



aquaculture news

ISSUE 6 JULY 2009

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

NSW Oyster Industry Field Days

A steering committee of NSW Farmers Association, the Seafood CRC and NSW DPI are coordinating this year's field days at:

- Batemans Bay Wednesday 9 September 2009
- Forster Friday 11 September 2009.

The field days will highlight: current oyster research; industry benchmarking and profitability; information on the latest directions in seafood marketing; and a trade show to access industry suppliers. Don't forget to polish your oysters for entry in the 'Most Beautiful Oyster Contest'.

Contact: Steve McOrrie NSW DPI 4916 3921

North Coast Floods

In mid February 2009, the NSW north coast experienced severe flooding. Unfortunately, the effects of the first flood were compounded by subsequent severe rainfall and flooding in the region in early April, in late May and again in late June.

Serious damage to oyster farming infrastructure and significant stock loss has occurred in many of the State's prime oyster producing estuaries, in particular the Bellinger, Kalang and Nambucca rivers. Clean up and recovery is being hampered by ongoing rainfall and minor flooding.



Devastation on the Nambucca River (Richard Barrie)

Best Practice Guidelines for Rafts

During the recent north coast floods a large number of oyster rafts broke free causing significant damage and losses of oyster stock. Oyster farmers have raised concern with NSW DPI regarding current raft standards used by industry. The Peak Oyster Advisory Group is working with NSW DPI to develop best practice guidelines for the construction and mooring of oyster rafts.

Contact: Steve McOrrie 4916 3921

NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS)

The streamlined lease application process set out in OISAS continued throughout 2008/09 with 30 new lease applications approved. The successful implementation of OISAS has also allowed NSW DPI to make comments and recommendations in relation to 33 proposed developments that had the potential to impact on oyster aquaculture. Some examples include:

- the re-design of an on-site sewage system adjacent to a number of Port Stephens oyster leases following a Land and Environment Court hearing. The new design will minimise risk of system failure;
- the incorporation of a substantial riparian buffer zone into a subdivision adjacent to Wallaga Lake; and
- thanks to Nambucca growers for ensuring that OISAS was factored into the Nambucca River Estuary Management Plan to ensure appropriate land use decisions by Council.

Contact: Tim Gippel NSW DPI 4916 3823

NSW Department of Primary Industries

As of 1 July 2009, NSW DPI will be known as the NSW Department of Industry and Investment.

Ornamental Fish

In line with a national approach to manage the ornamental fish industry, NSW DPI is introducing legislation to define commercial versus hobby ornamental operations. Legislation will be enacted 1 July 2009 with a six months moratorium to allow for education and introduction of the new laws. From 1 January 2010, commercial operations (ornamental fish producers with a production volume of 10,000 litres or greater) will be required to hold an aquaculture permit issued by NSW DPI.

Contact: Graeme Bowley NSW DPI 4916 3845

Silver Perch Review

Dr Stuart Rowland has published the following extension paper: 'Review of Aquaculture Research and Development of the Australian Freshwater Silver Perch, *Bidyanus bidyanus*'.

See: The Journal of the World Aquaculture Society, Vol.40, No.3 June 2009

New CEO National Aquaculture Council (NAC)

Justin Fromm replaced Mr Simon Bennison as the CEO of the NAC in January this year.

Justin graduated with an Aquaculture Degree from the University of Tasmania and then worked in the South Australia industry before moving to Canberra. Here Justin worked at AQIS and then the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry before taking



up a position the Fisheries Research Development Corporation as a Projects Manager-Research. He is currently based at Nowra.

The NAC is involved in many areas including: research, development and extension as a representative organisation of FRDC; Aquatic Animal Health and Welfare; Industrial Relations, e.g. awards etc; Trade and Market Access, e.g. AQIS, residues; Education and Training, through the AgriFood Skills; Australia Seafood Consultative Committee; and Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approvals where the NAC holds some registrations.

Contact: Justin Fromm 0411 146 396



Australasian Aquaculture

The NAC in conjunction with the Asian-Pacific Chapter of the World Aquaculture Society will host Australasian Aquaculture 2010 in Hobart, Tasmania - May 23-36. The theme chosen for the conference is 'Keeping Pace with Change'.

