



PRESS RELEASE

From pulse trawl back to beam trawl 78% more fuel consumption and CO2 emissions

In the case of a ban on pulse fishing, fishermen cannot but fall back on the beam trawl. This means that the income of owner and crew will be decreased by 100.000 up to 300.000 euro per trawl, based on the current, relatively favourable fish and fuel prices. At lower fish prices and higher fuel prices the loss can increase up to more than 20 million euro for the Dutch fishing fleet in total. This is a disaster for the continuity of the Dutch fishing sector, which is made clear by Wageningen Economic Research.

On request of the Fisheries Regions Network the Netherlands (Bestuurlijk Platform Visserij / BPV), Wageningen Economic Research carried out a research into the socio-economic consequences of a complete pulse fishing ban for the Dutch fishery. "If pulse trawling is going to be banned, this will have a huge impact on the fleet" according to chairman Jo-Annes de Bat of the BPV. "Not only a lot of money that has been invested in pulse equipment will be wasted, but also the revenues will decline substantially. On top of that you have the rising costs and difficulties with regard to finding well-qualified crew. If you add the Brexit threat and the many sea areas that are not accessible for fishing because they are nature reserves or wind farms, you will understand this is a blow that can mean the total bankruptcy of the fishing sector."

Continuity companies at stake

Various price scenarios have been worked out in the study. Pulse fishing is mainly focused on the catch of sole. With beam trawling, 12% less sole is caught per sea day, but 69% more plaice. However, fuel consumption increases by 78%. This means that the operating result per trawler (price level 2016) will be at least between 100.000 euro and 120.000 euro lower. For the entire Dutch pulse fleet, the net result will be 8.7 million euro lower. In the worst case price scenario (taking into account the drop of the price of fish and the increased price of fuel compared to the 2012 price level), there is a decrease of 21.5 million euro. This means that half of the trawlers are faced with a negative operating result. A situation that cannot last for long. The crew are also the victim of this. There is a danger that the remuneration will become so low that it will become very difficult to get young people interested in a fisherman's life.



De Bat: "In addition to the consequences for the fleet, which have an immediate impact on the fishing communities, it is also difficult to understand why pulse fishing should be banned, whereas it has the great advantage of causing less unwanted by-catch. Taking into account the landing obligation that will go into effect as of 2019, this means more unwanted by-catch should pulse fishing be banned. This will cost the sector approximately 3 to 5 million euro more because of the additional unwanted by-catch processing".

Dutch fleet

The flatfish sector in the Netherlands has a fleet size of 137 trawlers: 77 pulse trawlers and 60 other kinds of trawlers. The pulse trawlers collected 75% of the total supply of sole in 2016, 29% of the plaice supply and 40% of the remaining supply. Therefore the supply produced by pulse trawlers is of great importance. The direct employment within the pulse fishing sector (trawler crew members) is 540 to 600 fte.

Note for the editors:

For additional information please contact mr. J. Brands (secretary of the BPV), tel. 0527-689868.

For additional information about the results of the research, you can contact Wim Zaalmlink, member of the research team at Wageningen Economic Research, tel. 0320 – 293530, email wim.zaalmlink@wur.nl

The report can be downloaded from <https://doi.org/10.18174/452306>

The Fisheries Regions Network the Netherlands (Bestuurlijk Platform Visserij: BPV) is the platform for provincial and municipal governors that looks after the socio-economic interests of the fishery communities. The platform represents 6 provinces and 16 municipalities that are related to North Sea fishing. Chairman of the BPV is mr. drs. J. de Bat, member of the Provincial Executive of Zeeland.