



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Connecticut Shellfish Industry Meeting to be Held Tuesday in Bridgeport
Connecticut Department of Agriculture to update harvesters on Vibrio control management plan

(HARTFORD, CONN.) Today Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky announced that the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with Connecticut Sea Grant, will host a meeting for Connecticut shellfish harvesters from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 30, 2013, at the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center in Bridgeport.

The first portion of the meeting will include an update on and discussion of regulatory issues affecting the shellfish industry, with state and federal regulators on hand to answer questions. The second part of the meeting will include a moderated discussion of recent industry-related initiatives.

On the agenda, which appears below, are three presentations on *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, a naturally occurring bacteria that can pose serious—even fatal—health risks to shellfish consumers when proper management practices are not strictly followed by shellfish harvesters and dealers. The risk of illness increases during the summer months when environmental conditions are conducive to rapid growth of the bacteria in harvested shellfish.

The Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture has been proactive in its development and implementation of a *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* control plan for Connecticut. While neighboring states experienced multiple illnesses associated with this bacterium in 2012, Connecticut's plan was successfully implemented by the shellfish industry and can be attributed with preventing a similar illness situation here in Connecticut. Federal food safety officials have lauded Connecticut's proactive measures as among the best in the country.

The 2013 *Vibrio* Control Plan for Connecticut outlines the management practices that the industry must adopt, such as limiting time from harvest to refrigeration and rapidly cooling shellfish, in order to prevent the bacteria from reaching levels that may cause illness.

"I wholeheartedly encourage members of Connecticut's shellfish industry to attend this meeting," Commissioner Reviczky said. "We want them to ask questions, learn more about issues affecting their businesses, and provide feedback on initiatives. Stakeholder input is a critical component of effective programming and we invite the hard-working, dedicated men and women engaged in this important sector of Connecticut's economy to participate in this mutually beneficial process."

No RSVP or registration is required to attend. For more information about the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture and the state's shellfish industry, go to www.CTGrown.gov/aquaculture.

AGENDA

Shellfish Industry Meeting
Tuesday, April 30, 2013, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center (BRASTECC)
60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport, CT

Part 1: State and Federal Regulatory Updates

- U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Shellfish Sanitation Program: Connecticut *Vibrio* Risk Management Plan Evaluation FY2011 and FY2012, by Amy Fitzpatrick, Regional Shellfish Specialist, FDA
- *Vibrio*: The Big Picture, by Melissa "Lizzie" Evans, MS, Microbiologist, FDA Division of Seafood Safety
- NSSP Model Ordinance Time and Temperature Updates, by Nancy Balcom, Connecticut Sea Grant
- 2013 *Vibrio* Control Plan for Connecticut, by Kristin DeRosia-Banick, Connecticut Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture
- Question-and-Answer Session

Part 2: Sea Grant Industry Meeting

- Connecticut Shellfish Management Plan - A Consensus Building Effort Starting with You! by Tessa Getchis, Connecticut Sea Grant
- Economic Assessment of Connecticut's Shellfish Industry, by Bob Rheault, East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
- Question-and-Answer Session

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