



# shellfish culture

shellfish culture newsletter Winter 2006



*Shellfish Culture farm, Coffin Bay, South Australia*

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## Triploid shellfish: increasing your profitability

Shellfish Culture Limited has secured a \$2 million federal grant to further its cutting edge Australasian work on the development of triploid Pacific oysters and Blue Mussels.

The grant comes as the company gears up for a busy summer season, with triploid seed sales strong across all states, and the mature market demand growing firmly for the peak summer period.

Shellfish Culture has exclusive rights to the 4Cs method of natural triploid seed production in Australasia, and the three year AusIndustry Commercial Ready Grant will build on the company's existing triploid program to expand triploid production for the Australian Pacific oyster and Blue Mussel industries.

The project aims to develop world-leading technology in the area of tetraploid and triploid shellfish production. Shellfish Culture is undertaking this project to establish Australia's first population of natural tetraploid Pacific oysters, produce selectively bred family lines of tetraploids and to develop family lines of diploid and triploid Blue mussels.

At the end of this project, the aims are several:

- to have achieved further increases in the production of triploid Pacific oyster seed; as well as second generation family lines of tetraploid Pacific oysters;

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*Triploid shellfish: increasing your profitability continued*

- new techniques for producing tetraploid Pacific oysters;
- second generation family lines of diploid, triploid and tetraploid Blue mussels;
- development of Blue mussel broodstock conditioning techniques.

### Current production

In the meantime, Triploid Pacific oyster seed production at Shellfish Culture's Bicheno hatchery has been exceptional, according to the company's General Manager, Richard Pugh, with a number of large batches successfully produced during December and January.

"The quality of stock is excellent and early testing of triploid percentages show 100%."

According to Mr. Pugh, Shellfish Culture expects Australia to follow overseas trends, where a major proportion of Pacific oyster production on the US West Coast and France consists of the versatile triploid. He says seed production will be increased to meet growing demand next season.

## The good oil on triploids

- Triploids have superior meat quality in summer
- Triploids enjoy a better market price – up to 20%
- Triploids can be at their finest any time of the year, including in the peak summer demand period when diploids are spawning
- Triploids provide increased growth rates because energy is not being dissipated by diversion into reproduction
- Shellfish Culture Ltd is the only commercial supplier of triploid shellfish seed in the Australasian region and has been investing in triploid technology since 1990.

## Chairman's Report

I hope you enjoy this first edition of *Shellfish Culture*, and I want to say how excited I am at joining this dynamic and progressive organisation as its chairman.

When I was approached to take on the position, I did some research, and was frankly astonished at the growth of the company, and its reputation within the industry. This speaks volumes about the staff, board members, and the chairmen who preceded me.

Despite its success from its initial beginnings in 1979, Shellfish Culture still has enormous growth potential – not just in Australia – but internationally. Already, we're supplying triploid oyster seed to Singapore.

At the same time, we're expanding our South Australian production facility, and we're confident that our triploid shellfish will change the way shellfish are produced, marketed, and sold in this country.

Triploids give farmers a market presence for 12 months of the year with the cash flow benefits that go with this. At the same time, farmers can supply a consistent, quality product to



*Chairman, Greg Goodman*

the market, particularly at the peak summer demand period.

My congratulations, and those of my fellow board members, to two Shellfish Culture pioneers who were recently named in the Queen's Birthday honours list. Colin Dyke, a former Chairman of Shellfish Culture, was made a Member of the Order of Australia, while Allan Yates, a founding director, received an OAM.

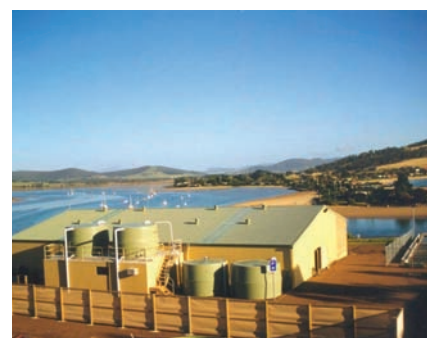
Their honours reflect my initial comments in this column. Shellfish Culture is a highly professional organisation, peopled by talented Australians, whose commitment is not just to the sale of seed, but who strive to support their customers through initiatives that range from research and development to product quality assurance.

