

Australian Oyster Industry Benchmarking Development

Rural Directions Pty Ltd

Project No. 2009/701



AUSTRALIAN
SEAFOOD
COOPERATIVE
RESEARCH CENTRE

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This project was conducted by Rural Directions Pty Ltd, ph. 08 88414500

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Australian Government

**Fisheries Research and
Development Corporation**



An Australian Government Initiative



Non-Technical Summary

2009/701 Australian Oyster Industry Benchmarking Development

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SUMMARY:

Annual financial and qualitative benchmarking was undertaken for oyster businesses in New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. Data was collected over three consecutive years for the financial years of 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

Benchmarking participation declined each year of the project from 36 participating businesses in 2010/2011 to just 12 in 2012/2013.

Key findings of the project were:

- Despite the higher per dozen price that Sydney Rock Oyster growers achieve relative to Pacific Oysters, Pacific Oyster growers have demonstrated a higher income per developed hectare and Full Time Equivalent (FTE). This can be attributed to production standards, handling systems and labour management.
- Oyster production was consistently more profitable in Tasmania than other states.
- Reporting of industry benchmarks should be based on “per dozen oysters” or “per developed hectare” to ensure that the confidentiality of smaller and larger growers is protected.
- Due to the attrition in numbers of growers participating in the benchmarking project, comparisons between years should not be made – The data sets over the three years vary considerably for all States.
- Growers need to have a reason to benchmark, such as:
 - A requirement to report to shareholders.
 - Curiosity about how their performance compares to other producers within their state or nationally.
 - A downturn in the industry (yields or prices).
 - The need to improve long term business profitability.
 - The need to value the business as part of a family business transfer or sale to a third party.
- Unless there is an ongoing need for benchmarking data, businesses tend to cease benchmarking on an ongoing basis. However, they may undertake benchmarking in the future as changes to the business or industry create a new need for this data.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. Continue operation of a benchmarking tool for Australian oyster industry participants becoming a self-funded program before the end of the CRC
2. Using the software tool, collect, analyse and report key production & marketing practices as well as individual business financial performance within the oyster growing sector.
3. Provide recommendations to the growing sector on key areas of focus for R&D activities in future
4. Communicate recommendations with growers

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- Improved data on the financial position and production practices of oyster businesses in NSW, SA and Tasmania.
- Resources are available to direct future investment in oyster research, development and extension activities.

LIST OF OUTPUTS PRODUCED

- Individual reports for participating businesses in 2010/2011
- Individual reports for participating businesses in 2011/2012
- Individual reports for participating businesses in 2012/2013
- Conference presentations for SA and Tasmanian state grower conferences in 2012.
- Three case studies - emailed out to growers, posted on the OA blog site
 - Remote does not mean isolated
 - A tool allowing investors to “see” their investment
 - Size doesn’t matter – if you’re efficient
- Program flyer
- Press release
- SnapShot NOW questions
- Update SnapShot Premium database
- Webinar and YouTube video to explain changes
- Referral strategy developed and communicated to participating businesses
- Report: Australian Oyster Industry SnapShot – Combined benchmarking results of participating businesses (2013)
- Sessions delivered at the Regional Grower Meetings in 2013,
 - NSW – Lemon Tree Passage and Pambula
 - SA – Smoky Bay and Coffin Bay
 - Tas – Smithton and Hobart
- Pre-recorded summary for state grower conferences in 2014.
- 12/13 Trend report (2014) – provided as Attachment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rural Directions Pty Ltd wishes to thank contributors to this project, including:

- The oyster growers that participated in the project,
- State grower organisations,
- Oysters Australia, and
- Funding through the Seafood CRC and individual oyster growers.

1. Introduction and Background

In 2009 an Access database benchmarking tool was developed that records and calculates a series of quantitative key performance indicators. It also allowed collection of qualitative data identifying the various production processes that growers use.

The Oyster Industry Benchmarking project was initially designed to produce the software and involve 40 growers for one year. Project results were so positively received that application to extend the project to include a further two years of financial data was approved by the Seafood CRC.

Grower participation in 2012 stood at 72; 35 from NSW, 20 from Tas, and 22 from SA. Two rounds of data were collected (07-08 and 08-09) in 2009 and 2011. Oysters Australia opted not to continue with the project provider in February 2012.

In June 2012 Rural Directions Pty Ltd took over as the project provider. The project aimed to improve average net margin of benchmarking project participants by 2% through implementation of identified profitable practices.

Seafood CRC has funded the project since 2008 with the aim that it will become self-sustainable by the end of the Seafood CRC in 2014.

1.1 Need

In March 2008 the CRC Oyster Consortium identified "Benchmarking" as the 2nd highest priority area of additional research for oyster growers (behind genetics). Its high priority was confirmed during the process of writing the Australian Edible Oyster Industry Business Plan 2009-2014 (Business Plan).

The Business Plan lists benchmarking as a means of achieving Objective 1: To sustainably increase industry production to 20 million dozen, net profit by 10% and industry Gross Value of Production (GVP) to \$120 million per annum.

Growers identified that;

- Due to rising input costs combined with stagnant average returns that average growers are receiving less net return per unit of output, which potentially is making some growers unviable.
- There is a wide variation in production practices in use by growers. Due to the lack of independently and objectively assessed and collected data, growers were not able to determine with any degree of certainty where their production practices sat compared to the average.
- They do not have the necessary tools to objectively measure the commercial impact that improved genetics does have on the profitability of individual oyster growers businesses.

Growers can identify and implement best profitable practice through the collection of production and marketing practice qualitative and quantitative data. Breeding programs also planned to evaluate stock performance against 'standard' practices.

1.2 Objectives

Initial project objectives as specified by Oysters Australia in April 2012 were as follows.

1. Continue operation of a benchmarking tool for Australian oyster industry participants becoming a self-funded program before the end of the CRC.
2. Using the software tool, collect, analyse and report key production & marketing practices as well as individual business financial performance within the oyster growing sector.
3. Provide recommendations to the growing sector on key areas of focus for R&D activities in future.
4. Communicate recommendations with growers.

2. Methods

The final project methodology undertaken by Rural Directions Pty Ltd is detailed below. This work was undertaken as per the original project proposal and resulting variations which were negotiated with Oysters Australia.