See: www.australian-aquacultureportal.com or call Sarah-Jane Day 0437 152 234

Little Change in Pacific Oyster Populations in Port Stephens

In a study spanning two decades, a team led by researchers from the University of Technology Sydney investigated whether the structure of wild oyster populations in Port Stephens has changed since Pacific oyster (PO) culture was permitted in 1991. Sampling of a number of rocky shore and mangrove sites in 1990, immediately before PO aquaculture, revealed that the species was already common in the inner port oyster assemblages, but much less so in the outer port. Sampling the same sites immediately after culture began (1991/92) and again several decades later (2008) provided little evidence of expansion in the distribution of PO, or its proliferation. PO remained largely confined to inner port sites and generally experienced a decline between 1990 and 2008 in its percent contribution to oyster populations. Where present, PO was most abundant on the low and mid shore and was most commonly less than 40 mm shell length.

Contact: Dr Wayne O'Connor NSW DPI 4916 3906

NSW Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme

Accredited facilities were surveyed after the 2008/09 breeding season with the aim of reviewing and improving the Scheme. This has led to policy amendments to: allow 1:2 – 1:3 broodstock matings instead of paired matings, allow for mixed batches, amend record sheets, and seek to streamline record keeping. Compliance audits have commenced with inspections in the Riverina. Three additional hatcheries are also being assessed for accreditation. NSW DPI is preparing an EIS to consider marine fish stocking. Should this program proceed, the Scheme would need to be expanded to cover marine hatcheries and marine fish stocking.

Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856

Aquaculture Administration Services

In recent years the Aquaculture Unit has streamlined many of its administrative processes to significantly reduce processing times for permit and lease transactions. In 2006/07 a lease transfer application took an average 96 days to complete whereas in 2008/09 it took 24 days. Efficiency measures undertaken include: introduction of self audit declarations; updating information kits and having them available via the web; acting as an agent for the Office of State Revenue to accept stamp duty payable on lease transfers; greater efficiencies in account & debt management and improvements in database management and functionality.

Contact: Janine Sakker NSW DPI 4916 3847

Marine Aquaculture Site Selection

NSW DPI is undertaking a site identification project for marine aquaculture. The project is initially focussing on shellfish culture in Jervis Bay. The project seeks to identify areas for sustainable aquaculture production, undertake environmental assessment, seek approval for the sites and then release the areas via tender to attract business investment to NSW. **Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856**

Minor Use Permits

The Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee has written to the NAC seeking advice on whether the NAC has the capacity to progress the Minor Use Permit application for clove oil. Correspondence from the APVMA indicated that full chemical and toxicological analysis is required as well as residue data to progress registration. **Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856**

Aquaculture Compliance

Supervising Fisheries Officer John Timmins has been appointed as the Aquaculture Compliance co-ordinator. John is located at Port Macquarie and has 39 years experience as a Fisheries Officer. John's role will be to co-ordinate aquaculture compliance activities within the state and to liaise with aquaculture management regarding work plans, policies and to renew the focus on aquaculture compliance.

Operation Trident Update - Operation Trident is an ongoing operation involving DPI Fisheries, Police and the NSW Food Authority to detect and deter oyster theft and black marketing of oysters.

- Fisheries Officers carried out covert and overt patrols to detect oyster theft over the busy summer months to April.

- Three offenders were caught stealing oysters and infringement notices were issued.

- John Timmins attended a meeting with Rural Crime Prevention Committee in May and discussed strategies to prevent oyster theft.

New Database - The NSW DPI integrated data base 'Nautilus' has been enhanced to provide Fisheries Officers with up to date information in respect to inspection programs, compliance requests carried out by permit holders and flag action required by officers. The new data base will enable Fisheries officers to be more effective in tracking and recording information associated aquaculture inspections and providing timely and accurate advice to farmers.

