



# shellfish culture

shellfish culture newsletter | Spring 2014



*John Stubbs (right) with his cousin Rob Moxham at work on the Hawkesbury.*

## Also in this issue:

Customer Profile: Zippel's  
Smoky Bay Oysters

shellfish futures 2014

SAOGA conference

## Key new role at SCL

Well known and respected former Hawkesbury River oyster farmer John Stubbs is joining Shellfish Culture in a new role as Customer Product Manager.

John brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his new role, which was formerly part of the duties of the General Manager of Shellfish Culture. He also brings plenty of industry empathy to his position.

John's farm was - in his own words - "wiped out twice"; first by the QX parasite in 2004 and then by POMs in 2013. After the first occurrence, he worked for five years on a research program into the parasite with DPI and Hornsby Council in Sydney, culminating with the publication of a scientific paper last year.

After POMs hit, John became heavily involved in POMs research, and worked closely with SCL, which is donating spat to researchers looking to solutions for POMs.

"I've had a long association with Shellfish Culture," says John. "With all the problems that Hawkesbury farmers have had, we'd be in desperate straits if it wasn't for the support we've received from Shellfish Culture over the years."

John's a fourth generation oyster farmer on the Hawkesbury, but following the devastation caused by POM's he decided to switch to acreage farming at Oberon in NSW. "The oyster community in Australia is really a family, and it runs deep in my blood. So I'm tremendously pleased to be coming back into the industry to work with a company that has a real vision for the future of the oyster industry in Australia.

"My new role involves overseeing SCL's nursery and farm operations as well as sales and generally looking after our customers. I'll be keen to get around our customer base once I've settled in to say g'day.

"Mother Nature throws up enormous challenges for our industry, and I believe the solution will be a disease resistant Pacific oyster. It's great to be part of a company that shares that goal and is actively working towards it."



## Chairman's Report

It is with some regret that I advise readers of the resignation recently of SCL's General Manager, Kerry Wells. After seven years, Kerry decided he wanted to return closer to his home on the North West coast of Tasmania, and back into the timber industry.

Our loss is certainly the timber industry's gain. Kerry played an important role in making Shellfish Culture the successful company it is today. He had a great rapport with both staff and the Board and he departs with our best wishes.

The Board has been engaged in a national search for a new General Manager, and I am pleased to be able to announce the appointment of Greg Bowers as our new General Manager.

Greg is moving to Tasmania from Melbourne where he is Coca-Cola Amatil's General Manager Supply Chain for Victoria and Tasmania. He has spent much of his career with Australia's leading publicly listed food company, Goodman Fielder, and has an expert knowledge of end to end supply chains, with a particular emphasis on what needs to happen at the production and distribution levels to be an on time, reliable supplier to customers.

I look forward to seeing Greg's expertise being deployed to enhance our own customers' experiences.

In the meantime well known industry figure John Stubbs has been appointed to a new position as Shellfish Culture's Customer Product Manager. I'm sure the industry will join with me in welcoming John to our team. He brings a tremendous depth of knowledge to his new position, and is very well qualified in giving SCL the farmer's perspective on what we do – and should do better – as a supplier to the industry.

Both these appointments underline the Board's conviction that our customers must be the ultimate focus and beneficiary of everything we do.

**Relationship** building, especially in Asia, is of enormous importance. So it was a great privilege to recently visit Japan, meet some wonderful oyster farmers, and see their centuries old oyster industry. Our visit followed a week's tour by a delegation of Japanese oyster farmers at Shellfish Culture in Tasmania.

Japan realises that its traditional industry must modernise following the 2011 tsunami. Because Japan views the Australian industry as a good modern model, SCL is very happy to be providing whatever assistance we can to assist the



*Chairman, Greg Goodman*

Japanese industry in its recovery. To meet local demand following the tsunami, Japan needs to significantly upgrade its industry capacity and production levels, which also presents the Australian oyster growing industry with some export opportunities.

