

Dominic Bailey  
Paragon House  
Albert Street  
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Kent  
CT11 9HD

Date 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear Dominic,

## ADVICE ON BIOSECURITY FOR HAND RAKED COCKLE GATHERERS OPERATING WITHIN THE THAMES

The biggest risk in terms of biosecurity is the transfer of material from one area to another, mostly in the form of live animals and 'detritus'. In this case the hold of a boat or dredging equipment associated with the boat is the biggest risk as the animals are far more likely to be shipped in the hold of a boat. Hand gathering, if I am correct in my assumption employs individuals taking bags out with them onto the foreshore and collecting them there. I would suggest that it is far more unlikely for any animals to be left in such bags.

With regard to the equipment used we concluded that there is a small risk with regards to transporting pathogens with the equipment used. Vehicles would have had to travel overland to access the fishery and unless they are very dirty the risk of pathogen transfer in this way is small – likewise with the use of hand rakes and clothing.

Ideally to mitigate against these small risks I would suggest that all equipment should be cleaned and no animals left on vehicles before accessing the foreshore, but enforcing this would be very difficult. Perhaps this could be detailed in the permit and subject to random spot checks? Again the fall back is that we would suggest the likelihood of transfer from hand gathering equipment is low, but that your experience of the methods of harvesting employed by hand gatherers will help inform your decision.

I hope this helps, please don't hesitate to contact us for more advice.

Yours Sincerely



Robert Packham  
Senior Fish Health Inspector