



Aquaculture News

Issue 17 December 2015

NSW production up by volume and value!

The Provisional Aquaculture Production Report 2014/15 is indicating a 14% increase in production value over the last financial year. Sydney Rock Oyster production is up 360,562 dozen and close to \$3m. Murray Cod production is also notable with a 107% increase to 177t, averaging \$15.06/kg farm gate price. Farmed Black Tiger Prawns were up 15% in volume and Rainbow Trout, Silver Perch and Mulloway all contributed significantly to the 16% increase in the value of land based aquaculture. Thank you for your returns. See <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/permit-holder-information>

NSW DPI Strategic Plan 2015-2019

Over the next three years NSW DPI Fisheries faces some important tasks and challenges, including: reforming the commercial fisheries sector to ensure its long-term sustainability and viability; implementing the State Government's response to the Report of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks; continuing to develop and enhance quality recreational fishing opportunities for the people of NSW; and engaging with Aboriginal communities to implement firm arrangements for cultural fishing.

A key measure in the plan is increased growth in the value of NSW primary industries by 30% by 2020. Aquaculture has been targeted as a key growth sector for NSW and with 14% growth last financial year is set to contribute to this goal. Major projects in 2016 include: Yellowtail Kingfish off Port Stephens; aquaculture in Jervis Bay; developing a Marine Waters Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy; and supporting the emerging Murray Cod industry in the Riverina.

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/strategic-plan-2012-15>

Vale Frank Roberts Tru Blu Prawns

Frank was born in 1933 to parents Doris and Dudley Roberts at Auburn, in the Western Suburbs of Sydney. Frank joined the NSW Railways and served his apprenticeship as a boilermaker. After completion, he left the Railways and worked as a Drainage Contractor, first for brother Norm who taught him the trade, and then on his own. Frank and wife Lorna moved to Yamba in 1972. Frank started cane farming shortly after on land

that is now home to Tru Blu prawns. Frank also began developing land with his brothers at Crystal Waters and even drove to Lismore weekly to study for a Real Estate Licence.

In the early 1980's Frank became fascinated with prawn farming and became a pioneer of the industry with his first successful crop in 1984, among the first commercial crops in Australia. He farmed wild caught School Prawns and then Black Tiger Prawns and Kuruma Prawns for export to Japan. Frank's love of Bank Managers is well known and he managed this relationship well, supplementing his borrowings with lottery winnings.

From his Eulogy - Frank had a wonderful sense of humour, always loved a laugh, loved a bit of mischief and took great pleasure in taking the mickey out of anyone and everyone. He was a great adventurer, an innovator and a gambler, a risk taker. He was a true larrikin in the best of its definitions and he will be sadly missed. Frank passed away 16 September 2015.

Tru Blu prawns is still in the family, operated by Frank's son Alan. The Australian aquaculture industry is indebted to Frank's pioneering spirit.



Yabby Farming Field Day

The NSW Aquaculture Association held a Yabby farming field day at Swan Bay NSW on the 8th August 2015. Held at "Yabby Dabba Doo" Yabby farm the event was sponsored by Aquatic Engineering Australia who also demonstrated on farm the latest water filtration systems.

Over 30 people attended the field day coming from as far as Western Australia and Victoria. The field day provided a perfect platform to obtain a wealth of information on Yabby farming techniques, make industry contacts and meet other like-minded people. The NSW Aquaculture Association conducts a number of field days each year. Field days are a great opportunity for members and interested parties to meet industry leaders and see how their commercial farms operate and what's required for them to enter the industry.

Contact <http://nswaquaculture.com.au/contact-us/>



Yabby field day

Valuing NSW Aquaculture

The Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC) has funded a project to produce reliable information about the ways the aquaculture industry contributes to the local economies and communities in coastal NSW. Some 34 oyster and 17 land based businesses have volunteered to support the project via a questionnaire survey. The benefit to industry will be having evidence about the contribution you make to regional communities. Dr Nicki Mazur has been doing some interviews on the south coast, and will do more on the central coast and mid north coast in January 2016.