**Shareholders** are reminded that our AGM will take place on November 6 at Bicheno on the Tasmanian East Coast. It will be an opportunity to visit our Bicheno hatchery following the AGM which will be held at the Beachfront Hotel at 11.00am. Shellfish Culture has experienced good production levels this year, and our order book is very strong for the current season.



*Shellfish Culture's Greg Goodman and Scott Parkinson (far right). Far left is Austrade representative Takehiro Yoshimoto and President Fumihiko Sato of the Sato Oyster Farm who stands next to a bust of the Farm's founder. The Sato family are third generation oyster growers who continue to be leaders in innovation.*

The Miyagi Prefecture in north western Japan is a prime producer for oysters, but its 41,000 tonnes of commercial oyster production has been whittled down to 5,000 tonnes following the tragic 2011 tsunami.

"The Japanese love oysters. It's part of their culinary culture, and oyster bars are becoming very popular in big cities such as Tokyo. To meet the demand, their producers realise they need to bring production into best modern practise, including more hatcheries and a single seed culture."

Part of the SCL visit, which was organised through Austrade, was to the Sato Oyster Farm at Shima City. "This large farm is in the vanguard of change in Japan, with innovations in automation, grading systems and Australian basket systems. It is very much the future of oyster production in Japan," said Scott.

Japan sees Australia as a model for its own oyster industry development, and Shellfish Culture used its visit to brief key Japanese industry figures on modern Australian hatchery and production techniques.

## Shellfish Culture visits Japan

After a recent visit to Tasmania by a group of Japanese oyster farmers, Shellfish Culture has returned the courtesy with a relationship-building visit to key oyster growing areas in Japan.

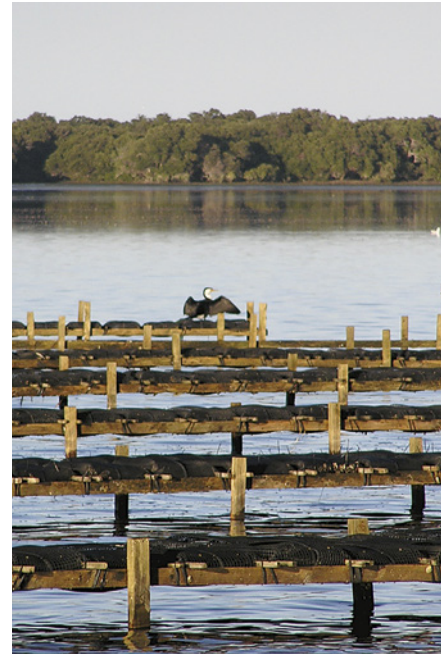
"The Japanese industry is hundreds of years old," said SCL's Breeding Manager, Scott Parkinson, "but it's only now beginning to modernise, and believes it can learn much from Australia."

"Their industry is still based on wild caught seed, and the tsunami of 2011 and changing environmental conditions mean that they are very interested in Australia's embrace of modern techniques and technology."



## Customer profile:

### ZIPPEL'S OYSTERS SOUTH AUSTRALIA



*Zippel leases at Smoky Bay. Mangroves fringe Eyre Island behind*

*The Zippel brothers at work: Ashley (left), Bruce, and Gary (right)*

Zippel's Smoky Bay Oysters was born out of necessity, and today is a major and successful supplier to the Australian market.

Don Zippel and his three sons, Bruce, Gary and Ashley, were a well-known sheep farming family in the hinterland of Smoky Bay in South Australia's western Eyre Peninsula until hard times on the land in the 1980's forced them to look at diversifying.

"We had a family council gathering and decided to try our hand at oyster farming, while initially retaining the sheep farm as well", says Bruce Zippel. "We finally sold the land farm in 2000, and bolted for the coast. Then there began a steep learning curve on the intricacies of the oyster industry."

