

Contaminated Bivalves may Cause Disease

Being filter-feeders, bivalves may concentrate bacteria and viruses from their growing waters. Because they are frequently consumed raw or lightly cooked, bivalves contaminated with these pathogens have the potential to cause disease

Health Protection Controls

On behalf of the FSA, Cefas manages the classification programme for bivalve production areas in England and Wales. The classification defines which areas are authorised for harvesting bivalves and the post-harvest treatment required before human consumption

Microbiological Monitoring and Classification

Levels of *E. coli* monitored in bivalves provide an estimate of the levels of pathogenic microorganisms present in classified production or relaying areas

For information relating to policy matters on sanitary surveys in England and Wales contact: Food Standards Agency

☎ +44 (0) 20 7276 8955
✉ shellfish.hygiene@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

For more information on the implementation of sanitary surveys in England and Wales contact: Cefas

☎ +44 (0) 1305 206600
✉ fsq@cefass.co.uk

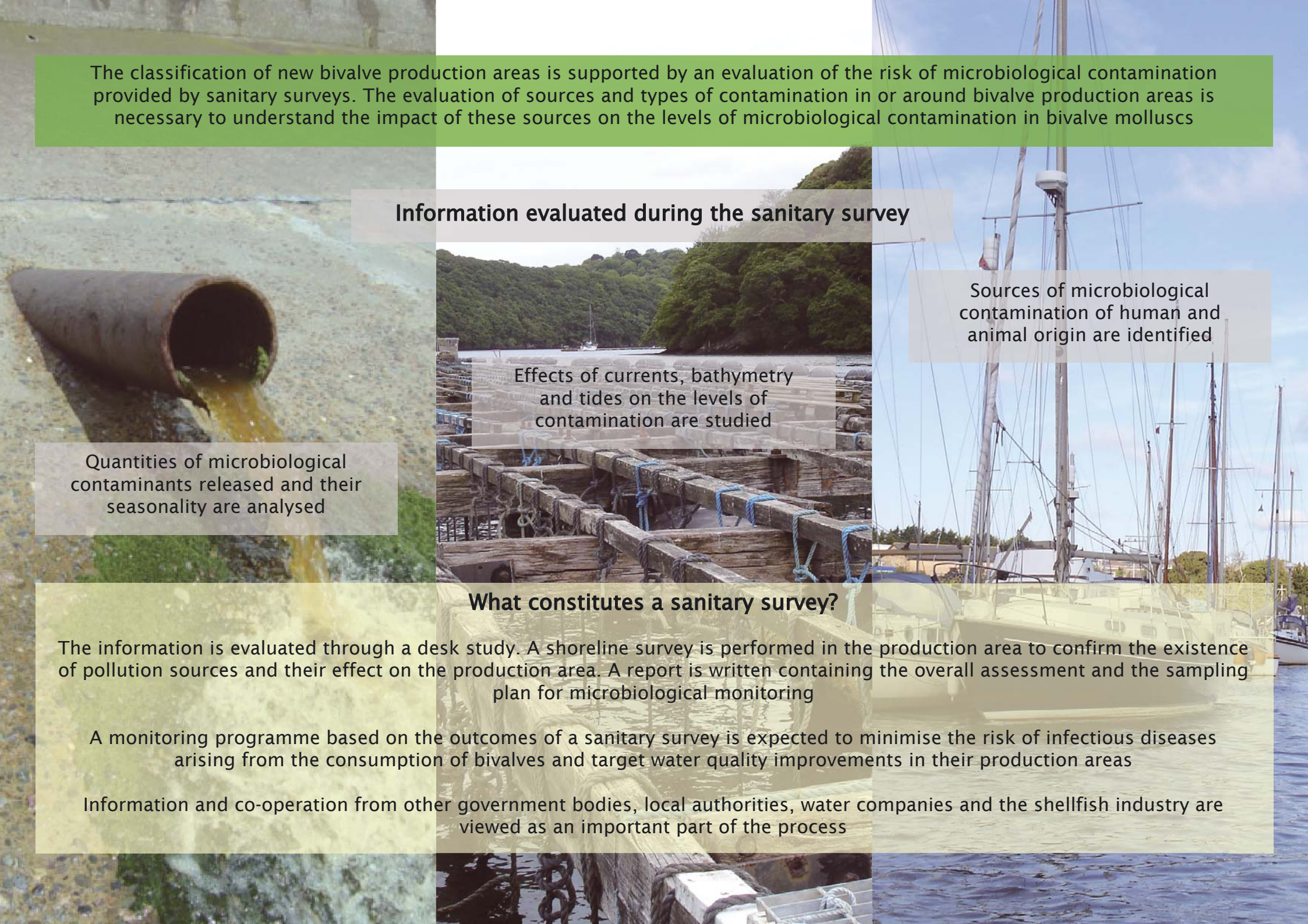
SANITARY SURVEYS IN BIVALVE MOLLUSC PRODUCTION AREAS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Working for Safe Shellfish

Identifying Pollution Sources

Evaluating Risk of Contamination

Promoting Food Safety



The classification of new bivalve production areas is supported by an evaluation of the risk of microbiological contamination provided by sanitary surveys. The evaluation of sources and types of contamination in or around bivalve production areas is necessary to understand the impact of these sources on the levels of microbiological contamination in bivalve molluscs

Information evaluated during the sanitary survey

Quantities of microbiological contaminants released and their seasonality are analysed

Effects of currents, bathymetry and tides on the levels of contamination are studied

Sources of microbiological contamination of human and animal origin are identified

What constitutes a sanitary survey?

The information is evaluated through a desk study. A shoreline survey is performed in the production area to confirm the existence of pollution sources and their effect on the production area. A report is written containing the overall assessment and the sampling plan for microbiological monitoring

A monitoring programme based on the outcomes of a sanitary survey is expected to minimise the risk of infectious diseases arising from the consumption of bivalves and target water quality improvements in their production areas

Information and co-operation from other government bodies, local authorities, water companies and the shellfish industry are viewed as an important part of the process