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Future of fishing raises debate at University of Hull

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By James Burton



GLOBAL APPROACH: Nick Riley, senior lecturer at the University of Hull, and Roos Galjaard, project manager of the North Sea Fish, at a dinner at The Deep before the conference.

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THE future of fishing has been discussed in a conference at the University of Hull.

Academics from across Europe talked about the issues around producing, selling and marketing seafood in a sustainable way.

Hull's own trawler fleet may be long gone, but Grimsby, on the south bank, remains a key production centre.

The economic benefits have a knock-on effect in East Yorkshire, speakers argued.

Nick Riley, a senior lecturer in engineering at the university, said: "There's a whole cluster of food and fish-related industries in the Humber and we're looking to maximise the economic benefits of that.

"The focus is on Grimsby now, realistically, but I think we need to improve it and look at the sustainability.

"My role is to look at the supply chains and see how we can improve them."

Sustainability is something of a buzzword in every industry, but it can mean different things to different people.

A key part of the conference, organised by EU- backed research [body](#) North Sea Fish, was determining what mattered to the public.

Speaker Jonathan Banks, a consumer goods consultant, said: "The industry has to be concentrating really hard on getting things such as the sustainability right, as well as the politics, the economics, how it catches the fish, how it processes it and how it sells it to the retailers.

"At the same time, we have to think about the impact on the consumer and what the consumer wants.

"One of the problems for shoppers is the issues around sustainability are very complex – it means different things to different people."

North Sea Fish project manager Roos Haljaard believes a global approach is the best way forward.

She said: "We're not supposed to make the fishery sector sustainable with our tiny little project, but it helps to do it internationally.

"We're working together, not to reinvent the wheel but to [support](#) each other.

"It's just small steps, but you never know what will come out."

Hull may have lost its fleet decades ago, but the work the conference is doing could still impact on some city businesses.

Roach Bros Curers, off Hessle Road, west Hull, is a major supplier of smoked mackerel for Aldi.

Fresh fish firm Copernus and wholesale merchant Norstar Trading are also based in the city.

Meanwhile, Bridlington is Britain's biggest shellfish port and, although the conference focused on other sea creatures, speakers said it could also offer lessons elsewhere.

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