

# Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome: Question & Answer Fact Sheet

(Short Version)

## 1. What is POMS?

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) is the name that has been given to the virus associated with high mortality events in the Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) in Europe, New Zealand and NSW.

## 2. How serious is the disease?

The disease is **very serious**; it has resulted in complete loss of farm stock in some areas together with restriction of oyster movements.

The disease represents a **MAJOR** Threat to the ongoing viability of the oyster industry.

## 3. Is POMS a human health risk?

**There is no evidence that the virus can infect humans.**

## 4. How is the virus spread?

Spread is most likely to occur through the movement of live oysters to uninfected areas, although spread by movement of equipment is also possible.

## 5. What should I do if I have a mortality event on my farm?

- Under license conditions, **growers are required to report high or unexplained mortalities** on their farms.
- 24 Hour disease hotlines have been established in each State and are detailed below
- ***Immediately stop any movement of oysters*** and associated gear and equipment.
- ***Assume that it could be POMS - act to safeguard your industry.***

## 6. How can its spread be controlled?

- Once the virus is detected, stop oyster and infrastructure movement between oyster areas **IMMEDIATELY** until further advice can be sought.
- Farmer reporting of mortalities is the main system used to identify new outbreaks and greatly assists in controlling the spread of POMS. **Remember: Report any mortalities immediately.**

## 7. The future: what is being done to control the disease?

Management strategies and research projects currently include:

- breeding Pacific oysters for resistance;
- growing hatchery spat to a larger size before stocking;
- understanding how new husbandry methods can protect against mortalities; and
- emergency harvest in the face of possible outbreaks.

**PLEASE TURN OVER for further information about POMS or how to report oyster mortalities**

**8. Further information about POMS or to report oyster mortalities**

**NSW:**

Web: [NSW Farmers Association - Oysters](#)

Ph: 02 8251 1700

Web: [Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome – NSW](#)

[Oyster Mortality Reporting](#)

Ph: 1800 043 536 or 02 4982 1232 or 1300 550 474

**South Australia:**

Web: [Oysters South Australia](#)

Ph: 0407 883 333

Web: [Biosecurity South Australia](#)

Ph: 1800 065 522

**Tasmania:**

Web: [Oysters Tasmania](#)

Ph: 0458 601 057

Web: [DPIPWE site relating to reporting of disease](#)

[DPIPWE site relating to import conditions for molluscs](#)

Ph: 24 hour government hotline: 1800 675 888

**9. Other Key Web Links:**

Report: [Final Report OsHV-1  \$\mu\$ Var International Workshop, Cairns, 9-10 July 2011](#)

Slides: [Power point presentation: Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome](#)

Media: [Oyster industry learning international lessons to stop virus spread](#)

*Fact Sheet produced by [RDS Partners](#) 5 December 2011*