Contact A/Prof Kate Barclay 0435 142 247 or

kate.barclay@uts.edu.au.

<https://www.facebook.com/UTSValuingCoastalFisheries>

Viewing oyster leases by mobile device or computer

NSW DPI is working on two tools to help oyster farmers use technology for your spatial farm planning; a webpage that will allow you to view your lease area on an interactive map that can also be used to download data (due for release mid 2016); and a document that explains some of the methods, pitfalls and many tools available for viewing spatial data on a computer or GPS-capable device. **Contact Antonia Creese DPI**

antonia.creese@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Norovirus and Hepatitis A survey results

The South Australian Research Development Institute (SARDI) has completed the analysis of samples collected for the national oyster virus survey. All results have returned negative. This is a great outcome

considering the wet weather that occurred when samples were being collected. This compares very favourably to surveys in other countries (UK = 76%; Ireland = 37%). Out of the 300 samples tested for Norovirus and hepatitis A, there were no positive samples and it can be concluded that the national prevalence for these viruses is less than 2%. The project was funded by FRDC and supported by Oysters Australia. See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-29/australian-oyster-food-poison-survey-clean-bill-of-health/6894998>

Williamtown firefighting foam contamination

NSW Health recommended a precautionary Fishing Closure on 3/9/15 in upper Tilligerry Creek following the detection by Defence of Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in biota. This was found in a limited number of fish found in drains close to Williamtown Airport. A ban on the sale of farmed oysters from the Tilligerry Oyster Harvest Area was also implemented. Sampling of oysters commenced 4/9/15. A depuration study of Sydney Rock Oysters commenced 9/9/15 to monitor PFOS purging with day zero, day three, one week, two week and four week tests undertaken. Subsequent testing of farmed Tilligerry oysters cleared them of any health risk and the industry was opened for sales 7/10/15. The test results and dietary assessment work considered by the Expert Panel are on the web.

A comprehensive Human Health Risk Assessment (soil, water, biota) is underway and is anticipated to take eight months to complete. This will consider the hydrology of the area particularly any impact from Moore's drain into Tilligerry Creek. There will be ongoing monitoring of the Tilligerry Creek Harvest Area for the next six months. Port Stephens Council is leading a media campaign to support the local seafood brand. Oyster farmers have been represented on the Community Reference Group by Mark Salm Chair of NSW Farmers Association Port Stephens and Don Burgoyne.

See: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/resources/epa/152670-preliminary-assessment-commercial-oysters-211015.pdf>

Shellfish Program Update

Classification of harvest areas was introduced in 2005. Initially, only 25% of harvest areas had a direct harvest classification. In 2015, this number has increased to 50% as the result of improvements in catchment management and targeted sampling strategies. This is generally the result of a rigorous effort by industry to systematically identify, and where required, remediate pollution sources that pose a potential risk to their harvest areas. The past two years have also seen an increase in export market access with the number of export approved harvest areas increasing from eight to twenty three.

Contact Anthony Zammit NSWFA 9741 4749

Oyster breeding update

Sydney Rock Oyster family production is currently underway at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute hatchery for the breeding program. Spat from another 44 families have just been settled bringing the total number of families produced in 2015 to 92. This hatchery run is focused on increasing the genetic diversity of the breeding population and the level of QX resistance by using exposed survivors sourced from the Clarence River. The 48 families produced in January 2015 are currently being assessed for winter mortality and QX resistance in the Georges River, QX resistance in Clarence River and meat condition and growth in Wallis Lake and Port Stephens. This work is leading to the development of families that rank highly across a number of the key traits (QX, condition and growth) that can then be commercialised. Another field challenge trial that exposed juveniles from the ASI Pacific Oyster breeding program was conducted in Georges River throughout October and November. OsHV-1 was detected in early November and the survival data was able to be used to inform the current round of Pacific Oyster breeding in Tasmania. **Contact Mike Dove DPI 4916 3807**

10th International Conference on Molluscan Shellfish Safety Chile March 2015

As a member of the NSW Shellfish Committee I was lucky enough to be able to represent the NSW oyster industry at the recent ICMSS conference held at Puerto Varas in Chile in March this year.

