

Press release: New centre for sustainable aquaculture aims to unlock solutions to global food security

With the world's population set to increase to almost 10 billion by 2050, providing future generations with safe and sustainable farmed seafood is the critical aim of a new collaboration between the Centre for Environment, Aquaculture and Fisheries Science (Cefas) and the University of Exeter.

The Collaborative Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture Futures has been launched today by Environment Secretary Michael Gove, with an ambition of bringing together world-leading scientists to ensure the key challenges facing sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry are better understood, both at home and internationally. The centre will focus on aquatic animal health, food safety and protection of the aquatic environment – in support of international food security and sustainable “blue” growth.

Key issues to be addressed by the centre include:

- providing scientific support to reduce the \$6bn annual losses due to disease in aquaculture
- providing evidence and tools to ensure that fish, shellfish, crustaceans and seaweeds produced in the global industry are safe to eat
- understanding how cutting edge molecular diagnostics, pathology, animal breeding and nutrition can be applied to assist seafood farmers, particularly in more vulnerable societies
- ensuring that aquaculture is developed sustainably, for the benefit of communities, economies and the environment.

Speaking at Cefas' annual science conference, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

As we work towards a Green Brexit, it is crucial we tackle the challenges facing our marine environment and Cefas' commitment to scientific research and innovation has never been so important.

The new centre not only establishes our position as a world leader in marine science and sustainability, but will prove critical to the health of our fisheries and the economic vitality of our coastal areas – helping us in our continued drive to leave the environment in a better state for the next generation.

Speaking on behalf of the new centre, co-Director and pathologist Professor Grant Stentiford from Cefas said:

The launch of this centre is timely – by acting now to apply UK

science expertise to the barriers that currently stand in the way of a safe and sustainable future aquaculture industry, we will help ensure food security for future generations and continue to support our national, as well as international commitments to the environment.

For the first time, government and academic science related to aquaculture sustainability is coming together in support of development and consolidation of the global industry. The Centre will co-design solutions in national, regional and global aquaculture sustainability and is uniquely positioned to support the rapidly expanding global aquaculture industry.

A Strategic Alliance has existed between the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the University of Exeter since 2012. The Alliance combines the complementary capabilities of a cutting-edge Government laboratory and, a leading Russell Group University. The alliance has increasingly focussed on solving intractable problems in the sustainable supply of food from the aquatic environment.

Professor Charles Tyler, co-Director of the centre from the University of Exeter said:

We are delighted to be able to strengthen our collaboration with Cefas in the area of aquaculture. Making aquaculture 'work' for the environment and for society is a grand challenge and one which requires both broad thinking and, a truly interdisciplinary scientific team.

Given that animal disease and food safety present two of the most significant hurdles to sustainable production, we will place major focus on scientific research and advice where the impact to industry and society will be highest.

Examples of current projects that the centre will take forward include:

- 10 joint PhD studentships in aquatic animal health and food safety funded between 2015-2020
- Joint aquaculture health projects funded by Newton/BBSRC in India, Bangladesh and Malawi
- Newton funded programmes in Thailand, focussed on new models for controlling disease in aquaculture.

Whilst linking up specialists from across the University, the new Centre will closely align with the recently-opened Living Systems Institute, a world-class collaborative research facility focused on the mitigation of disease in plants, animals and humans.

Press release: Rule change proposal heralds more choice for fairgoers

The proposals include opening up Guild-run fairs for non-member showmen and reducing restrictions on rival fairs opening close to Guild fairs. They also include practical steps to improve transparency, including publishing the Guild rules online, and ensuring objective criteria for membership are explicitly set out.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [investigation](#) has therefore been closed, pending the result of a vote of Guild members to confirm the changes.

The changes aim to:

- Give fairgoers more choice and variety in their local area.
- Improve the quality of rides and fairgoers' all-round experience.
- Give local councils more power to decide who runs fairs in their area. This will allow them to change the make up of and refresh under-performing fairs.
- Help members and non-members of the Guild work together more easily, providing more choice and fresh attractions to fairgoers.

Ann Pope, CMA Senior Director of Antitrust, said:

The rule changes offered by the Showmen's Guild will provide the opportunity for millions of UK fairgoers to have more choice in the range of fairs coming to their local area, as well as give showmen the chance to expand their businesses and improve their fairs.

These rule changes are not about favouring larger fairground businesses over smaller ones or depriving any showmen of their livelihood.

Instead, the aim is to make the all-round experience even better for the benefit of fairgoers and showmen alike.

We are pleased the Guild has responded positively to the competition concerns our investigation raised by offering changes to address them.

The members now have the chance to vote in favour of these rule changes to address our competition concerns and draw a line under the CMA's investigation.

The changes have been suggested in response to the CMA's allegation in December 2016 that the Guild's current rules broke the law by limiting

competition at fairs run by the Guild and between existing Guild fairs and rival fairs.

