



# shellfish culture

shellfish culture newsletter | Winter 2015

## Sharpening customer focus at SCL

Well known former NSW oyster farmer John Stubbs has hit the ground running in his new role as Shellfish Culture's Customer and Product Manager.

In just his first six months John has visited more than 70 oyster farms in South Australia, Tasmania and NSW, sharing information and advice, and handling orders.

"I'm getting a good response to my visits and phone consultations, and I'm able to share a little of my own experiences in dealing with on-farm issues," says John.

"I want to get round the farms regularly – a minimum of once every six months or so – to ensure our products are being fully integrated into the farm's production cycle, and to understand what is happening in the market place from the customer's perspective.



"With lease development in Pipe Clay Lagoon, we are now closer to being able to have an inventory of stock on hand to fulfil customer orders and spot sales when required.

"As I do my rounds of farms I've really appreciated the sincere empathy farmers have shown me after POMS hit my own business

in NSW. Farmers are very interested in QX and POMS."

John says his top priority is to make sure orders are met on time and to high quality standards. "We have no hierarchy of customers at SCL. Every customer will be treated the same irrespective of the quantity of orders they place with us."



Rack building in Pipe Clay Lagoon

## Farm Developments

Shellfish Culture continues to grow its farm operations with the rack building process in Pipe Clay Lagoon running ahead of schedule last financial year and continuing into the new year.

When Shellfish Culture acquired the farm 1.5ha had been developed. By the end of last financial year it was 3.5ha with a further hectare being developed in this new financial year. This phase should be completed in September.

The expansion allows Shellfish Culture to increase its on-hand stock and provide a variety of different sizes according to market demand. It helps SCL to achieve the goal of being an on time supplier of quality stock, to the specifications that farmers want, and when they want it.

General Manager Greg Bowers has thanked farm staff for their efforts "It's partly due to Michael "Chumpy" Riley, Frank Kerruish, and the rest of the team that our rack building has been running ahead of schedule, with more than 70% of our annual target achieved in less than nine months last financial year."

### Also in this issue:

SCL farm developments

Customer Profile: Temptation Oysters

Meet our new staff

Shellfish Futures



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## Chairman's report

Our farm in Pipe Clay Lagoon continues to grow to meet demand. It's all part of the strategy we developed two or three years ago to ensure we become a year round reliable supplier of quality product, in the sizes our customers want, and to the deadlines they require.

There is an inevitable lag between developing a strategy and seeing the outcomes, but we're now beginning to see the building blocks coming together, with a supply of stock available in different sizes according to farmers' needs, and with a strong focus developing on customer care.

More on-farm rack building has boosted our ability to build our stock inventories; and this places the company in a good position to respond to orders from farmers.

Excellence – and then a little bit more – is the goal I've always set when aiming for customer

satisfaction. We want to help our customers to grow, because we then grow with them.

In this respect the appointments of Greg Bowers and John Stubbs – one a supply chain logistics expert, and the other an oyster farmer of significant experience in NSW – is enhancing our customer care focus.

But it's more than that. Senior management representing our core sales, farm and technical teams all meet together regularly with one goal: a quality product, available when farmers need it, and to the specifications they want.

I'm told that the result is a growing understanding in our wider work force that whatever the Company does – whether it's rack building, preparing algae for the larvae, or handling orders – it's all about supporting our customers, the oyster farmers of Australia.



Chairman, Greg Goodman

## Customer profile: Temptation Oysters Coffin Bay Pty Ltd



Temptation Oysters Coffin Bay Pty Ltd's operation

Leigh Clarke has been involved in the seafood industry in one way or another most of his working life, from seafood processing to aquaculture. Now he's embarked on a new opportunity by taking over part of his brother Kym's oyster farm, and trading as Temptation Oysters Coffin Bay Pty Ltd.

Leigh and his two sons, David and Todd, are now working 5ha of water at Little Douglas, part of the renowned Coffin Bay waterway.

"We're going to grow from spat to sale," says Leigh. "From start to finish, and we're using

Shellfish Culture as one of our suppliers. They've got good products; and while we've just started we've got half a million 8mm oysters growing quite happily out there on the farm."

