling and testing in response."

Anecdotally speaking, some of the Vietnamese companies selling basa are very upset that other Asian companies are substituting Pangasius which is cheaper, for Vietnamese basa and is hurting them economically. Is this a paradox or what?

NATIONAL FISHERIES INSTITUTE FORMS BETTER SEAFOOD BUREAU

The National Fisheries Institute (NFI) has adopted an economic integrity program that every member will have to comply with or be dropped from the organization. All 241 members of NFI will be required to sign an anti-fraud agreement not to transship product subject to an antidumping duty in an attempt to bypass tariffs; mislabel products or substitute species; or mislabel weights or product counts. (This is practically the same policy SFA has had since the development and approval of the Seafood Quality Control Code.) NFI will also establish a Better Seafood Bureau which will be a separate entity to handle complaints received and take action to get the supplier in line or terminate their membership after a 3rd party audit. Hopefully NFI's model will be adopted by other groups around the world to put a stop to all the consumer fraud anywhere in the chain from the boat to the throat. Bob Jones will give the NFI Power-Point presentation at the Board meeting with the approval of NFI's President John Connelly.

NMFS CLOSES RECREATIONAL GROUPEL FISHING DURING SPAWNING

NOAA Fisheries Service announced a February 15 through March 15 seasonal closure for the recreational red grouper, black grouper, and gag

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fisheries in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The seasonal closure will occur annually, and coincides with the commercial grouper fishery closure established in 2000. "We thought it was a good idea to wait for the gag assessment before determining the need for a seasonal closure," said Dr. Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Administrator. "Now there is no question the closure is needed to protect and conserve these grouper populations." Thus, in light of the results of the recent gag assessment, the fisheries service published a final rule on November 17, 2006 implementing the seasonal closure.



This closure is one of many management measures recently proposed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) and approved by the Secretary of Commerce in response to a plan set up to rebuild the Gulf of Mexico red grouper population by 2012. This 10-year rebuilding plan was implemented in 2004 after an assessment of red grouper populations completed two years earlier indicated the species was being fished too heavily. Other measures implemented earlier this year to reduce red grouper landings to levels specified in the rebuilding plan include: a 6,000-pound commercial grouper trip limit; a recreational bag limit reduction to one red grouper per person per day within the five grouper aggregate bag limit; and a zero bag limit for captains and crews of for-hire vessels while under charter."

A note to all buyers of grouper: There will be no legal **fresh** gag, red or black grouper from Feb. 15 through March 15 so any restaurant or retailer who advertises **fresh caught Gulf grouper** will be in violation of this federal law and subject to heavy penalties. Be warned.

BIRD FLU PLANNING TOOLKIT AVAILABLE ON LINE

If you go to <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/> you will find a 216 page background paper on the possible impact of a Bird Fl pandemic in the state of Florida. Every county in the state has a Bird Flu plan. You might contact the county for more information on this if you like. Florida has budgeted \$34 million dollars to buy Tamiflu. It is not known how

Gulf States Fisheries Commission presents Charles H. Lyles Award to Robert P. Jones, Executive Director of Southeastern Fisheries Association

The award was presented at the Commission's Annual Meeting Award Luncheon on Tuesday October 24th in New Orleans. Following are from comments made by *Ginny Vail*, Chairman of the Commission....

"Bob, please know that we, the Commissioners, take great pride in giving this award to the most deserving of our colleagues, those who have demonstrated outstanding contributions through out their careers with regard to marine resources. If you'll look on the back of your program, you'll see a list of those giants in the field of fisheries management,



Left to right—*Larry Simpson*, Executive Director of GSMFC, *Ginny Vail*, Chairman of GSMFC and *Bob Jones*, recipient and Executive Director of SFA

who have contributed without measure to the field we all work in today. Bob, you served with many, if not all, of the people listed there, and you are most deserving of induction into this select group. The leadership, organizational skills and statesmanship you have demonstrated while advocating for the seafood industry are to be admired and serve as an example to us all. You have been very active in the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council including serving as Chair and on the Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee, and a member of the Department of Commerce Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee. And Forty two (42) plus years as the Executive Director of Southeastern Fisheries Association is a record we can only look to and admire. You are an advocate for objective, science based management of marine fisheries resource and the many user groups.

We honor you today as best we can to demonstrate the appreciation we feel for your efforts in marine fisheries management. You are a model for us with your dedication, respected advocacy, and eloquent communications and the ability to intimidate those found on the opposing side of an issue you are advancing. It is with respect and humble appreciation for all you have done in your career to advance the wise management of our priceless marine fisheries resources that we have asked you here today."

