

Oysters Tasmania

eNews – March 2010

Triabunna school kids taste joys of oyster farming

About 30 students in Year 4 and 5 at Triabunna District School were treated to a farm visit of the Little Swanport farm of Oyster Bay Oysters in late 2009. The farm visit was led by Hayden Dyke, Manager of Oyster Bay Oysters, and his father Colin. Hayden and Colin took the students out on a boat tour of the lease showing them how an oyster farm works. They spoke to the students about estuarine function and catchment management and how, as oyster farmers and residents of Little Swanport, they aim to operate sustainably within the marine environment.

Over half the students were invited to try a fresh oyster; reactions ranged from “spitting it straight over the side of the boat” to “please split me another one”. Hayden said he was delighted to be able to introduce a new generation of consumers to the joys of eating Tasmanian oysters.

Coal River Valley farmers working together

Pittwater oyster farmers and land based farmers in the Coal River Valley in south-east Tasmania have recently got together to discuss issues affecting both groups of farmers on the land and in the sea. The farmers formed an informal group between the Pittwater Oyster Growers Association and the Coal River Valley Growers Association. The group initially had a function in February 2010 hosted by James Calvert of the Tasmanian Oyster Company. The function was held in James's oyster shed on the shores of Pittwater, where they conducted a tour of the marine farm lease followed by a social BBQ and drinks. The gathering was warmly received by all.

A further meeting is currently being organised with the support of Fiona Ewing, SeaNet Extension Officer and NRM South. This meeting will include a Catchment to Coast tour looking at land farm, residential and marine farming issues in the Coal River / Pittwater catchment.

The purpose of the oyster farmers and land based farmers getting together is to increase the understanding between all growers of each other's needs and to promote the sustainable use of natural resources within the catchment.

ASI production at the TAFI Taroona laboratories

Australian Seafood Industries (ASI) has been undertaking its annual family line production at the TAFI aquaculture facility in Taroona, Hobart. Previously production had been undertaken at commercial oyster hatcheries but due to increasing production pressure, this is currently not a viable option. ASI's Manager Matt Cunningham reported that TAFI have been most helpful in providing facilities for ASI to carry out this work.

ASI production at the TAFI Taroona laboratories (cont.)

The Board of the Tasmanian Oyster Research Council and the Oysters Tasmania Executive met with Matt and Stephen Battaglione (Research Group Leader – Sustainable Aquaculture, TAFI) in February and were given a tour of the facilities used for the ASI production. The meeting sought to discuss the ongoing relationship between ASI and TAFI and it was agreed that Oysters Tasmania would continue discussions with TAFI regarding possible agreement to house ASI at TAFI.



TORC Board at the TAFI Taroona laboratories

Seafood CRC – Oyster Consortium Benchmarking Project

Final project results for the CRC's Australian Edible Oyster Industry Benchmarking Project are due to be released on 2 April 2010 with growers involved in the project seeing their individual results before then. Results are likely to be presented at the Hobart Australasian Aquaculture conference in May 2010.

The Benchmarking Project involved interviews in which 47 growers were asked a range of quantitative and qualitative questions about their farm's performance, with data entered into a specialised software package. While grower confidentiality is maintained, the benchmarking process allows participating growers to identify how their business is performing against other growers and the issues that are really important for running a profitable business.

The Oyster Consortium is keen to see the Benchmarking Project run to the end of the CRC. The Consortium is considering seeking training funding through the DAFF FarmReady program to extend the Benchmarking Project to industry. The aim would be to enable reimbursement of 'program' costs, with the benchmarking program results presented at state field days/conferences.

eNews ideas

Oysters Tasmania welcomes your news items. Send news ideas to info@oysterstasmania.org