Chile is the longest country in the world, and I flew south from Santiago to Puerto Varas along a stretch of land that is only 350km wide from east to west, and 4300km long from north to south. Chile is situated on the 'Ring of Fire' and this was very obvious as I flew alongside many of the 2000 volcanoes in the Andes on my right, most were inactive but some were very active.

Our host city Puerto Varas, lies on the shores of Lake Llanquihue, the 2nd largest lake in Chile and covers approximately 860 square kilometres. This area was originally founded by Germans and has a diverse mix of Spanish and German heritage.



Local native flat oysters

On the Sunday we took the local bus to Puerto Montt to visit the local fish market. Chilean Blueshell Mussels

account for 25% of the countries income, reaching production of 238,000 tonnes in 2014. Farmed Atlantic Salmon is their biggest aquaculture enterprise, with Chile 2nd after Norway and represents 47 % of total fish harvested. They reached 440,800 metric tonnes by the end of November 2014.

Each day started with a joint session with all participants invited to attend on topics like: growth of bacteria in shellfish and the emergence of seafood related outbreaks, or academic collaboration for traceability to shellfish producers, or introduction to FAO/WHO work on technical guidelines on bivalves. The following sessions were then divided into two rooms, one running with sessions based on Biotxin and Phytoplankton issues and the other with Virus and Health related issues.

Going to the various sessions gave me a better understanding of what the researchers are trying to achieve in order to help us in providing a safe product and the time and sometimes frustration they endure to provide us with timely testing and results: Government agencies trying to establish protocols and management plans, giving first hand evidence of situations that affected their farmers and what they did to solve the problems or how they were able to provide assistance; Private Companies providing technical support, designing testing regimes and equipment that provide us with more cost effective management tools or testing solutions; and general scientists explaining what different issues are out there and why we need keep informed to ensure that the product we harvest and sell is safe for our consumers to enjoy with confidence.

We were taken on two industry tours; the first one was to the Orizon Shellfish Farm and Processing Plant in Chiquihue, Puerto Montt. Here we were shown first hand world class best practice in processing their mussels and given the opportunity to taste some very innovative ideas for marketing their mussels. Our second tour was to Mejillones America, a shellfish and industry farm in the Salud Region de Los Lagos. We were able to inspect the various processes that were used to seed the long lines with mussel spat, shown where and how their mussels were grown to maturity and then harvested.

I found the experience one that I would love to re visit and urge all oyster farmers if given the opportunity to attend these types of events. It gives you the ability to meet and interact with people who are actively involved in researching, managing or working on issues that can, do and could affect your business. We need to actively engage with them to ensure that they know what we want and need to make our businesses safe and profitable.

Contact Caroline Henry Chair NSW Farmers Association Oyster Committee, member NSW Shellfish Committee

Safety Management System (SMS) Workshop

The NSW Farmers Association Oyster Section and NSW Roads and Maritime Services recently held a workshop to assist local oyster farmers to become conversant with the new requirements of having a SMS. The workshop held at Pambula had 35 oyster farmers receive advice from Education Officers from NSW RMS and Anthony Bradstreet from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). A well earned BBQ followed a very productive morning.

Contact Jaimie Lovell NSW Farmers 9478 1008



South Coast oyster farmers with RMS and AMSA

NSW Oyster Industry Strategic Development Plan,

The Implementation group has convened with a membership of 11 growers with geographically spread representation; Tony Troup, Noel Baggaley, Ian Crisp, Anthony Sciacca, Richard Hamlyn-Harris, Kel Henry, Kevin McAsh, John Dawson, Andy Baker, Brandon Armstrong, Mark Hamilton. Tony Troup has agreed to act as Chair for the implementation group and NSW DPI has agreed to provide secretariat support.

The group had its first meeting by teleconference on 7 September 2015 and resolved to prioritise actions in the Strategy and hold a face to face meeting to progress initiatives. Growers input is invited.