Contact: John Timmins NSW DPI 5524 0604

Aquaculture Legislation Amendments

Four proposed amendments to the Regulation are due to be made in time for a 1 July 2009 commencement. The proposed amendments are to:

- exempt small scale ornamental fish producers, with less than 10,000L of production water, from the need for an aquaculture permit. All other ornamental fish producers will require a Class H permit;
- clarify the provisions for financial contributions paid by class A permit holders to the Minister for lease security so that a permit holder can't change over to annual contributions at the last minute without providing adequate lease security;
- remove the 3-month limit on the duration of permits for charitable and non-profit making purposes; and
- provide the Minister with the discretion to refund all or part of any aquaculture lease rent or contributions when the lease is terminated. This will provide consistency with other refund provisions for administrative and research contributions.

Amendments to the Act underway include:

- making further provisions for the granting of permits and leases (eg identify species 'type' such as triploidy or a product such as pearls);
- expanding provisions relating to quarantine areas not covered by aquaculture permits; and
- transferring the list of diseases and noxious fish from the Regulation to attached Schedules.

Contact: Tim Gippel on 4916 3823

NSW Diffuse Source Water Pollution Strategy

The Strategy provides a framework for coordinating efforts in reducing diffuse source water pollution across NSW. The main aim of the Strategy is to reduce pollution inputs into all NSW surface and ground water and contribute towards the community agreed NSW water quality objectives and Statewide Natural Resource Management targets. Pathogen pollution is one of the priority issues the strategy addresses along with nutrient and sediment pollution. A Priority Action Plan identifies agreed projects that will be progressed across NSW to help improve management of these priority issues. Many of these projects are designed specifically to improve sanitary water quality in oyster harvest areas. **See: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/water/dswp.htm**

Southern Bluefin Tuna Breakthrough

NSW DPI has joined with a South Australian company to rear Southern Bluefin Tuna. In a world first, Clean Seas Tuna have domesticated wild tuna broodstock in very large, on-shore facilities and have induced the tuna to spawn. This has allowed research into large-scale production of tuna fingerlings for aquaculture. Clean Seas Tuna, through the Seafood CRC, has enlisted the leading marine fish hatcheries in Australia to assist with this research effort. Initial results are encouraging with the first batch of larvae successfully reared for two weeks at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute. **Contact: Stewart Fielder NSW DPI 4916 3902**

What is the Aquaculture innovation hub?

NSW DPI will develop and manage the "Aquaculture Innovation Hub" for the Seafood CRC and the FRDC. The aim of the Hub is to help hatcheries access and adopt the latest technology and identify key research, training and education priorities. Dr Stewart Fielder will lead the finfish hatchery network and Dr Wayne

O'Connor will lead the shellfish hatchery network.

Contact: Geoff Allan NSW DPI 49163 909

Soybeans for Barramundi

NSW DPI has been awarded an international contract to evaluate soybean products for use in aquaculture diets for barramundi. This research will benefit barramundi farmers and feed manufacturers in NSW and Australia as well as soybean producers. The research will be conducted at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute in collaboration with barramundi farm, Tailor Made. **Contact: Mark Booth NSW DPI 4916 3816**



Aquaculture Judging Spring Show

Judging of Pacific and flat oysters, barramundi and regional products will take place 10 September 2009.

See www.rasnw.com.au

Peak Oyster Advisory Group (POAG)

POAG met 6 MAY 2009 see a summary of issues at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/committees/poag>

Contact: Katie Sachs NSW DPI 4916 3913

Fish Broodstock Collection

NSW DPI is currently preparing a Species Impact Statement to support issuing broodstock collection permits. This will save broodstock collection applicants from having to prepare an environmental assessment at the application stage. This will also assist the process of approval for longer term broodstock collection permits.

Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856

Harmonisation of Interstate Disease Testing

NSW DPI is working with QDPI and VicDPI to fund a consultant to make recommendations on disease screening for fish translocated interstate. The aim of the work is to harmonise requirements and to use HQAS standards (monitoring/recording) to rationalise the frequency and volume of testing required.

Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856

NSW DPI Biosecurity

- The Pacific Oyster Closure has been renewed for two years with minor amendment. A full review of this closure is scheduled.
- The QX closure has been revised following QX negative results from Woolli which means the risk goes from medium to low for Woolli and Wonboyn.
- Animal health researchers at NSW DPI's Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) have a strong interest in furthering understanding of winter mortality following reports of significant mortalities in 2008. Submission of samples from affected estuaries to EMAI is requested.