Leigh has an impressive operation at Kelledie Bay, with a large shed facility, tumble grader and Shellquip SED machinery among other assets.

"We sell product through wholesalers and an agent with most of it going to restaurants and retailers across Australia.

"We're very lucky to grow our oysters in a pristine location. There's a lot of upwelling from the ocean down south. There's good water flow, its nutrient rich, and there is no other industry

that flows into the bay to spoil the environment. It's just good clean water."

Leigh admits to a life long passion for the seafood industry." I've worked for large seafood processors in Port Lincoln for many years dealing with prawns, lobsters, tuna, mussels and oysters. When I'm travelling, my first port of call is always the local fish market and fish mongers

"This is a new phase of my life and I'm loving oyster farming. Why wouldn't I? It's a great part of the world and it's a fascinating industry – a long way from my career beginnings as an accountant."

# From the General Manager

## Focusing on Growth for our Customers

Over the past few months John Stubbs and I have met with many customers, both current and new, and this round of meetings is still progressing.

For me this is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about our great industry and importantly how SCL can support our growers and through them the industry as a whole. It is really pleasing – even inspiring – to have had several conversations about how SCL can support and assist growers in building their businesses further on several fronts.

Some of these discussions have resulted in firm opportunities for both the grower and SCL to build a stronger business relationship. This transition into a growth focus is exciting and I strongly believe it is coming at the right time for all. Of course meeting all customer orders on time, with product quality and the correct volume, is the fundamental everyday priority.

However this priority – when you couple it with the growth opportunities we're seeing in the industry right now – is a very powerful dynamic as the industry moves ahead.

Over recent months we have received some very positive feedback on our products' performance, from both the Tasmanian and South Australian markets. This is very pleasing but more importantly we seek feedback so that we can learn and improve. On receiving the feedback we go back and historically review the specific batches and see what we can learn.

I offer these following insights based upon our feedback.

1. **Our Standard broodstock selection** is based on customer demands. The standard lines are generic oyster lines with the most important selection based on:
  - a. Maintaining a high level of genetic diversity by using a large number of individuals to breed from, ie minimising inbreeding.
  - b. Selecting oysters based on feedback from our customers: shape, colour, batch performance and survival etc.
  - c. Using commercial lines to breed from: ie lines that have performed well on farm in both South Australia and Tasmania will be used in future commercial lines. Any line that we are not happy with - or customers were not happy with - are discarded.
2. **Spawnless stock continues to improve with current batches being produced from the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of tetraploid breeding.** We are considered world leaders in the commercial production of tetraploid broodstock. The advantages of *naturally* produced Spawnless oysters include:
  - a. No chemicals being used in the production of our natural Spawnless oysters, vital for all those growers looking for organic certification or a clean green image.
  - b. Triploid assessments are done at point of sale and over 10,000 oysters tested during the production cycle demonstrating greater than 98% triploidy (*we test mature oysters not just the larvae*).



*GM Greg Bowers and Andy Day, Senior Hatchery Technician discussing the preferred traits being bred at SCL through its natural breeding process. Greg sees this as an opportunity to continually improve customers' product offering with recent breeding lines performing exceptionally well.*

- c. Spawnless quality – such as uniformity, shape, darker colour and growth rate - continue to improve and this year's stock is no exception. They look great!
  - d. We are keeping a very close eye on ASI breeding lines, particularly for POMS, and will be soon introducing these lines into our tetraploid. This will be separate from our own tetraploid breeding lines.
3. **Thoroughbred families** continue to improve with the latest generation of ASI lines showing uniformity in growth, shape and general performance. We have received very positive feedback which also includes the growers now having greater experience in growing these lines.

This season's stock looks absolutely fantastic and in addition our stock levels are continually increasing as planned due to our farm extensions. So please continue providing feedback so we can keep the improvements coming.

## A BIT ABOUT US



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

Shellfish Culture has been in business for more than 30 years as a supplier of quality seed stock to the Australian oyster industry.