1. By 1st September 2012
 - a. Initial database review and conversion to Snapshot Premium.
2. By 30th October 2012
 - a. On-site grower consultation.
 - b. Obtain F11 data.
 - c. Update/maintain database completed.
 - d. Produce individual reports.
 - e. Communication/workshop of 3 year averages & production efficiency issues at annual conferences completed.
3. By 15th June 2013
 - a. Remote collection and reporting of 11/12 data for 36 existing and 24 (target) participants (total of 60 participants).
 - b. Recruitment of new participants.
 - c. Provision of average and trend report to Oysters Australia and participants.
 - d. Workshop & case study of key inefficiencies at regional grower groups completed.
 - e. Modification of Snapshot NOW complete.
4. By 20th May 2014
 - a. Obtain F13 data remotely.
 - b. Produce individual reports.
 - c. Compile and create industry trend report.
 - d. Pre-recorded summary/Webinar arranged for conferences 2014.
 - e. Draft report (demonstrating cost-benefit of project) submitted.
5. By 15th June 2014
 - a. Final report

3. Results

Database Review and Modifications

The primary data analysis tool for this project was undertaken using the SnapShot Premium and NOW program that has been developed.

SnapShot Premium

SnapShot Premium is the financial component to the benchmarking process. This involves businesses collecting information on:

- Assets and liabilities
- Oyster purchases and sales
- Business expenses
- Developed hectares
- Labour used in the business
- Method of sales
- Type of growing method

This information is then reported in key financial indicators such as profit per developed hectare, equity, profit per dozen sold and operating costs as a percentage of income. A 'traffic light' reporting system is used; this highlights strengths in green, weaknesses in red and in between is orange.

To explain the SnapShot Premium methodology used to determine profit, the following abbreviated Statement of Performance output sheet is provided. The data included is for demonstration purposes only.

Table 1: Example SnapShot Premium template to demonstrate data collection methodology.

Income		
Oyster sales (live)	\$450,000	
Oyster sales (opened or otherwise processed)		
Interest received	\$5,000	
Other Income	\$5,000	
Total Income A	\$460,000	
Variable Costs		
Freight	\$10,000	
Fuel and Oil	\$25,000	
Industry Levies	\$40,000	
Repairs and maintenance – Land	\$15,000	
Repairs and maintenance – Water	\$8,000	
Spat and Ongrower Purchase Costs	\$32,000	
Total Variable Costs B	\$130,000	
Gross Margin C	(A – B) = C	\$330,000
Overhead Costs		
Accountant	\$2,000	
Audit and survey fees	\$6,000	
Repairs and Maintenance – packaging, processing and other	\$13,000	
Utilities	\$7,000	
Insurance	\$5,000	
Wages and on-costs	\$55,000	
Total Overhead Costs D	\$88,000	
Operating Surplus = E	(C – D)	\$242,000
Oyster sub-lease / Rental F	\$0	
Other lease / rental G	\$0	
EBITDA = H	(E – F – G)	\$242,000
Depreciation I	\$75,000	
Financing Costs		
Bank Charges	\$5,000	
Land Interest	\$40,000	
Plant & Equipment Interest	\$8,000	
Working Capital Interest	\$5,000	
Total Financing Costs J	\$58,000	
Net Profit (before imputed labour amount) = K	(H – I – J)	\$109,000
Imputed labour (based on family FTE drawings)	L	\$50,000
Net Profit (before tax and after imputed labour amount) – L)	(K	\$59,000

A new feature added to the database in 2013 was the ability to calculate the Trading Profit. This adjustment was made based on oyster grower feedback and has allowed for improved accounting of oysters from one financial year to another.

Trading profit has been calculated as:

Total oyster sales minus total spat and on-grower purchase costs
plus
Oyster value at the end of the period minus oyster value at the start of the period

The system also set a standard value for the stock values to enable greater comparisons between the businesses. These values were:

Juvenile	5c / oyster
On-grown	10c / oyster
Mature	25c / oyster

Due to the addition of Trading Profit calculations in 2013, detailed comparisons between 2010/2011 and 2011 to 2013 data were not possible.

SnapShot NOW

In 2013, SnapShot NOW was added to the data collection process. Participating businesses for the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 financial years were encouraged to complete both the SnapShot NOW and SnapShot Premium questionnaires.

SnapShot NOW is a qualitative benchmarking tool that focuses on the whole business. Each business provides a score out of five for a series of topics. A score of five is the 'best practice' response and a score of one is the least preferable approach.

SnapShot NOW covers the following areas:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Infrastructure | 5. Product Risk Management |
| 2. Business Management and Planning | 6. Self Management |
| 3. Production and Management | 7. Environmental Management |
| 4. Business Performance and Risk | 8. Human Resources |

Each of the eight areas above has a series of questions linked to it. These questions were developed in conjunction with Oysters Australia and Rural Directions Pty Ltd.

The SnapShot NOW report can be interpreted as a visual business plan. Areas that are going well are mapped close to the edge of the radar plot and areas for improvement are a dip or a result closer to the middle. Figure 1 is an example of the SnapShot NOW report.