Contact Ian Crisp or Kel Henry

Oyster lease cleanup

The cleanup program now has remediated 393 leases covering 459.61 ha. Over the last six months we have been allocating a \$90,000 grant from Crown Lands and have finished projects in the Hawkesbury River, Salamander Bay (Port Stephens), Botany Bay, Wallis Lake and one lease in the Karuah River (Port Stephens). Three leases in Brisbane Water and two leases in the Crookhaven River are in progress.

Illegally dumped oyster lease material has been removed from the Fox Bay foreshore (Hawkesbury River) with a contribution of \$3322 from the Aquaculture Lease Security Trust. This investment was leveraged threefold with contributions from Clean 4 Shore, NPWS, volunteer labour and a local oyster farmer.

NSW DPI continues to pursue former lessees to ensure clean-up responsibilities are met. One current case

involves a lease in Tuross Lake that was cleaned up by contractors following a nil response to final warnings issued to the former lessee. NSW DPI will pursue costs and has raised an invoice for the work against the former lessee.

Contact Katie Sachs DPI 4916 3913

Biosecurity Act 2015 - Aquatic Discussion Papers

NSW is improving the way we protect our community, environment and economy from biosecurity risks with the introduction of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. The Act will repeal parts of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* relating to aquatic declared diseases and noxious fish. These parts currently include various regulatory controls with respect to diseases and pests including *Bonamia*, Winter Mortality, QX Disease, Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) and Pacific Oysters. Before the Biosecurity Act can commence, regulations, other legal instruments and policies and procedures need to be developed. Discussion papers on some key topics and their proposed management under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* have been prepared for public review. We are seeking comments on the papers by 12 February 2016 and we encourage your feedback in this important process.

See www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

Get to know Wonboyn Lake

Members of the Sapphire Coast Wilderness Oysters hosted Bega Valley Shire Mayor Michael Britten and Councillor Sharon Tascott, South East LLS Manager Jillian Keating, Forest Corp NSW Water Quality Officer Brad Jarrett, Don McPhee and Kerry Pfeffer, community representatives along with 25 oyster farmers from Wapengo, Merimbula, and Pambula on a familiarisation cruise around Wonboyn Lake. Participants were shown around the lake by local oyster farmers and given an information narration by Kel Henry the Shellfish Program Coordinator. Following the leisurely cruise everyone enjoyed a lovely BBQ lunch at the Wonboyn Lake Resort hosted by Bill and Joy Foxwell.



Wonboyn tour participants

Aquaculture Program Evaluation

NSW DPI has nominated the Aquaculture section to undertake a Program Evaluation assessment, to be completed by March 2016. The assessment reviews our current role and performance and seeks to refine where the section will head in future years. The current emphasis is to reduce investment risk by identifying and obtaining approvals for new marine lease areas, reducing red tape, and introducing e-business. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is developing a National Aquaculture Strategy which may also contribute to this evaluation.

Contact Raelene Trenaman DPI 4916 3843.

Eden Whale Festival Oyster Shucking

Sapphire Coast Wilderness Oysters again hosted the Eden Whale Festival Oyster Shucking Competition. Once again at the Whale Festival, or Gale Festival as the locals call it, delicious oysters were available for festival goers to enjoy fresh from Wapengo, Merimbula, Pambula and Wonboyn. While the winds created havoc with the stall holders, enthusiastic would-be oyster shuckers competed for the coveted trophy opening as many oysters as they could within the two minute time frame. **Contact Sue McIntyre 0427 824 690**



