



Announcing the Fishing Vessel Fixed Cost Survey

Who: Owners of federally permitted Northeast U.S. commercial fishing vessels which landed any fish in 2005 or 2006

What: A voluntary survey on the fixed costs of operating commercial fishing vessels

When: The Northeast Regional Office will mail out the survey in early 2007, along with permit renewals

Why: To provide improved, up-to-date information to evaluate the financial impacts of any proposed fishery regulations

Economists at NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center conduct research and analyses to assess how proposed fishing regulations affect (a) different sectors of the fishing industry; (b) different ports; and (c) different groups of fishermen and fishing communities. To accomplish this, information about fixed costs and trip costs is needed.

Fixed costs include insurance, mooring and dockage fees, repairs and maintenance, and other costs not directly determined by the number of trips that a vessel makes or the duration of these trips. Trip costs include ice, fuel, bait, food for the crew, etc.

Although information on trip costs and fixed costs is presently collected during observed trips by NOAA's fishery observers, it is often difficult to get accurate information about fixed costs while at-sea. Often, the captain is not the vessel owner and therefore does not know these costs. Even when the captain is the owner, records of fixed costs are usually not kept on board and therefore the captain/owner must work from memory. The fishing vessel fixed cost survey is a mechanism for acquiring more accurate information about fixed costs.

Confidentiality: By law, all survey data are confidential. When these data are analyzed, the information provided by individual vessel owners will be combined, resulting in a summary of costs by gear type, vessel size, region, etc. No individual owner's data will be published or made available to anyone other than those specifically authorized to analyze the data. To reinforce confidentiality, the survey is divided into four parts and each vessel owner will be requested to fill out only three of the four parts. Therefore, no owners will have to report their total fixed costs for any given year.

Note: Participation is voluntary; permit renewal is not affected by whether the vessel owner participates in the survey.

Questions: Contact Andrew Kitts, NOAA Fisheries Service, 508-495-2231 or Andrew.Kitts@noaa.gov. The survey will be administered by Mike Morin at the Northeast Regional Office's Permit Office. Mike can be reached at 978-281-9196 or Mike.Morin@noaa.gov.