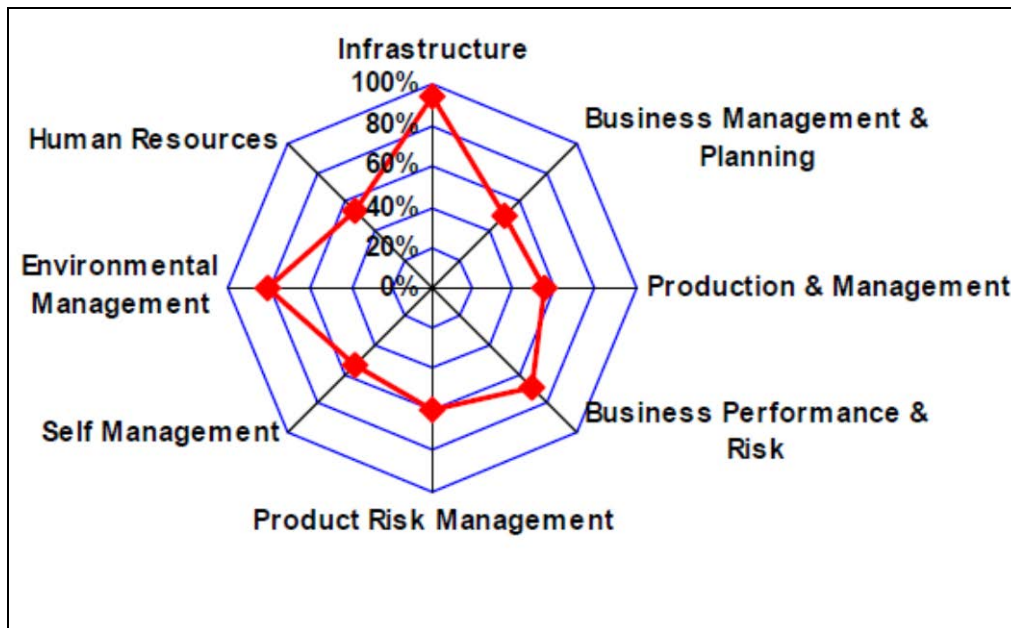


Figure 1: Example SnapShot NOW report

Reports

Participating businesses received the following outputs after completing the SnapShot Premium and NOW questionnaires.

- Individual SnapShot Premium report for the current financial year
 - This report includes Statement of Performance, Statement of Position and key benchmarks and financial indicators.
- Individual SnapShot Premium Check report for the current financial year
 - This report provides a copy of the original figures submitted.
- Individual SnapShot Premium Multi-year report
 - This report compares all years with data submitted in SnapShot Premium.
- Individual SnapShot NOW report
 - This report compares all years with data submitted in SnapShot NOW.
 - This report was not included in the program for 2010/2011 data.

Participating businesses in 2011/2012 also received a copy of the Australian Oyster Industry SnapShot Report – Combined benchmarking results of participating businesses.

Participation

The number of businesses participating in the benchmarking program since 2012 is shown in Table 2. Of all the businesses that participated, only nine participated every year since 2012 (3 consecutive years in the program).

Table 2: The number of participating businesses in each financial year and the percentage of the total (%).

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
Total participants	36	26	12
Reoccurring participants		21 (81%)	11 (92%)
New participants		5 (19%)	1 (8%)
TAS participants	12 (33%)	11 (42%)	7 (58%)
SA participants	12 (33%)	8 (31%)	2 (17%)
NSW participants	12 (33%)	7 (27%)	3 (25%)

Industry Benchmarking Results

The following graphs and tables highlight a few of the average benchmarks from the project during 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

It should be noted that the average financial benchmarking results should not be compared between financial years because of the decline in the dataset each year. Because of this, averages will be skewed by the smaller sample size and the scale of continuing businesses in the program. For example, if there is a proportionally higher number of small businesses in year 3 compared to year 1 then the average profitability is likely to be lower.

More detailed average results for each financial year have been analysed and discussed in the following outputs:

- Conference presentations for SA and Tasmanian state grower conferences in 2012.
- Sessions delivered at the Regional Grower Meetings in 2013,
 - NSW – Lemon Tree Passage and Pambula
 - SA – Smoky Bay and Coffin Bay
 - Tas – Smithton and Hobart
- Australian Oyster Industry SnapShot Report – Combined benchmarking results of participating businesses (2013)
- 12/13 Trend report – provided as Attachment
- Pre-recorded summary for state grower conferences in 2014.

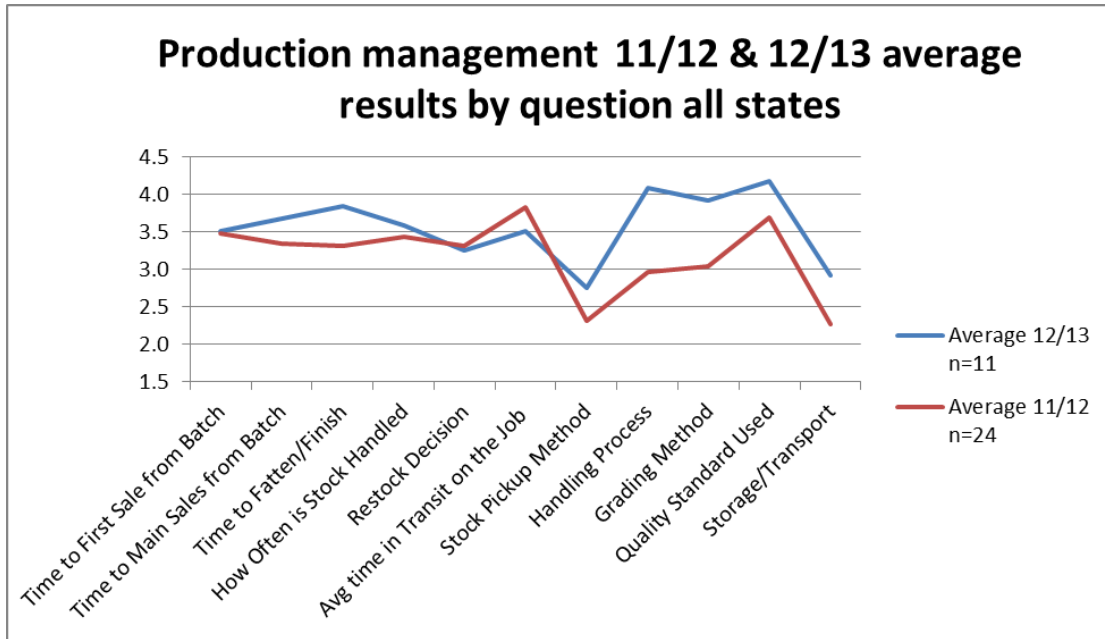


Figure 2: The average score from SnapShot NOW Production Management questions for all businesses in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