Today, Zippel's Smoky Bay Oysters has grown to cover 40ha of intertidal waters and up to 40ha of sub tidal leases in the Smoky Bay area and St. Peter Island near Ceduna. More than 200,000 dozen oysters are grown from spat to the farm gate on Zippel's leases. Zippel's is one of just a few South Australian oyster producers which farms oysters in a sub tidal environment.

"We specialise in larger oysters which are grown completely on farm and wholesaled to distributors to supply Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane."



Zippel's oysters are grown from spat at Smoky Bay and are then moved to St Peter Island for their middle growth phase, and back to Smoky Bay for finishing and harvesting. Packing and distribution occurs from a single land facility at Smoky Bay.

Zippel's sources its stock of Pacific oysters from Australian Seafood Industries, and this year is augmenting this traditional supply source with some Shellfish Culture spawnless oyster stock. "We've heard some pretty good things about the spawnless oysters, and so decided to try them out this year in addition to our ASI stock," says Bruce.

After purchasing water at St Peter Island about four years ago the farm is currently engaged in further investment by installing an adjustable long line system on some of its farms, and is considering a retail outlet at Smoky Bay to cater for the passing grey nomad trade.

"We employ about 12 people, including my brothers and Dad, who is now 84," says Bruce. "As a third generation sheep farmer, Dad's a local legend and he's taken to oyster farming like the proverbial duck to water. He's one of our best workers, and we built him his own shed where he undertakes the farm's repair jobs."

## SAOGA Conference



*The Oyster Judges: Ben Cameron, Scott Parkinson and Matt Cunningham*

All the growing areas were well represented at the 2014 SAOGA conference, held in Streaky Bay on the 7th and 8th August.

Presentations on the latest developments in POMS research, the ASI funding model, and climate and food forecasting updates were all well received.

A combined hatcheries panel discussion gave growers an ideal opportunity to ask all the things they had ever wanted to ask; including broodstock selection, batch naming, etc.

Frank questions enabled the hatcheries to demystify some of the myths that surround the production of oyster spat. The annual oyster competition was dominated by Cowell growers who won all but one of the six prizes.



*Alex Priest at Pipe Clay Lagoon*

## shellfish futures 2014

shellfish futures 2014 is to be held at Tall Timbers, Smithton, Tasmania on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

Keynote Speaker, Professor Richard Whittington from Sydney University, will deliver the latest results in the efforts to minimize the risks to our businesses from 'POMS'.

Beer and Bivalves BBQ will be held on Friday night in Stanley, with the 'Oyster Olympics' as the main draw card for the evening.

Saturday night will encompass the Oyster Awards, Industry Dinner and Grand Auction. This will take place at Tall Timbers. The oyster competitions will be revamped to present a showcase of what our industry can produce. Get on to preparing your oysters to showcase our industry!



*September is a busy time at Shellfish Culture's Pipe Clay Lagoon farm*

### OUR PEOPLE:

## Alex Priest

Alex Priest is a local in every way. He works locally, lives locally, and even plays football locally. He's also building a successful career locally in aquaculture.

Alex works in Shellfish Culture's farm and nursery operations at Pipe Clay Lagoon, south-east of Hobart.

"I'd worked for six and a half years with mature oysters and was keen to further my knowledge in hatchery, grading, and handling operations. The work is varied, and tide and weather conditions tend to dictate my working hours. The job appeals to me because you're out in the elements and the job keeps me reasonably fit."

After working in the building industry for a few months, Alex got his break in aquaculture after hearing a local whisper about a job going on at a nearby oyster farm. "So I put my resume in, and at first thought it was just a job. But I soon became very interested in aquaculture."

Alex worked at South Sea Oysters and then spent five years with Pipe Clay Oysters, before moving to Shellfish Culture this year. He's currently undertaking a Certificate 4 in aquaculture.

Born in Hobart, Alex lives close to his work at Acton. He attended local primary and high schools, and when he's not at work, helps his girlfriend to look after her horses.



**Shellfish Culture**  
T A S M A N I A