Sapphire Coast shucking underway

ASFB & ISSSR Conference

The Australian Society for Fish Biology (ASFB) partnered with the 5th International Symposium on Stock Enhancement and Sea Ranching (ISSSR) in holding a conference in Sydney on the 11th-14th October 2015. The conference was well attended with approximately 400 delegates from around the world. The ASFB portion of the conference was themed “Understanding, sustaining and restoring fish populations”. The presentations considered factors affecting the sustainability and productivity of fish populations including understanding fish biology and fisheries, such as recruitment and population dynamics, population and community structure, habitat use and connectivity and ecosystem function. The ASFB portion of the conference also included a Murray-Darling Basin Native Fish Forum attended by 130 delegates from different research and management agencies throughout Australia. Also in attendance were over 30 recreational anglers from fish clubs throughout NSW. The forum

showcased the latest developments in the science and management of native fish in the Murray-Darling Basin. This included: environmental flow management; ‘fish-friendly’ infrastructure; habitat rehabilitation; stocking; carp control and the role of recreational fishers in citizen science; and fish habitat management. The ISSSR portion of the conference considered fisheries management approaches involving the use of aquaculture technologies to enhance or restore fisheries. This portion of the conference showcased advances in aquaculture technologies, scientific understanding of the performance and effects of artificial reefs, stock enhancement programs, sea ranching, and the impacts of cultured organisms in the wild. The NSW DPI offshore artificial reef project and the recreational fish stocking program including the NSW Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme (HQAS) featured in this portion of the conference with a number of overseas delegates seeking further information on the HQAS.

Contact Graeme Bowley DPI 4916 3845

Retrofitting and Compliance for white and multi-coloured infrastructure

The ban on white and multi coloured infrastructure is not a new policy position and was agreed to in 2006 by the industry, the broader community and all relevant NSW Government Agencies and published in the First Edition of the NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS, 2006). This position was reiterated with industry support in the Second Edition of OISAS in 2014 and more recently at Shellfish Committee (August 2015) and NSW Farmers Oyster Committee (November 2015).

The rationale of the Policy is based on minimising visual amenity impacts and creating consistent navigation safety.

The extent of white infrastructure on the North and South Coasts requires a substantial refit of infrastructure for some oyster farmers. NSW DPI recognises that this work may take some time to complete and a consistent compliance program will be used in all estuaries.

1. Farmers should cease installing new white internal infrastructure. Farmers will be asked to remove any new white infrastructure installed after December 2015 within 120 days.
2. Notices to remove or remediate internal white infrastructure installed prior to December 2015 will be issued at the next Triennial inspection.
3. Initially notices to comply within 120 days will be issued.
4. Growers may negotiate a workplan with the Local Fisheries Office to extend this timeframe up to a maximum of three years. The Local Fisheries Officers will exercise their discretion to extend timeframes on a case by case basis.

Contact your local Fisheries Office

Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee

ARAC comprises an independent chair (Prof Ian White ANU) and representatives of the oyster and non-oyster aquaculture industries. The Minister recently reappointed five of the current members after an EOI process and welcomes Mrs Anne Loftus (from Wonboyn Lake) as a new member.

Contact Jo Pickles DPI 4916 3901

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/committees/arac>

OISAS Best Practice Standards on Lease Tidiness

Watch out for a discussion paper on the proposed changes to the OISAS Best Practice Standards for lease tidiness that will be distributed to all oyster aquaculture permit holders in the new year. The paper proposes that the lease tidiness standards become mandatory (must) rather than advisory (should) to facilitate compliance and includes amendments to marking, floating cultivation, rafts, conveyor belting and overcatch management.

Contact Tim Gippel DPI 4916 3823

SMS Service

NSW DPI is continuing to utilise an SMS service to communicate with the Aquaculture industry. Contact an Aquaculture Officer 4982 1232 to be added to our list.

Wallis Lake Productivity investigation

Prior to 2011, oyster production at Wallis Lake had been fairly stable for over 20 years at around 20,000 bags per annum. Since 2011 Wallis Lake has been experiencing poor oyster growth with production falling by around 40% by 2015, particularly at major nursery lease areas. A working group coordinated by Local Land Services with representatives from NSW DPI, Great Lakes Council, Office of Environment & Heritage, Wallis Lake commercial fishers and the Wallis Lake oyster industry met in August to discuss the issue. Independent investigations suggest that the cumulative effect of the significant rainfall events experienced in the Wallis Lake catchment since 2009 is unprecedented and may be implicated in the poor performance of the oyster nursery areas. The group is:

- seeking further tidal gauge and rainfall information regarding recent trends;
- seeking expert advice on the hydrological processes operating at Wallis Lake;
- reviewing recent climate change outputs and their applicability to Wallis lake;
- reviewing commercial fisheries catch data to investigate recent trends; and
- with the assistance of NSW DPI and local oyster growers, undertaking an oyster growth/survival study to investigate growth/survival at the Bandicoot nursery area using a range of commercial growing options.