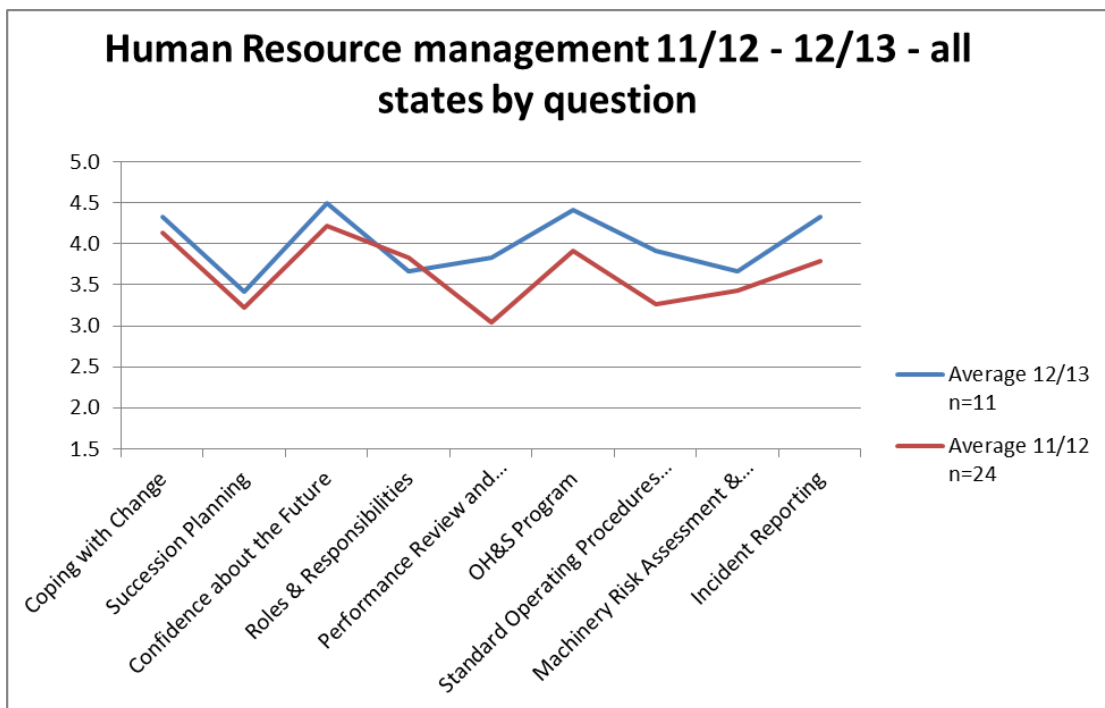


Figure 3: The average score from SnapShot NOW Human Resource Management questions for all businesses in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

On average 2012/13 resulted in the highest level of production since 2010/2011. Finished oyster growers have also made notable advances in production gains.

On average, South Australia and Tasmania production increased each year since 2010/2011, but New South Wales production dropped every year. Table 3 below shows the dozens sold per state and by grower type.

Table 3: Total dozen oysters sold by participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

		10/11	11/12	12/13
Dozen oysters sold per business	Average	142,557 doz	150,482 doz	241,159 doz
	Range	10,179 – 724,054 doz	9,373 – 686,863 doz	0 – 676,534 doz
Average dozen sold (by state)		10/11	11/12	12/13
SA		119,006	132,755	183,440
Tas		197,062	247,037	355,560
NSW		50,571	46,600	12,702
Average dozen sold (by grower type)		10/11	11/12	12/13
Finished Oysters only		78,457	80,222	166,342
Combination (Finished / On-grower)		348,584	210,992	309,641
On-grower only		198,054	400,261	400,292

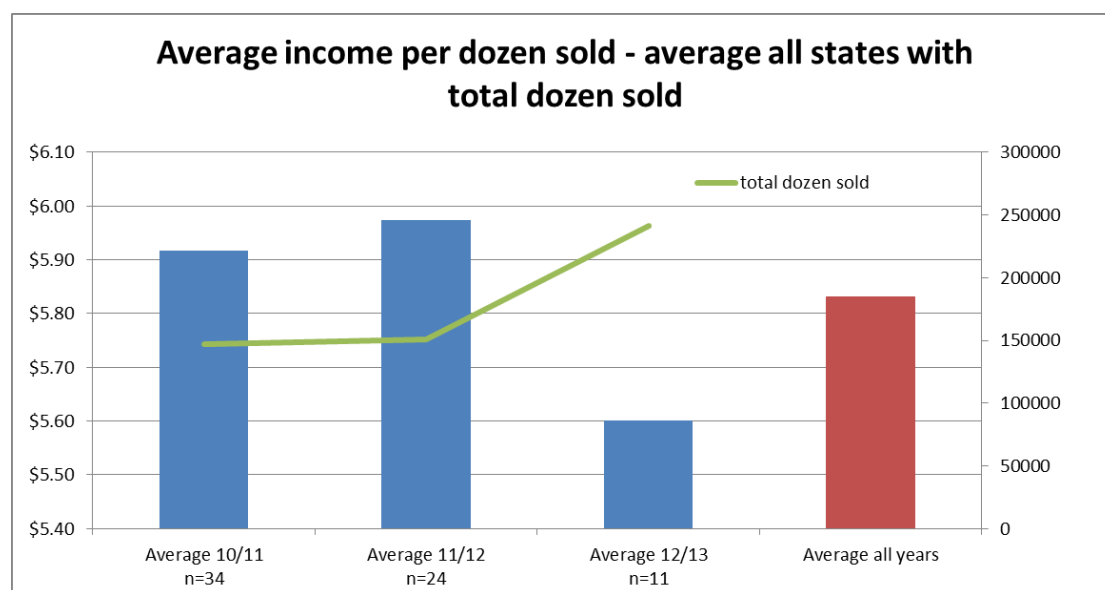


Figure 4: The average income per dozen sold and the average total dozen oysters sold per business from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013, for all participating businesses.

