
Disease risk perception and management in Pacific oysters: the Farmer's story.

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Résumé

Pacific oyster aquaculture in New Zealand and in New South Wales (NSW), Australia has suffered mortality outbreaks since 2010. Known as Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS), this condition involving Ostreid herpesvirus type 1 microvariant (OsHV-1) has highlighted the complexity of ongoing disease management in the marine environment. To capture oyster farmers' perception of disease risks and their management decisions, twenty-two face-to-face interviews were conducted in NSW and in New Zealand. Participants were chosen to maximise diversity of views and practices in the Pacific oyster farming industry in both countries. The study group included both growers who had experienced POMS on their farm and those who had not. The questionnaire was organised in five sections: participant characteristics; experience with OsHV-1 mortalities; support during the disease crisis; risk management strategies; and state of preparedness.

This collaborative research identified potential strategic directions that could be integrated in business risk management plans for the shellfish farming industry. It also indicated that farmers, scientists and governments will be more successful if they work in partnership to develop practical and effective measures to manage diseases as well as pests in the aquatic environment.

Mots-Clés: Shellfish disease, Pacific oyster, perception, risk management, strategies, questionnaire

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