Contact Steve McOrrie DPI 4916 3921

Australia's Oyster Coast at Hong Kong Expo

NSW DPI joined the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Food Expo (HKTDC) with a trade pavilion showcasing 12 companies. Australia's Oyster Coast (AOC) participated in this event in August 2015. The HKTDC CEO stated the oysters were the highlight of the Expo. Over 3,000 oysters were shucked for tasting. AOC is following up on inquiries from Hong Kong, mainland China, and other Asian and Middle Eastern locations.

Contact <http://australiasoystercoast.com/contact-us/>



Minister for Trade Stuart Ayres at the AOC stand

Date to remember - 4 January 2016 Entries Close

Established in 2001, the Sydney Royal Aquaculture Competition has gone from strength to strength. Products from around Australia that are judged include prawns, oysters, barramundi, fresh fish, cured salmon, cured trout, trout caviar and aquaculture-derived terrines, mousses and dips. The Aquaculture Competition is held each February as part of the Summer Fine Food Show.

Contact Sydney Royal Fine Food Team 9704 1353

<http://www.sydneyroyal.com.au/1587.htm>

Local Land Services (LLS)

LLS is continuing to develop and implement oyster farm profiles with growers in the Hunter region to assist growers map and detail their current operations and plan for the maintenance and upgrading of leases. Hunter LLS recently employed Mitch McGrath for six months part-time to continue to develop oyster farm profiles using the approach Nick Bullock has been progressing - most recently with growers in Port Stephens. This is available for growers in the Wallis, Manning and Port Stephens estuaries.

Contact Mitch LLS (Taree) 6551 8994

mitchell.mcgrath@lls.nsw.gov.au

Freshwater Native Fish Association

NSW Silver Perch Growers Association is currently changing its name to the Freshwater Native Fish Association. The change has been prompted by a need

to encompass a wider range of species, particularly in view of the likely rise in production of Murray Cod. The association recognises its greater role is communication with NSW DPI, NSW Fisheries, Australian Government and Statutory Authorities on matters such as licensing, grants, cost recovery and minor use permits (MUP). The association will enable members to keep informed about changes and developments in the industry. In 2015/16 the association is led by Noel Penfold of Murray Darling Fisheries as President and Ian Charles of Silverwater Native Fish as Vice President, both having over 20 years of experience in the native fish industry. In 2016 we plan to work with other organisations to plan a field day in the Riverina to enhance production and best practice in the native fish industry. The next association meeting will be held in late January 2016. A newsletter will be emailed out quarterly to keep members up to date. The membership fee for the Freshwater Native Fish Association is \$100/year. Contact nettedsystems@bigpond.com for membership

Australian Bass at PSFI

The winter/spring bass production season has seen another bumper crop of bass stocked in to NSW impoundments. Funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust, a total of 350,000 fingerlings produced at PFSI were distributed around the state. The bass went to 23 locations as far south as Tallowa Dam near the Shoalhaven River and north to Toonumbar Dam in the Richmond Valley. NSW anglers can look forward to several good fishing years to come.

Contact Stewart Fielder 4916 3902

Marine fish grant

Yellowtail Kingfish research at PSFI has received a boost with FRDC funding a project entitled "Enabling land-based production of juvenile Yellowtail Kingfish in NSW". The project will start in 2016 and run for three years with the aim to investigate methods to optimize

hatchery production and to ongrow large numbers of juvenile fish to about 100g in land-based tank systems.

Contact Stewart Fielder 4916 3902



Merry Christmas from all at NSW DPI

Aquaculture News is a newsletter from the industry team at NSW DPI.
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