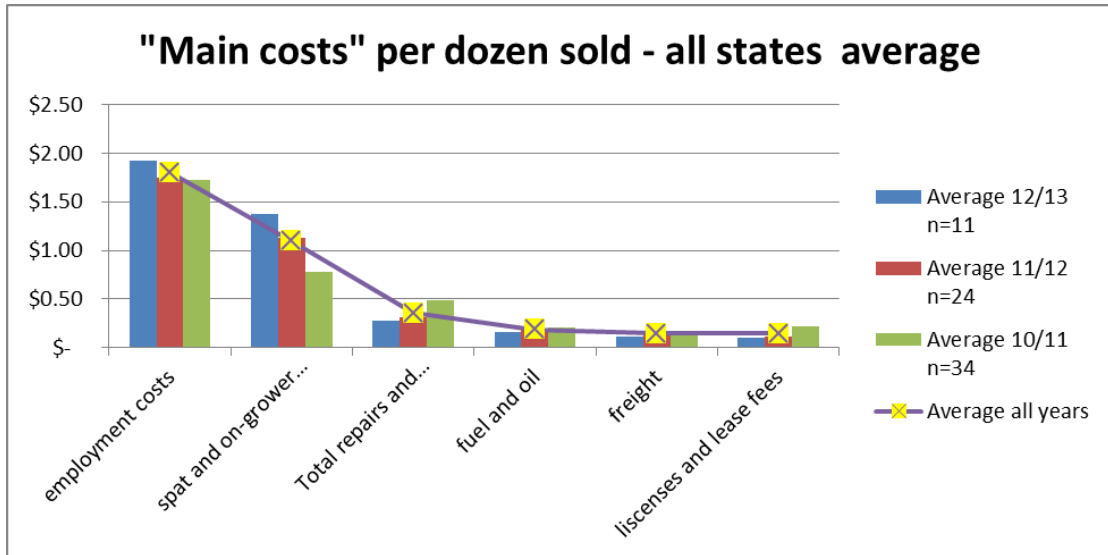


Figure 5: The main costs per dozen sold for all participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

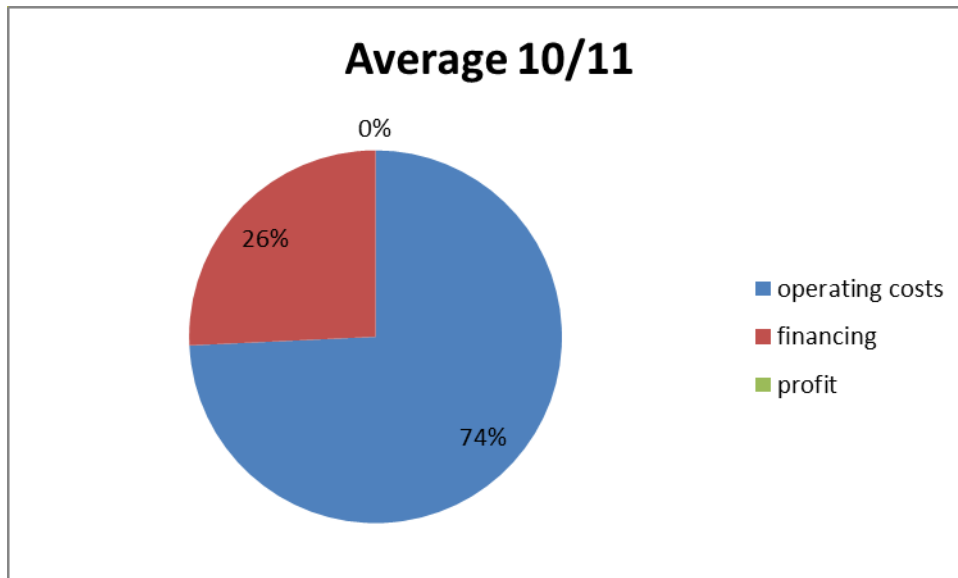


Figure 6: The average operating costs, financing costs and profit as a percentage of income for all participating businesses in 2010/2011, n=34.

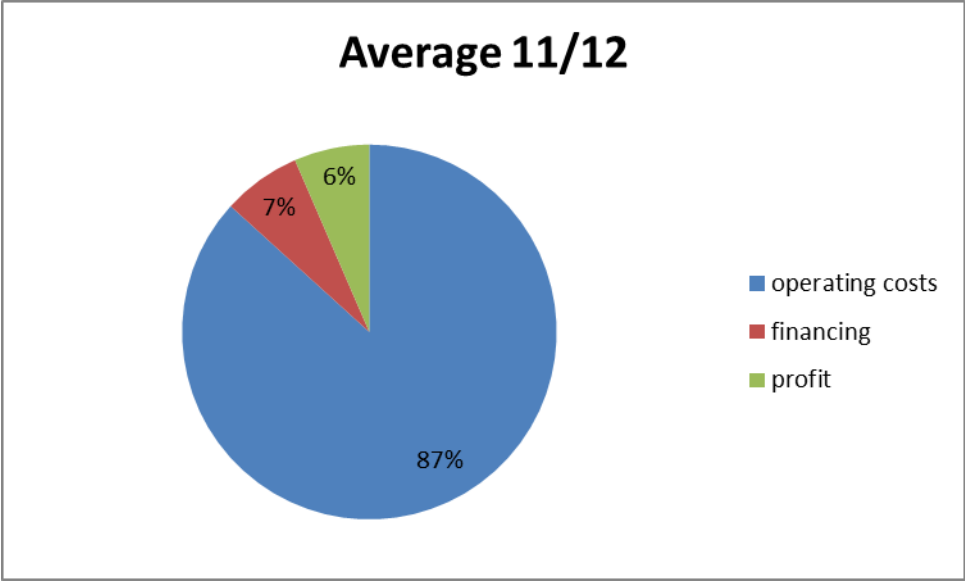


Figure 7: The average operating costs, financing costs and profit as a percentage of income for all participating businesses in 2011/2012, n=24.