Following a [public consultation](#) the CMA considers that the commitments offered by the Guild address its competition concerns and has today formally accepted them.

Guild members will vote in January 2018 on whether to accept the proposed changes. If the rule changes are not accepted, the CMA could re-open the investigation.

Notes to editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on Competition Act 1998 cases.
2. The Chapter I prohibition in the Competition Act 1998 (the Act) prohibits anti-competitive agreements and concerted practices between undertakings (for example, businesses) and decisions by associations of undertakings which may affect trade within the UK or a part of it and which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the UK or a part of it, unless they are excluded or exempt in accordance with the Act.
3. In December 2015, the CMA launched a formal investigation in respect of certain rules of the Guild, having established that there were reasonable grounds for suspecting that the Chapter I prohibition had been infringed. In December 2016, the CMA issued a Statement of Objections to the Guild, setting out its provisional view that certain of the Guild's rules infringed the Chapter I prohibition.
4. Where the CMA has begun an investigation under the Act but has not made an infringement decision, it may accept commitments to take such action (or to refrain from taking such action) as it considers appropriate for the purposes of addressing the competition concerns it has identified. If the CMA proposes to accept the commitments offered, the CMA must consult those who are likely to be affected by them, giving them an opportunity to give the CMA their views. The CMA must then take any such views into account before making a final decision on whether to accept the commitments. Formal acceptance of commitments results in the CMA terminating its investigation and not proceeding to an infringement decision.
5. The decision by the CMA to accept commitments does not amount to or

imply any finding as to the legality or otherwise of the conduct by the parties under investigation either prior to acceptance of the commitments or once the commitments are in place.

6. The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain describes its purpose as being "to protect the interests of its members – travelling showmen who gain their livelihoods by attending funfairs".
7. The Guild has stated that "Virtually all travelling Funfairs – some 200 per week between Easter and Bonfire night – are operated by members of the Showmen's Guild". Some fairs in the UK attract over half a million fairgoers. It is estimated that the Guild has around 2,000 members that are active in putting on fairs.
8. The Guild's commitments have been offered by those members representing the Guild (having taken soundings of the wider membership of the Guild) on the basis that the Guild's membership will now be asked to implement them by a vote at the annual general meeting of the Guild's Central Council to take place no later than 31 January 2018. In the event that the membership of the Guild fails to vote in favour of the rule changes proposed under the commitments and therefore to implement the Guild's proposed commitments by 31 January 2018, then the CMA reserves the right to re-open its investigation.
9. Any businesses or individuals that have concerns about compliance with the commitments can contact the CMA by email (general.enquiries@cma.gsi.gov.uk) or by phone (020 3738 6000).
10. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.

Press release: Report 14/2017: Fatal accident at Alice Holt footpath crossing, Hampshire

RAIB has today released its report into a fatal accident at Alice Holt footpath crossing, Hampshire on 5 October 2016.

Summary

At 16:20 hours on Wednesday 5 October 2016 a mobility scooter was struck by a train, and the scooter user fatally injured, at Alice Holt footpath crossing, Bentley, Hampshire.

Users of Alice Holt footpath crossing are required to look and listen for approaching trains before deciding whether it is safe to cross the line. It is uncertain why the user decided to cross when it was unsafe to do so, as CCTV images suggest that he had previously crossed in a safe manner. It is probable that the user did not see the train or misjudged when it would arrive at the crossing, perhaps due to sun glare, when deciding to cross. The mobility scooter user's opportunity to see the approaching train was limited by the design of Alice Holt crossing, in particular the fencing. The mobility scooter user did not react to the train's horn, possibly because he did not hear it.

The RAIB has found that Network Rail's guidance for level crossing managers did not include any advice concerning use by mobility scooter users and the management of the crossing had not allowed for vulnerable users such as these.

Recommendation

The RAIB has addressed one recommendation to Network Rail. This seeks modification of Network Rail's level crossing management processes so that they consider mobility scooter use at all crossings which rely on users looking and listening for trains.

Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

Newsdate: 26 October 2017

PDF, 7.42MB, 43 pages

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[News story: Unpaid tax at record low](#)

The difference between the tax due and that collected by HMRC – known as the ‘tax gap’ – fell to a record low of 6% in 2015 to 2016, official statistics revealed today.

The UK is a world leader on tax compliance, with one of the lowest tax gaps in the world and sets an international example on tax transparency, being the only country to measure and publish tax gaps every year covering both direct and indirect taxes.

If the tax gap had remained at the 2005 to 2006 level of 7.9%, it would have grown to £46 billion and the country would have been nearly £12 billion a year poorer.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General said:

Collecting the right tax is crucial to fund our vital public services. Today’s data shows how far we have come in tackling avoidance, evasion and non-compliance, but there is still more to do and we will continue to take action to ensure that everyone pays the tax they owe.

