

New Zealand comments on the operation of the Catch Documentation Scheme

Introduction

This paper supplements the Secretariat's paper CCSBT-CC/1010/05 on implementation issues with the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS), based on New Zealand's experiences in the 2010 season.

Key issues identified for discussion include:

- Opportunities for streamlining the operation of the CDS
- Allowing for more than one vessel to be included on catch monitoring form
- Process for dealing with any problems in documentation, particularly in the context of exports of fresh product where timing is critical ('trouble-shooting')

Opportunities for streamlining the operation of the CDS

The New Zealand industry has identified that they face a range of documentation requirements, and that many of these requirements duplicate existing reporting (including for domestic reporting purposes, for commercial purposes e.g. on pack slips, as well as between the catch monitoring and catch tagging forms). Further, the nature of the New Zealand domestic fishery means that time is a more critical factor for exports than for many other members' operations. The domestic fishery is based on exporting fresh products that are flown from one of two main international airports, while processors of the fresh product are located up to several hours away from the airports. This may mean that the time taken to fill out additional CDS forms is sometimes critical for making a particular flight. While the benefits of a global CDS for southern bluefin tuna (SBT) clearly outweigh such potential downsides, New Zealand would be interested in exploring opportunities for streamlining the operation of the CDS as part of the overall review. For example, procedures for completing and providing forms could be streamlined to take account of the practical operation of fisheries.

Allowing for fishers to provide information electronically would be one way of streamlining the process. In general, electronic certification can be used to:

- Improve the efficiency of the export certification process
- Increase the robustness of information checks prior to validation of forms
- Significantly reduce the risk of errors
- Provide a means to improve the quality and potentially the range of data from which to make decisions
- Reduce the ability to create fraudulent paper certificates that can be difficult to detect.
- Potentially reduce the total cost of compliance with documentation requirements
- Provide the ability to rapidly respond to increasingly changing market requirements.

- Improve the ease of information sharing between countries and the Secretariat and, where necessary depending on member government organisations, improve the ability to share between agencies involved in fisheries, port and export functions.

New Zealand considers there is potential to streamline the documentation requirements for fishers by allowing submission of forms through electronic systems. At this stage, it is likely that a printed form would be an output of the system (i.e. a hard-copy form would be provided to the importing country, even though the data for the form had been collected electronically). The appearance of the form might therefore be different from the currently-approved forms, although all the data fields would be included.

New Zealand is still in the process of assessing the costs and benefits of developing some form of electronic system, but in the meantime would like members to discuss the idea, including if there would be any potential problems with having the information provided in a different document format. More importantly, members may also wish to consider if there would be advantages in collaborating and moving over time to a CCSBT-wide electronic system.

Allowing for additional vessels on catch monitoring form

Another means of streamlining the CDS documentation that would benefit New Zealand exporters of fresh product would be to allow catch from more than one vessel to be documented on a single catch monitoring form. The Trade Information Scheme previously allowed a single trade statistical document to cover more than one vessel, but this was not carried over to the CDS. The main reason for this change was to ensure the information on a given catch monitoring form could be directly linked to the associated information on the catch tagging form. If multiple vessels were listed on a catch monitoring form, it was thought it would not be possible to do so.

Noting the need to simplify the documentation requirements if possible, New Zealand suggests that it would be possible to list more than one vessel on a single catch monitoring form but still allow for identification of which catch tagging form related to which product on the catch monitoring form (at the aggregate level).

For example, one means of doing so is by providing an additional column in the description of fish, as follows:

Catch tagging form document number	Product: F (Fresh) / FR (Frozen)	Type: RD/GG/DR/FL/OT*	Month of Catch/Harvest (mm/yy)	Gear Code	Net Weight (kg)	Total Number of whole Fish (including RD,GG or DR)
<i>Example</i>						
T-NZ11 0001	F	GG	07/11	LL	250	3
T-NZ11 0002	F	GG	07/11	LL	99	1

In the example given, each catch tagging form could relate to a different vessel. Unless other members would also like to include multiple vessels on a single form, this could be a variant of the catch monitoring form specifically for the New Zealand fishery.

Trouble-shooting

Timing is critical for the quality of fresh products that are exported, and it is particularly important to ensure smooth processing of catch documentation so there are no delays in the acceptance of imports. In general, as an exporter of fresh SBT New Zealand is pleased to report this has not been a problem with the CDS to date. However, members may wish to consider for the future if there is a need for a process to deal with any situations in which genuine exports/imports may be unnecessarily delayed at the border as a result of administrative error. A process could be useful to resolve such situations to the satisfaction of the importing and the exporting country as quickly and smoothly as possible. Possible examples of when such a process could be necessary include errors in species identification; errors in the accompanying documentation including illegibility; or even loss of documentation in transit. In many cases, the types of error involved could be considered 'administrative' rather than instances of non-compliance with the CDS.