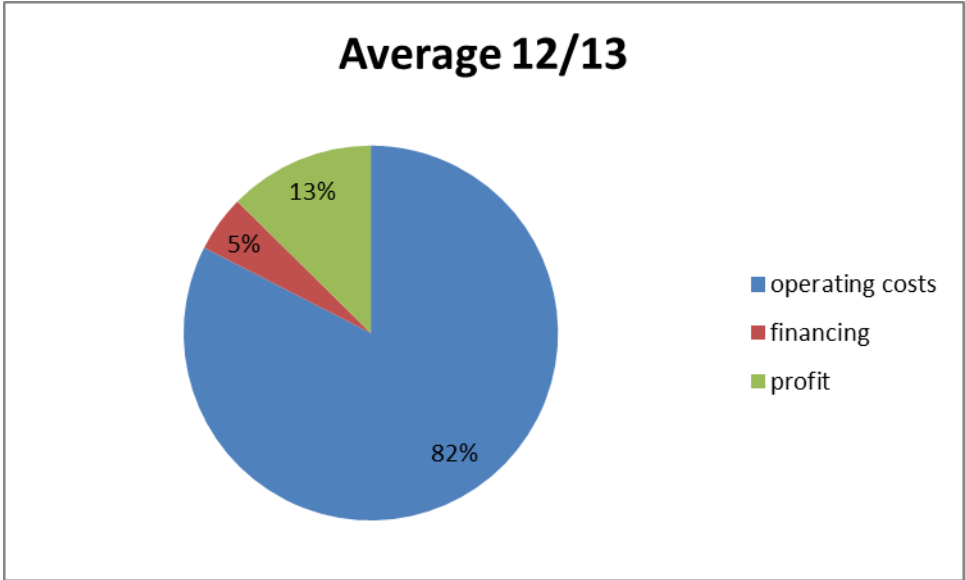


Figure 8: The average operating costs, financing costs and profit as a percentage of income for all participating businesses in 2012/2013, n=11.

Table 4 shows the average profit achieved each year since 2010/2011, for each state.

Table 4: The average profit (before tax and after imputed labour) and profit as a % of income for each state per year.

	Profit (before tax and after imputed labour)			Profit as % income		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
All states	\$ 89,746	\$ 76,643	\$ 194,863	-5.6%	6.0%	13.2%
SA	\$ 37,087	\$ 71,838	\$ 325,960	4.7%	16.8%	41.9%
TAS	\$ 71,060	\$ 113,754	\$ 183,053	5.5%	10.6%	5.2%
NSW	\$ 17,848	\$ 34,421	\$ 15,332	-29.5%	12.2%	11.8%

Please note: There was an adjustment to the Trading Profit methodology; 2011/2012 considered change in value of stock on hand within the profit figure. The method used in the two years differs so further observations on this result are difficult.

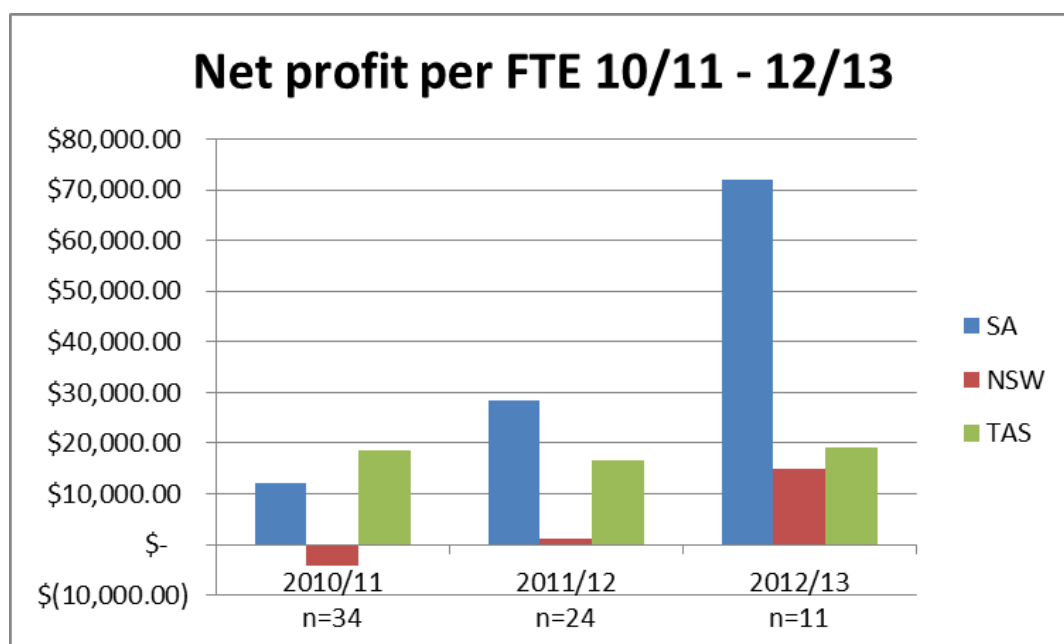


Figure 9: The average net profit (after imputed labour and before tax) per full time equivalent for all participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

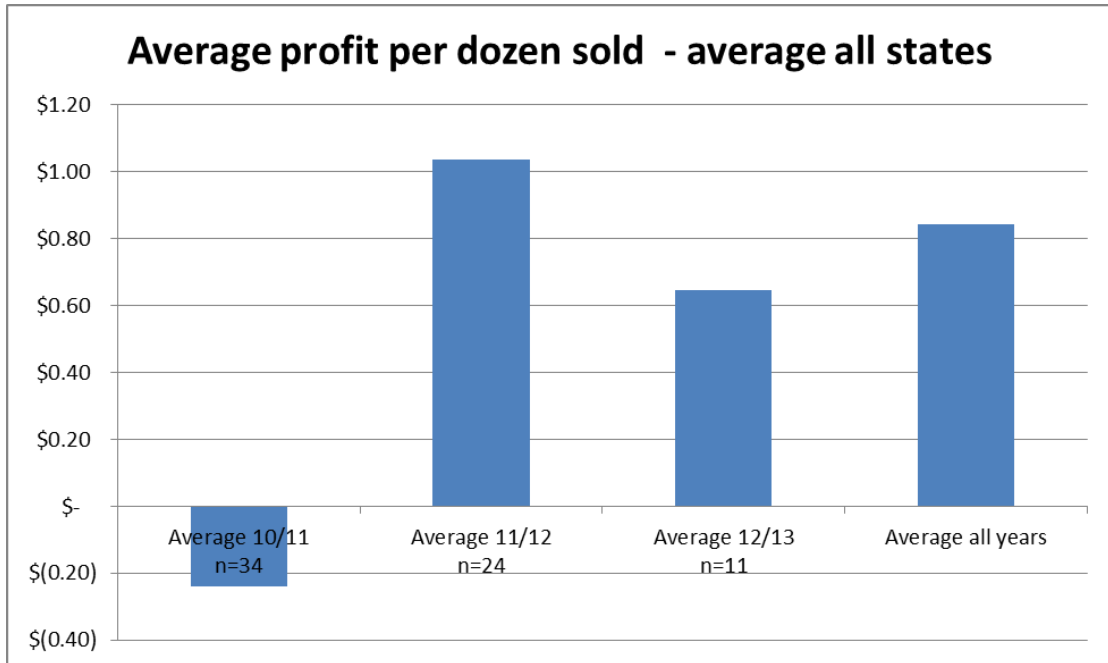


Figure 10: The average net profit (after imputed labour and before tax) per dozen oysters sold for all participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