Jim Harra, Director General, Customer Strategy & Tax Design, HMRC, said:

HMRC’s online tax accounts and use of data increasingly help people get their tax right and prevent mistakes and fraud. This enables us to focus on tackling those who deliberately pay less than they owe. Measuring the tax gap gives us vital insights into where to direct our efforts, and tells us that our strategy is succeeding.

The tax gap fall follows the introduction of 75 measures over the last 7 years to reduce tax avoidance, evasion and non-compliance, including:

- cracking down on avoidance by multinationals to ensure companies pay the right amount of tax under UK law
- introducing tough new criminal offences that make it easier to prosecute both evaders and companies that fail to prevent evasion, as well as significantly increasing penalties
- introducing a new penalty for those who enable the use of tax avoidance schemes that are later defeated by HMRC
- investing £800 million in HMRC’s compliance operations, which are expected to bring in an additional £7.2 billion in tax by 2020 to 2021

Since 2010, HMRC have secured almost £160 billion in additional tax revenue

as a result of actions to tackle tax evasion, tax avoidance, and non-compliance, including £2.8 billion from offshore tax evaders, through action both at home and abroad.

Notes to editors:

For more information on how tax gaps are measured read HMRC's [Measuring Tax Gaps and Methodological Annex documents](#).

Press release: UK Government Investments strengthens and expands senior management team

UK Government Investments (“UKGI”), the Government’s centre of expertise in corporate finance and corporate governance, announces a significant strengthening of its senior management team with the appointment of four new Directors. Tom Cooper and Candida Morley join UKGI as Directors, while Michael Harrison and Henry Lloyd have both been promoted to Director from within UKGI. These appointments expand UKGI’s senior management team from four to eight Directors working with Mark Russell, UKGI’s Chief Executive Officer.

Commenting, Mark Russell said:

As UKGI activity continues to increase, I am delighted that we have been able to strengthen further and enlarge our senior management team through the appointment of four highly experienced Directors.

One of the primary attractions of working at UKGI is that we operate at the heart of government, at the point where the public and private sectors meet. As such, we welcome Tom and Candida to UKGI from the private sector and congratulate Michael and Henry on their appointments as UKGI Directors. They all bring a breadth and depth of expertise to the senior management team which will be hugely beneficial to the ongoing development of UKGI.

Tom Cooper was most recently Global Co-Chairman of M&A at Deutsche Bank where he has spent the last 8 years. He started his career at KMPG and was at UBS Investment Bank for 21 years where his various roles included Head of European M&A.

Candida Morley joins UKGI from HgCapital where she was an Operating Partner. Between 2001 – 2015 she worked at private equity fund LDC (where her roles

included Chief Portfolio Offer and Chief Operating Officer), prior to which she worked at Elementis plc, 3i plc and as Director of Development at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Michael Harrison joined UKGI in 2009 from Greenhill Caliburn, the Australian independent corporate finance adviser, prior to which he worked at CSFB and BZW. At UKGI he has worked on a range of projects across Government and currently works closely with organisations including Network Rail and Ordnance Survey.

Henry Lloyd joined UKGI in 2015 having spent over 25 years in European corporate finance and M+A, including roles at JPMorgan, CSFB and BZW. At UKGI his work has included representing the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the board of The Insolvency Service and advising the Ministry of Defence on the establishment of a new Executive Agency for the delivery of the submarine programme.

For further information:

UKGI: Josh Coe – 0207 215 4787

Citigate Dewe Rogerson: Toby Moore, Jos Bieneman, Elizabeth Kittle – 0207 638 9571

About UK Government Investments ('UKGI')

UKGI is owned by HM Treasury but independently managed and with a Board mostly comprised of independent Non Executive Directors. It combines the former Shareholder Executive and UK Financial Investments ('UKFI'). Working with a range of Government departments across Whitehall and operating at the boundary of the public and private sectors, UKGI's role is to provide Government with a centre of excellence in corporate finance and corporate governance.

While enormous in its scope and diversity, UKGI's work covers four principal areas:

- It acts as shareholder, representing Government's interests in the stewardship of over twenty arms-length organisations and assets, ensuring their good governance, scrutinising their performance and looking to optimise their value and operational efficiency on behalf of the taxpayer. It does all of this in line with its Principles of Portfolio Governance, which set the standard for the governance of assets in the public sector;
- It continuously reviews the feasibility of and alternatives for optimising the monetisation of those Government assets held for disposal, going on to prepare and execute all of Government's significant corporate and financial asset sales;
- It advises Government on all its financial interventions into corporate

structures resulting from corporate or sectoral distress and other special situations;

- It advises Government on its major negotiations with corporates, responding to M&A and other potential transactions that have implications for the UK national interest.