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Workshop to discuss lobster market

*Local fishers encouraged
to attend*

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Marketing, Sustainability, Labelling. Those are only a few of the subjects an upcoming lobster workshop in Port aux Basques will address.

On Nov. 5, 'Opportunities for Sustainable Livelihoods in Newfoundland's Southwest Coast Lobster Fishery,' will be at Hotel Port aux Basques from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The main project partner is the Community-University Research for Recovery Alliance (CURRA). CURRA is a five-year research program looking at developing strategies to recover fish stocks and fishery communities on Newfoundland's Southwest coast.

The workshop will connect those involved in the southwest coast lobster fishery, including researchers, harvesters and buyers, among others.

Mandy Ryan, fisheries stewardship advocate, said in an email the Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) is encouraging area lobster harvesters to go to the workshop to learn more about lobster marketing.

"We think it's a good opportunity for knowledge exchange between our lobster harvesters, local resource people, people from the university and others," wrote Ms. Ryan.

The morning facilitator is Dr. Barbara Neis and the afternoon one is Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee.

Katie Temple is one of the presenters. She's a research intern with CURRA. Ms. Temple has been researching seafood-marketing options.

"I'm just looking at forms of marketing that might financially benefit harvesters and buyers maybe as well," said Ms. Temple.

She's looked at eco-labeling (for example, the Marine Stewardship Council). She's also looked at fair-trade labeling and direct-market options. Ms. Temple will be running the 'Alternative Marketing Options' session at Friday's workshop.

Other sessions will include a panel discussion about the lobster industry, a video presentation about the effectiveness of lobster conservation methods, and seafood marketing options in Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Temple said for the past 10 years or so, there's been more of a dependence on lobster on the southwest coast.

"Just in the past couple of years there have been decreases in the price that fishers are able to get for their lobster," she explained.

Ms. Temple said southwest coast fishers need to look at the dependence on lobster and whether it's sustainable. The price also needs to be examined.

"Is there any way that harvesters can have more control over or be able to have a say in what prices they're able to get for their fish?" asked Ms. Temple.

The workshop will end with group discussions.

Those interested may contact Janet Oliver at 709-864-7551 or email her at joliver@mun.ca.