

2020 Spring Fishing Season Update: Wednesday March 25, 2020

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen’s Association (PEIFA) continues to focus on the numerous concerns facing the Spring fishing season of 2020.

The association has been in constant contact with industry representatives of the live and processed sectors, regional fishing organizations, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, our elected representatives and Ministers at the Provincial and Federal levels.

Our organizational focus has been on issues confronting the Spring lobster season and the ability of plants to process product. The Federal government has recently allowed the sourcing of foreign plant workers to continue in order to meet the labour requirements of the seafood sector.

However, a number of key challenges still exist for industry.

These are:

Processor Concerns:

* Having enough available labour
* Will additional travel restrictions from source countries prevent approved workers from coming to Canada?
* The volume of lobster that may come in at the start of the season
* Concern of a total plant shut down if an employee becomes ill
* Availability of additional cold storage
* Available cash resources to hold inventory if product is held until markets improve

Harvester Concerns:

* Shore Price
* Absence of markets and demand
* A fishery being stopped once it begins
* Will there be a season start delay?
* What will be the number of total fishing days will remain if a delay occurs?
* Support package if the lobster season is cancelled or shortened and operating expenses cannot be met

These issues will be discussed by local Advisory Boards, the PEIFA Board of Directors, and association members in the near future to determine the best course of action to be pursued.

The immediate focus of the PEIFA is to continue to work with all parts of industry to put a program or programs in place that will produce a viable Spring fishery in 2020 for the Island harvesting sector.