**Fact:** Shellfish Culture is an unlisted public company. It is predominantly owned by oyster growers.

**Fact:** Shellfish Culture is a leader in oyster research and development. To support our industry it has a strong record of involvement in scientific efforts to mitigate the challenges that affect our industry.

**Fact:** We supply two types of Pacific oyster – standard and spawnless in differing sizes according to market demand. We are Australasia's sole supplier of spawnless oyster seed which, as farmers appreciate, delivers superior meat quality in the peak summer consumer demand period.

**Fact:** Quality control is paramount at Shellfish Culture

**Fact:** We strive to achieve exceptional reliability of supply and delivery: what our customer needs, and when they need it.

## New staff for SCL

Maternity leave, life style changes, and new career opportunities have all played their part recently in several staff movements in and out of Shellfish Culture.

While it's always sad to see valued staff leave, the company hopes their time with SCL has left them enriched in both a professional and a personal sense. At the same time, team rejuvenation provides a great opportunity to introduce some fresh ideas and thinking into SCL, increase capability; and teaching the ropes to new staff helps keep existing team members focused on the company's core objectives.

Recently Michel Bermudes of SCL's Bicheno hatchery took up an opportunity in New Caledonia. Originally from France, Michel is going to a new role still within the aquaculture sector. Apart from anything else, it will be a great life experience for his family.

Michel has managed the Bicheno hatchery very well, and to ensure it continues developing its crucial role within the organisation, we have appointed Scott Mactier to succeed Michel. He commenced work recently, enabling a very smooth and detailed transition from Michel to



*A seamless changing of key staff at the Bicheno hatchery (pictured) with Michel Bermudes moving overseas and a NSW marine scientist taking over Michel's role*

Scott. Scott brings a very professional approach, a can-do attitude, and strong technical skills. You can read a profile on Scott in this edition.

Additionally SCL welcomed Alex Hickling to the Bicheno team on 20 July. Alex has replaced Elise Wilson who is on maternity leave. Alex moved over from WA after finishing his Degree in Marine Science with Honours and has brought a great attitude to complement his technical skills.

Shellfish Culture also welcomed Will Bartolomaeus from South Australia to the

Pipeclay Lagoon hatchery. Will has a degree in Marine Science, and with previous hatchery experience in South Australia he brings to the team a lot of passion and an energetic attitude.

"The recruitment of the like and calibre of all three new colleagues is the result of a good succession plan and also because of the strong, professional reputation that SCL has in the aquaculture community, and one which we strive to enhance further," says SCL General Manager Greg Bowers.

## Shellfish Futures 2015

The planning for Shellfish Futures 2015 is now well advanced,

The format for the conference has changed a little this year and reflects requests and issues identified in an industry survey earlier this year. The main change to the program will be an earlier start on the Friday with a broad industry discussion covering fees and levies, industry priorities and R&D concepts.

The AGM for Oysters Tasmania, and Beer and Bivalves, will still be on the Friday. The conference, followed by the Oyster Awards, the Gala Dinner and auction will take place on the Saturday. A detailed program will be released as soon as possible.

"There are new sponsors on board this year, as well as continued and substantial sponsorship of previous sponsors," says Adam Saddler, Executive Officer Oysters Tasmania, "I would like to extend my thanks to Shellfish Culture for their platinum sponsorship of the event. "Without their support it would be difficult to ensure Shellfish Futures' success."

Shellfish Futures takes place this year on 23 and 24 October at Tidal Waters, St. Helens. Tidal Waters has provided competitive rates for accommodation and you can book using Booking Reference No 71214 - Oysters Tasmania Conference 2015. Any questions? Give Adam Saddler, Executive Officer Oysters Tasmania, a call on 0458 601 057.



**An important date for the diary**

**The Shellfish Culture Annual General Meeting will be held in Hobart on Thursday 5 November 2015.**

Last year the AGM was held at Bicheno so that shareholders could visit the SCL Bicheno hatchery. This year the meeting will be held at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Sandy Bay. Annual reports will be distributed to shareholders ahead of the meeting.