Contact: Jane Frances NSW DPI 4916 3904

Aquaculture Extension Update

To date, 70 on-farm visits have been made with oyster farmers along the NSW coast with a focus to provide extension support to new entrants to the oyster industry. Work is underway to complete an "Oyster Farming Handbook" which will be made available to industry. A training day for Fisheries Officers was also held at the Hawkesbury River to assist with compliance inspections following the devastating 2005 QX outbreak.

Unfortunately the temporary extension position will be drawing to a close at the end of June 2009. NSW DPI would like to thank the NSW aquaculture industry for their support for the program during the last two years.

Contact: Steve McOrrie NSW DPI 4916 3921

Disaster "Preparedness"

The recent floods on the NSW north coast have highlighted the need for farmers to be prepared for natural disasters and have strategies in place to deal with the aftermath. While there are a number of natural disaster relief programs at a state and commonwealth level it is important to understand when they apply and whether you are eligible. For example, low interest loans are offered where a region is declared a natural disaster area but many farmers may not meet the eligibility criteria. Where a farmer still has access to commercial loans they may not be eligible.

In agriculture, the trend in Government is to encourage farmers to be better prepared for natural disasters and disease events. Some sectors have taken to establishing a disaster fund that can be drawn on for disaster/disease events.

For further information:

Rural Financial Counsellors: The Counsellor's main role is to help growers access government support, their service is free of charge and confidential. **See:** <http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/rfcs/counsellors/nsw> or contact 1800 686 175.

Natural Disaster Relief Scheme (low interest loans) or grants: NSW Rural Assistance Authority see www.raa.nsw.gov.au or contact 1800 678 593 or (02) 6391 3000.



NSW north coast fish/prawn farmers weathering the recent storms

Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee

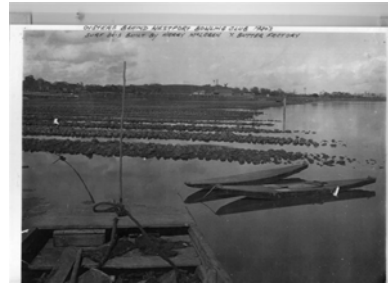
ARAC met in Sydney on 28 May 2009. For a full summary of the meeting see www.dpi.nsw.gov.au Two major points of interest for aquaculture permit holders are: 1) the decision to re-advertise for more applicants for ARAC membership. Only a limited number of applications were received, and if you

wish to apply, please see the expression of interest included with this mail out; and 2) ARAC have developed a one-page form 'Submission to ARAC for a Research Initiative' giving you an opportunity to convey your ideas and advise of the issues that may be constraining the growth of your business. The form will be mailed out with the annual production returns in August this year. Responses will be collated and discussed at the next ARAC meeting in October 2009 to determine priorities.

Contact: Jo Pickles NSW DPI 4916 3901

History of the NSW Oyster Industry

ARAC is progressing this project and seeking a grant application for archival support with potential to produce a publication on the history of the industry and its contribution to coastal communities.



*Oysters behind Westport Bowling Club 1920's
Photo c/ Bruce Fairhall Hastings River*

National Seafood Industry Leadership Program

Delegates from around Australia met at the Sydney Fish Market in June. The FRDC program focuses on skill development at a personal, business and national seafood industry level. In 2009, the participants will take on a major project on communication delivering the results in Canberra in September 2009. Over 100 graduates have done the course from all sectors including: commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, processors and marketers. The Program is a key platform to develop future leaders within the Australian seafood industry.

Contact: Jill Briggs 6035 7284

Seafood and Semillon

Port Stephens oysters were featured at the Seafood and Semillon event held in the Hunter Valley vineyards on 18 April 2009. Freshly shucked oysters complimented the Hunter's best wines and there was an excellent roll up for the Oyster Appreciation Classes. **Contact: Steve McOrrie 4916 3921**

Aquaculture News is a newsletter for the aquaculture industry in NSW.

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