## A little history ...

Shellfish Culture was established in 1979 by a group of Tasmanian shellfish producers. Its initial target was to produce 10 million oysters per annum, but today, over 100 million shellfish seed are produced each year.

The company's first hatchery was established at Bicheno on Tasmania's East Coast, and nearly 30 years later, it operates major hatchery and nursery facilities in South Australia and Tasmania, and also operates marine farms in the two states.

Shellfish Culture operates an R&D hatchery at Clifton Beach, Tasmania, specialising in triploidy



*Shellfish Culture's R&D Hatchery and Head Office in Tasmania*

and selective breeding. By operating in two states, Shellfish Culture provides a diversity of sites, a secure supply to customers, and a premium quality seed.

Over 25 years after it was established, Shellfish Culture has become a major Australian supplier, which is now expanding into new markets in Australia and overseas.



# Growing Great Oysters in SA



Summer meat quality comparison: diploid left, triploid right



diploid left, triploid right

As Shellfish Culture expands its operations in South Australia, its farm at Coffin Bay is now supplying the majority of Shellfish Culture sales in South Australia.

“Our customers are saying that the quality of the seed is excellent, with a good shape, growth, uniformity and hardness”, says Richard Pugh. Meanwhile, this coming production season will see further development of algal culture systems for grow-out of post set spat.

## Native oysters back on the menu

The native oyster, *Ostrea angasi*, appears to

be making a come back on restaurant menus. As a result, Shellfish Culture has received increasing numbers of inquiries from farmers wanting to purchase seed.

Shellfish Culture has produced this highly valued shellfish many times in the past two decades and is pleased to see demand return. A new batch will be produced this season and stock will be available during autumn 2007.

If you wish to place an order for any seed, please contact Vicky Blizzard or Richard Pugh on 03 6248 9441 for all seed inquiries and orders.



Native oyster seed

## Congratulations

Shellfish Culture congratulates the winners of this year's South Australian Oyster Growers' Association oyster competition.

Our congratulations to Terry Rehn and his team at Cowell Oysters for winning the Best Unopened Oyster category and to Brendy Guidera and the team at Pristine Oysters for winning the Best Opened Oyster category.

“Shellfish Culture finds it most gratifying that both winners used seed stock supplied by our company,” says Shellfish Culture General Manager Richard Pugh.

## Australasian Aquaculture Conference 2006

Shellfish Culture will deliver two papers at this year's Australasian aquaculture conference which is being held in Adelaide towards the end of August.

We'll also be exhibiting at the conference. So come along and meet us at booth 73 to inspect seed, view mature triploids, and discuss how Shellfish Culture can help improve your bottom line.

General Manager Richard Pugh will make a presentation on triploid Pacific oysters, highlighting their benefits to the industry. “They offer the ability to extend the market season for oysters, particularly in the summer months, when diploid oysters would have poor meat quality,” says Mr Pugh. A second presentation at the conference by Mr Pugh will give delegates a virtual tour of Shellfish Culture.

Shellfish Culture Ltd also produces native flat oysters, blue mussels, commercial scallops, and abalone. Several hundred million spat are produced by Shellfish Culture each year at their hatcheries, nurseries and farms in Tasmania and South Australia.

The Australasian Aquaculture Conference 2006 is being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre from August 27-30.

## Shellfish Futures Workshop 2006

The Tasmanian Shellfish Executive Council will be hosting this year's annual workshop and dinner on October 6/7.

The workshop will look at the future of the shellfish industry and how businesses can best position themselves to adapt to a changing market environment.

