



Rules on marine farming *Undaria* in New Zealand



What is *Undaria*?

Undaria pinnatifida (*Undaria*) is a species of kelp that is native to Japan. It is a highly invasive seaweed which can easily be spread as by fouling on vessel hulls and on marine equipment.

Undaria is primarily found in the low intertidal area to subtidal depths of around 15 metres. It grows on any hard surface including shells, reefs, ropes, wharf piles, marine farming structures, vessel hulls, moorings and other artificial structures. It is widespread in a number of New Zealand locations.

What is the classification of *Undaria*?

Undaria is classified as an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993. As such, approval under this Act is required for certain activities that would otherwise be prohibited (for example, the commercial harvest or farming of *Undaria*).

Undaria is also listed as a pest in the regional pest management strategy of some regional councils.

Can *Undaria* be harvested or farmed?

The Ministry for Primary Industries introduced a revised policy focused on the commercial use of *Undaria* in May 2010. This policy can be found on the MPI website at <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/19889-undaria-harvesting-policy-2010>.

The policy:

- allows farming in selected heavily infested areas;
- allows harvest when *Undaria* is growing on artificial surfaces (including marine farms);
- allows harvest when *Undaria* is cast ashore in selected areas not vulnerable or sensitive to commercial harvest processes;
- prohibits harvest when *Undaria* is growing on natural surfaces, except when part of a programme specifically designed to control *Undaria*.

The harvesting component of the policy has been in operation since May 2010. If you wish to apply to commercially harvest *Undaria* you will need to seek permission from MPI under section 52 and/ or 53 of the Biosecurity Act by completing the commercial harvest application form that is available from <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/15967-commercial-farming-of-undaria-pinnatifida-application>.



The reason for allowing farming of *Undaria* in selected heavily infested areas is that there is minimal risk of additional spread as *Undaria* is already present in New Zealand's five main marine farming geographical areas. In addition, *Undaria* already inadvertently grows on the marine farm structures in some of these areas.

In early 2012, MPI announced three areas where farming of *Undaria* will be allowed, subject to MPI approval. The areas are in waters of Wellington, Marlborough, and Banks Peninsula.

How do I obtain approval to farm *Undaria*?

In accordance with other aquaculture activities in the coastal marine area, regional councils will be responsible for assessing and granting any applications for marine farming of *Undaria* under the Resource Management Act 1991. In addition, MPI may be required to undertake an assessment under the Fisheries Act 1996 to determine whether the proposal will have an undue adverse effect on fishing.

As it will remain an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act, any proposal to farm *Undaria* will also require permission from MPI in addition to obtaining resource consent.

It is recommended that you secure the necessary Biosecurity Act permission from MPI prior to lodging an application for consent with the regional council.

Once permission from MPI has been granted, you will have to lodge a resource consent application with the relevant regional council. This will need to include an assessment of environmental effects of the activity.

Anyone wishing to farm *Undaria* should contact MPI in the first instance.

**For further information contact
info@mpi.govt.nz**