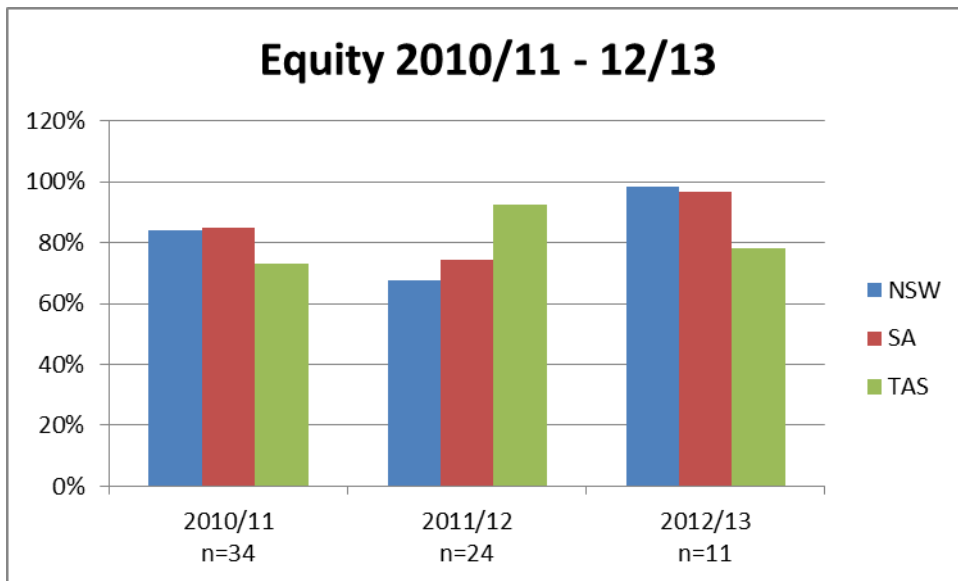


Figure 11: The average equity for all participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

On average, business return on equity has increased each year from 2010/2011 to 2012/2012. The table below shows the result for each state per year.

Table 5: Average return on equity (%) per year and state for all participating businesses from 2010/2011 to 2012/2013.

	Return on equity		
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
All states	1.0%	7.0%	15.0%
SA	2.0%	13.0%	3.0%
TAS	4.0%	4.0%	21.0%
NSW	-5.0%	3.0%	11.0%

6. Discussion

The industry benchmarking results has provided a lot of information and comparisons between the different grower types and oyster species in SA, Tasmania and NSW. The Australian Oyster Industry SnapShot Report (2013), highlighted that in 2011/2012 Pacific Oysters were the most profitable species to grow and Tasmania had the most profitable businesses on average. This was confirmed again in the 2012/2013 trend report (see attached).

One possible trend identified is related to efficient production and labour systems and income per Developed Hectare or Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Even though Sydney Rock Oyster growers receive a higher per dozen price; Pacific Oyster growers are able to generate higher income per Developed Hectare and FTE. They also scored the highest SnapShot NOW results for the Production and Management section in 2012 and 2013. This indicates that Pacific Oyster growers and particularly the Tasmanian growers are leading the industry with their production standards and labour systems.

An observation from the project is that industry benchmarks, such as profit, costs and income, need to be reported on a “per dozen oysters” or “per developed hectare” basis. This ensures that the confidentiality of both larger and smaller growers is protected. These indicators are then useful for comparing the performance of businesses in different states, growing regions, and possibly different production systems. Unfortunately these comparisons could not be fully realised in the benchmarking project due to the lower than ideal participation in across the industry.

5. Benefits and Adoption

Benefits

Key benefits of the benchmarking project have been:

- SnapShot Premium provided each business with a financial report which highlights their strengths and weaknesses.
- Key benchmarks such as debt to income ratio, equity, net worth and finance costs as a percentage of income have been analysed and provided to industry.
- Electronic data collection in 2013 and 2014 reduced project costs.
- SnapShot NOW provided each business with a visual tool for business and succession planning, business meetings and annual reviews.

- Growers have been able to compare their business to the performance of other businesses across Australia in that year.

The following testimonials were collected from a few oyster grower participants in 2012.

“Having a management report gives a good critical analysis of the business and a different perspective to tax figures”, Carl Jaeschke, SA.

“You’ve got to be in the program for a couple of years to decide which figures are most relevant to your business”, Carl Jaeschke, SA.

“Benchmarking enables you to focus on where your business is in relation to others. Why am I different from others?” John Thomson, TAS.

“For a small operator, seeing your strengths against larger businesses is surely a confidence booster. It’s a very valuable tool” David Sims, SA.

“Being able to look at the results and compare them with the group was very important. It’s probably the most important part of benchmarking.” Jon Poke, TAS.

“If you do enough work with your balance sheet and your profit and loss, it’s not a difficult process. It’s more when you get variations from the way your records are kept that’s when there’s any chance of confusion.” Jon Poke, TAS.

It is hoped that all oyster growers reviewing the individual SnapShot NOW and Premium reports are able to learn more about their business. The trend reports produced with the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 data will also inform businesses about the industry averages and how they compare.

Ideally future discussions at Grower Group sessions or State Conferences will also be sparked from the benchmarking outputs.

Adoption

Approximately 50% of the original participants did not re-join the program in 2012 as they were dissatisfied with previous delivery or were not suitable candidates. Participant numbers continued to decline by approximately 50% each year from 2012 to 2014, as shown in Table 2.