Shellfish Culture is assisting with the organisation of the workshop, which will be held at the East Coaster Resort, Orford. A workshop information package will be sent out shortly. For further information please contact Naomi McGrath-Kerr at Rural Development Services on 03 6231 9033.



## Quality Assessment It's all about good seed

Quality Assurance is something that Shellfish Culture takes very seriously. For instance, a triploid quality assessment report is provided with all consignments, tested at point of sale.

But did you know that the Triploidy rate is also assessed throughout production with internal controls in place to remove sub-standard stock? This assessment provides an indication of the triploid rate, although it should not be seen as an absolute guarantee.

Shellfish Culture also provides a triploid assessment service for farmers who need to check triploid rates for mature oysters. Please contact Richard Pugh to arrange assessment.

"The Triploid QA system complements our existing QA system for oysters, where we assess counts, curl back, doubles and dead shell. Up to five sub-samples are collected for each consignment, and all sampling and calculation of the total amount of seed supplied is determined by weight on trade certified scales. The consignment is thoroughly drained to remove excess moisture, and sub standard spat are not included in counts; only good quality spat are counted. A 2.5% over pack is supplied to negate count discrepancies" says Mr Pugh.

## Triploids spur growth

Lester Marshall farms 22 hectares of water in South Australia for oysters, and over the years has built a close working relationship with Shellfish Culture.

According to Lester, the demand for oysters – indeed all types of shellfish – has never been stronger. "Because diploid oysters spawn through the summer, it can be challenging to meet the peak summer consumer demand, whereas the triploid oyster seed produced by Shellfish Culture gives us a quality year round product.

Lester Marshall, who trades as Mar-shell Aquaculture from his headquarters at Coffin Bay, is developing a new online business to meet the growing consumer demand. "Now that we have access to the all year triploid oyster, we're going online to supply fresh oysters to customers by overnight courier."

Seafood Online is expected to commence trading in September to meet consumer demand for fresh oysters in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney; and later, the rest of Australia. "So many people come to Coffin Bay and tell us that they want to buy – not just any oyster – but oysters they've seen growing at our farms. It made us realise that the development of triploid oysters, together with the opportunities afforded by the internet, would give us the means to farm one day, and have the product delivered fresh the next day."

Lester is a former farmer on the land and shearer, who took up oyster farming 15 years ago. "Consumers tell us that when they buy oysters commercially, they are never entirely sure of the



source of the oysters, whereas once they visit a farm, they feel a connection, and would like to source their oysters directly from the farms they've seen. That's where Seafood Online will come in. Within 24 hours of an order coming in, we'll have the oysters out of the water, and at the customer's address. You can't get much fresher than that."

According to Lester, the development in Australia of triploid oysters by Shellfish Culture has been "just brilliant" in revolutionising the industry. "As any customer will tell you, the reliability of supply is paramount, and that's what triploids present. The triploids we're harvesting this year have a very good shape and there's more meat in the shell than in a diploid.

"Shellfish Culture has been a very important partner to us in developing our market position. They've invested in the technology to support triploid development, they've invested in qualified staff, and they have been extremely helpful in supporting us."

- Seafood Online's website is currently being constructed. You can find it at [www.seafoodonline.com.au](http://www.seafoodonline.com.au)

## The internet: profit from it

Increasingly, the internet is becoming a useful resource for our industry. Here are two sites on the massive CSIRO website that may interest readers. First, sea temperatures:

<http://www.cmar.csiro.au/remotesensing/MODIS/index.html>

On the left hand side of the page, click on: point

and click seas temperature map. You will find a handy tool which gives you an accurate reading of the seas temperature for any location around the Australian coast.

**Algal Blooms.** Click on the following CSIRO link, and you will be directed to satellite imagery which gives you, not just sea temperatures, but the location of algal blooms in the waters around Australia.

<http://www.cmar.csiro.au/remotesensing/MODIS/LEVEL2/composites.html>