

# QX



NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

and



## QX management overhaul

Both NSW Farmers Association and NSW DPI are keen to overhaul the way the oyster industry manages QX and wants your input. The Association's Oyster Committee wants to investigate, with industry and DPI input, a move towards QX 'risk based' management that is agreed and managed by each estuary. The Committee wants to pass on some of the models that are currently being discussed amongst estuaries. The following is a brief summary of the current situation to get the industry talking but should not be used as a guide for making decisions.

## Why the push for change?

QX is being detected in more estuaries. QX is currently a 'notifiable disease' in NSW and when an outbreak is detected the area is 'quarantined'. The industry is losing stock and normal trade patterns are being disrupted. Many estuaries are now thinking through whether they should exclude external stock or continue to trade while managing the risks.

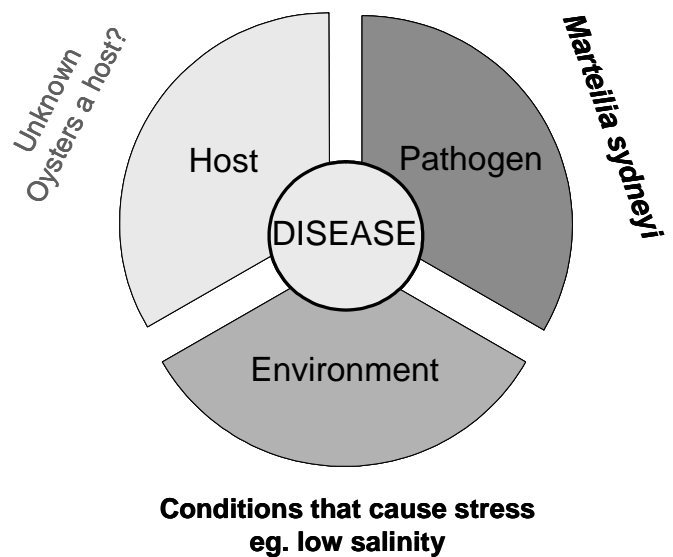
## Is QX a mystery?

Research has answered many questions but has raised many others.

Disease occurs when there is a host, a pathogen and the environment favours disease (see picture).

All three factors are needed but each factor doesn't always exist in the same amounts for disease to occur.

QX is caused by the interaction of these three factors (see picture) just like any other disease and its risk can be reduced.



## Is there a way that QX can be avoided?

**Stopping oyster movements (controlling 'pathogen' amounts)?** QX can occur even when oysters have not moved into the estuary eg Woolli River. But moving oysters with *M. sydneyi* in its infective state or at known high levels is poor disease management eg moving oysters from Georges River to Shoalhaven in March would be unwise.

**Testing oysters for QX (controlling 'pathogen' amounts)?** Testing oysters before moving into an estuary provides QX status but will not determine future QX status.

**Testing the environment (controlling environment stressors)?** The stressors/environmental factors that favour QX have not been identified and so cannot be monitored with a surveillance program. Managing stock movements around environmental stressors may help eg. moving stock away from a chemical spill.

**Monitoring estuaries for QX?** Monitoring does not 'forecast' QX outbreaks. *M. sydneyi* is known to be present in the majority of estuaries tested mostly dormant (QX dormant) but can be triggered into a QX outbreak (QX positive) eg. *M. sydneyi* below detection in Hawkesbury in 2003 with an outbreak in 2004.

**Disease resistant stock ('proofing' against all disease factors)?** Growing a proportion of QX resistant SRO or triploid Pacifics or is being used to guard against QX losses.

## What are estuaries thinking?

**Wonboyn Lake:** 'QX dormant' Wonboyn has relied heavily on spat from Woolli. All growers have agreed that the risk of a QX outbreak from moving stock from Woolli is low, given Woolli's low QX prevalence, and have requested the ability to accept stock from Woolli.

*Summary: Wonboyn has decided that the calculated economic loss of not receiving Woolli stock is higher than the disease risk.*

**Wallis Lake:** 'QX dormant' Wallis Lake relied heavily on stock transfer between estuaries that are now 'QX positive' eg Hawkesbury and Macleay R. Wallis Lake has considered;

1. No movement of stock into Wallis except for a QX free movement from a hatchery
2. Free movement of stock into Wallis through low risk period, and in high risk period only from estuaries with 'like status' with a QX test
3. Do nothing (not supported)
4. Free movement all year with a QX test

*Summary: Wallis Lake has decided that risk of disease and economic loss warrants a disease risk management plan.*

**Clyde R:** 'QX dormant' Clyde River relies heavily on importing spat supply. Clyde River is also considering testing and stock transfer restrictions.

*Summary: Clyde River understands that risk of disease and economic loss warrants a disease risk management plan.*

**Hastings R:** Hastings R relies heavily on spat supply to other estuaries. Keen to retain specialist seed producing status, it and other seed producing estuaries are waiting to see how other estuaries decide to manage future stock transfer.

*Summary: Spat supplying estuaries understand that estuaries are likely to gauge risk against economic loss and are looking for information.*

## Is there going to be more information?

Yes. The QX Technical Working Group (consists of NSW DPI, QX experts and industry) meets on 5 October and the Association's Oyster Committee meets on 17 October. The aim is to provide recommendations from both meetings on identifying and managing disease risk. Some QX risk management guidelines may include;

- Safest time to move stock
- Uptake of disease resistant SRO
- Use of triploid Pacific (REF required)
- Testing where appropriate

Options available for testing will also be discussed.

## Who wants to know what you think?

Both DPI and the Association need to know;

- whether you are prepared to employ an industry managed disease risk approach rather than the 'quarantine and forget' approach,
- what information you need to make the decision

If your estuary is having a meeting over QX we would like to know what you discussed either before the 5 October QX Technical Working Group meeting or before the 17 October Oyster Committee meeting.

Send your thoughts to either [jane.frances@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jane.frances@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or [kingr@nswfarmers.org.au](mailto:kingr@nswfarmers.org.au)