The threat of POM's and disease outbreaks has impacted on grower and industry thinking during the benchmarking project. Businesses that have been affected by disease have not been open to participating in benchmarking, with comments such as “What is the point.....” often heard from growers. This issue has also shifted grower’s energy away from increasing business efficiencies to a more “defensive” strategy and the avoidance of POM’s.

Other reasons for the decline in participation each year was due to:

- POM’s affected businesses in the Hawkesbury River
- Businesses being sold
- Businesses being affected by Tasmanian bushfire in 2013

- Away on holidays at the time of data collection
- “I was good last time, no need to look again”
- Too busy to get the data themselves
- Did not return calls or respond to emails
- High mortalities with Pacific oysters in the Port Stephens region in 2012/2013
- A couple of businesses believe they are a bit small and aren't comparable to bigger organisations
- One grower mentioned that some benchmarks don't apply to growers of Sydney Rock Oysters as much of their stock is wild caught and not hatchery.
- Dissatisfaction with previous program, mostly not receiving reports
- Having to pay for the program
- Had greatest impact when coupled with dissatisfaction in previous program – why pay for something they did not value
- Not willing to release or cannot access required financial data – common with investor business models

Once oyster businesses got involved, majority were satisfied with what Rural Directions Pty Ltd was offering. Feedback from participants includes:

- “our investors are looking for this type of information”
- “well worth the investment”
- “this is an increased focus on reviewing your business first, then look to what others are doing second”
- “makes interesting reading, a very worthwhile exercise”

As a result of poor participation, an extensive promotions campaign was undertaken at the beginning of 2013 to meet the target of 24 new participants (60 participants in total). The following promotional tasks were undertaken by Rural Directions Pty Ltd in 2013.

1. Construction and communication of three case studies (rather than testimonials) that demonstrated return on investment for a business implementing benchmarking program finds. These case studies were used at the regional grower groups and in other available communication avenues (OA blog news, Seafood CRC, industry associations, etc.).
2. Business referral. In 2013, for every business that was successfully referred to the benchmarking program, the participating business received a discount of \$100.
3. Splitting of the grower group day meetings into two half days: the first half day was for general industry to discuss average benchmarking finds and the second half of the day was exclusively for participants to deal with confidential information and case studies.
4. Participated in an ABC Bega radio interview (Feb 2013) and ABC Port Lincoln radio interview (April 2013).

The promotional campaign was not very successful. Only 5 new participants joined the program in 2013, 21 less than the target, and only 1 of those businesses was referred to the program by an existing participant.

RDS Partners recommended that the grower group's trialled as a method of industry communication in 2013 should not continue into 2014 for cost-benefit reasons. Oysters Australia and Seafood CRC agreed, and changed and finalised the method

of oyster industry communication. This impacted on the benchmarking project outputs to be delivered in April 2014. As a result, further case studies, promotional press releases, presentations at grower workshops and an industry summary report was not delivered in 2014. The lack of promotional material developed and distributed in 2014 could also have contributed to the low participation numbers in the 2012/2013 benchmarking round.

Rural Directions Pty Ltd has observed that benchmarking is only of interest to a segment of growers. This has now been demonstrated for the grains industry, oyster industry, livestock industry and the grape industry. This does not seem to be based on the scale of the business, but more in the interest in business performance and a desire to understand the current position and key drivers. Some businesses benchmark only once; Other benchmark for a longer time; However, not many businesses continue to benchmark for the long term (> five years) unless there are other compelling benefits linked to the benchmarking process. These benefits may be associated with discussion groups or focused groups for which benchmarking is a central premise, but there is more to the group than just benchmarking.

6. Further Development

As a result of this project, Rural Directions Pty Ltd has already been approached by Government to deliver workshops on financial management and planning to oyster growers. Results of this project may be made available via these workshops, where the information is not commercially sensitive.

The project now has the ability to be self-funded by oyster growers. Rural Directions Pty Ltd will continue to be a provider of SnapShot NOW and Premium for oyster growers.

Identifying and reducing costs of production (e.g. via benchmarking) remains a high priority in Oysters Australia's 2014-2019 strategic plan. It is understood that benchmarking is a catalyst for individual and industry wide profitability improvement.

Oysters Australia discussed some possibilities for continuation of the benchmarking program at its meeting in Adelaide on the 7th June 2014 and will survey growers, including past and future participants on their preference for program continuation.

Two models were discussed:

1. Running an annual workshop attached to each state annual conference, primarily for participants to discuss results and troubleshoot data.
2. Benchmarking periodically, e.g. every 3 years with some data entry assistance.

7. Planned Outcomes

Public Benefit Outcomes

The public outcomes of this project are improved data on the financial position and production practices of oyster businesses in NSW, SA and Tasmania. The project outputs can be used to assess oyster businesses in each year, state, grower type or oyster type.

The oyster industry can use the collected data to identify current strengths and weaknesses, and better direct future investments in research, development and extension activities. It is hoped the outcomes of this project will assist in increasing the sustainability of the Australian oyster industry.

Private Benefit Outcomes

Each participating oyster business has been provided with individual qualitative and financial benchmarking reports. Participating growers can now assess whether their production practices meet best practice through the SnapShot NOW reports. They also have the resources to assess the financial viability of their business and cost structures, through the SnapShot Premium and industry trend reports.

As this project has provided oyster growers with the tools to identify their strengths and weaknesses, they can now take action to improve and grow their businesses.

Linkages with CRC Milestone Outcomes

8. Conclusion

The project aimed to improve average net margin of benchmarking project participants by 2% through implementation of identified profitable practices.

An assessment of how this project has met the initial objectives is:

1. Continue operation of a benchmarking tool for Australian oyster industry participants becoming a self-funded program before the end of the CRC – COMPLETED IN FULL
2. Using the software tool, collect, analyse and report key production & marketing practices as well as individual business financial performance within the oyster growing sector – COMPLETED IN FULL
3. Provide recommendations to the growing sector on key areas of focus for R&D activities in future – COMPLETED IN FULL
4. Communicate recommendations with growers – COMPLETED IN FULL
This was achieved by:
 - Providing average benchmarking result trend reports to participating growers.
 - Presenting results at state conferences in 2012 and 2014.
 - Presenting results at regional grower groups in 2013.

9. References

No references cited.

10. Appendices

12/13 Trend report