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many doses that will be but it will not be enough for everyone in the state. There is a plan for distribution which will mandate that health care providers, emergency managers and other critical job employees will get the first doses. There are tables in this information indicating that without antiviral medication available there will be two waves affecting 3.2 million people per wave (6.4 million persons), 96,000 people in ICU after the second wave and at least 128,000 deaths from these 2 waves. If there is antiviral medication available for about 25% of the population most at risk, the above numbers could be reduced to between 32,000 and 64,000 deaths.

One of the most important preventive aspects of surviving a pandemic is to wash your hands every chance you get, segregate the sick people from healthy ones, avoid crowds and practice every kind of sanitation actions you can take.

Many people believe there will be no pandemic and point to the number of people who die each year from flu and other respiratory illnesses. Still others believe it is not a case of if but when and those are the people who must make plans for any emergency. Remember, the most important office in your county will be the Emergency Services Operations. They will be in charge along with the law enforcement officials to keep society and government operating.

WORKING WATERFRONTS FADING AWAY

A drive around the state coastline portrays a future where only condominiums, gated communities and private marinas have access to the water. The number of fish houses is miniscule compared to just 20 years ago and disheartening compared to 40 years ago.

Things change and there is no stopping that but should the state allow developers to push businesses that provide service to boaters out of the way? The state should

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not only develop a plan to maintain access for waterfront businesses but should place them in an agricultural classification in order to pay ad valorem taxes more in line with a blue collar industry and not multi-million dollar playgrounds. Not only are businesses that need access to the water



being pushed out, affordable housing for employees in all the service trades is non-existent in many parts of Florida. This is a growth dilemma where government should be involved and not rely on coastal developers to help with affordable housing.

SFA PAST PRESIDENT EUGENE MCROBERTS DIES

Eugene Mc Roberts of Ruskin, Florida recently passed away, just a

few months following the loss of his wife Grace. Gene was an original. Not only an original pioneer of SFA but an original commercial fisherman who knew first hand just how difficult it is to earn a living from the sea. Gene was a very powerful lobbyist in the legislative sessions in the late 1960's and 70's. One of his closest legislative friends was Senator Tom Whitaker of Tampa who was a great orator and powerful member of the Florida Senate. Gene, Leon Kenney of St. Petersburg and Wayne Mead of Palmetto were formidable in their position concerning the Tortugas shrimp nursery area. They were on the opposite side of the Association position but there was never any personal angst between Gene and the association leadership.

Gene was a member of the Greatest Generation serving in the Army in the Pacific theater of WW II. He was one of so many who came home from the war in order to have a career in the commercial fishing industry which at that time was held in high esteem by people in government.

Gene was a good a caring person and his counsel will be missed. May his soul and the souls of all the faithfully departed, Rest In Peace Amen.

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We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly.....We would look forward to serving you and your company!

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BOB JONES VISIT WITH JOE VERSAGGI

Joe Versaggi, who was burned in a plane crash several months ago is out of the hospital and at his home in Tampa. During a visit in early November I had a chance to spend about an hour or so with him and am happy to report that he is doing quite well. He has a long way to go but with the support of his brothers, children and friends his spirit was strong and the outlook very positive. He joked about being bald and in the process of having a much younger face when the healing is done. He laughed and was up to date on everything going on in the fish world. He said to say hello to all the members and friends and to let them know he will be back as soon as possible to help keep the association and industry viable. It is ironic that he went through so many incidents like this during his tour in Vietnam and it was a Vietnam veteran who stopped his car on the highway to help him and Estelle and through another little miracle, a man

in a CO2 truck happened to be nearby and rushed over to help put out the fire. God Bless.

ATTORNEY GENERAL/GOVERNOR – ELECT CRIST'S OFFICE ISSUES SUBPOENAS PERTAINING TO SEAFOOD PRODUCT SUBSTITUTION

Attorney General Charlie Crist's office in Tampa has issued subpoenas to 10 or so restaurants mandating they provide records including invoices to his office. The AG has been investigating a number of restaurants for the past few months by purchasing fish items and then sending the samples off to a lab to determine if the fish was the same as described on the menu and what they paid for.

The days of "business as usual" when it comes to cheating the consumers is about to be placed on the front burner and those places of businesses selling pangasius and other catfish-like species for grouper need to be advised.

SFA asked Governor Bush to help and he wrote back saying he would ask that this issue be given to the transition team for their handling.

Some restaurants in Florida are really under the gun right now with all the product substitution plus several TV stations around the state are doing specials entitled, "How dirty is your local restaurant" or "The dirty dozen restaurants". The TV stations are using the freedom of information to get copies of inspection records of restaurants in their area and are listing the number of violations and do interviews with the owners. Many of the TV stories had a great deal to say about roaches and HACCP type violations.

Southeastern Fisheries Association would be glad to work with the seafood restaurants and help them with their HACCP and Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures. The association can't get them the DBPR seal for HACCP because no other groups can get into the HACCP training program for restaurants. The association certainly can certify individuals in seafood HACCP.

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