

ECSGA
1623 Whitesville Rd.
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www.ECSGA.org



Volume 2:07
October 2007

From the Mouth of the Bay – Fall 2007

It has been a busy and challenging growing season for many of us in the Northeast. Several hatcheries ran into early production problems causing many growers to scramble for seed. Thankfully, a good dry growing summer has allowed many to make up for a late start. Meanwhile, strong markets have kept prices firm and dealers report that demand for high-quality, cultured shellfish remains strong.

The ECSGA has been busy too. We have several exciting developments to report on since our last newsletter. The East Coast Shellfish Research Institute has been incorporated and the Board of Directors (capably led by John Kraeuter) is busily working on prioritizing industry research needs. We are cautiously optimistic that some of this work may be started in the spring, made possible by congressional funding. It would be very gratifying if all these trips to DC finally paid off.

We received NOAA funding for a project to establish Best Management Practices for our industry and Sandy MacFarlane will begin a series of workshops this fall to work with growers to ensure that these BMPs are meaningful and practical for our industry.

ECSGA members were well represented at the Nantucket Wine Festival and we served thousands at the Milford Oyster Festival. Thanks to all those who helped make these events a great success.

Congress is debating legislation to enable aquaculture permitting in waters 3 to 200 miles offshore. While some argue that this provides limited opportunities for shellfish producers, the Offshore Aquaculture Act does boost the visibility of the entire industry and funding for near-shore research is included. Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Guttierrez has been touring the country passionately touting the need for domestic aquaculture development, highlighting the fact that the US imports 80% of its seafood and half of that is cultured in overseas. Guttierrez has been pushing hard for passage of the Act and in June he pulled dozens of industry leaders in to DC for an Aquaculture Summit designed to attract support for the Act. As an invited speaker I highlighted the need for a workable permitting process if the Act is going to have the desired impact of jumpstarting domestic production. Unfortunately, the Act has drawn fire from environmental groups who fear the potential impacts of giant offshore fish farms, and it remains to be seen how restrictive the permitting process will be after the Act comes out of Conference Committee.

At the same time we have been pushing for some key changes to the '07 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is reauthorized every five years and this is our best chance in years to ensure that shellfish farms receive some of the same support dirt farmers enjoy (eg. crop insurance, marketing and research assistance). We are hoping Congress will expand USDA crop

insurance programs and we are fighting hard to preserve the conservation assistance funding that many growers have recently been able to access.

When these bills come forward for a vote in the upcoming months we hope we can count on you to make a few phone calls to your congressional delegates to let them know what issues are most important to your business. Keep abreast of these issues, and all shellfish-related news, by joining the ECSGA online discussion LIST. This is the best method for us to keep you informed of late-breaking news and events. Instructions for joining can be found on our website www.ECSGA.org.

We are making plans for our annual meeting Jan 18/19 in conjunction with the North Carolina Aquaculture Development Conference in Atlantic Beach. Save the date and make plans to attend.

The following week we will be making our annual pilgrimage to DC with our colleagues from the West and Gulf Coasts. Our Congressional visits are most effective when we can bring growers with us from several states, so we are always seeking new participants. Our annual Congressional reception (1/23) grows bigger (and more expensive) each year and we are seeking sponsors to step up to support this important event.

With all of this progress on the political front, I fear we have not been doing enough to boost our membership ranks. We are an association of members and we cannot function without your support. We need to expand our membership, and the best way to do that is to ask existing members to recruit new members. Please pass this newsletter on to a colleague and ask them to join. Together we can have a real impact.

May all your shellfish be fat and all the hurricanes blow out to sea. *Bob Rheault*

NOAA Hosts 2007 National Marine Aquaculture Summit

On behalf of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, NOAA hosted the 2007 National Marine Aquaculture Summit on June 26-27, 2007, in Washington, D.C. At the Summit, over 200 national business leaders, policy experts, government officials, and researchers from across the nation exchanged ideas and made recommendations on how the United States can join the global aquaculture community and accelerate the integration of domestic aquaculture into domestic seafood

production efforts. The Summit also focused on specific action items including legislation, regulation, research and development initiatives, economic incentives and investment programs, and scientific research priorities to address public policy issues. Additional information, including a complete transcript of the meeting, is available on the summit website – <http://www.Aquaculture2007.noaa.gov>.

House Holds Hearing on Offshore Aquaculture Bill

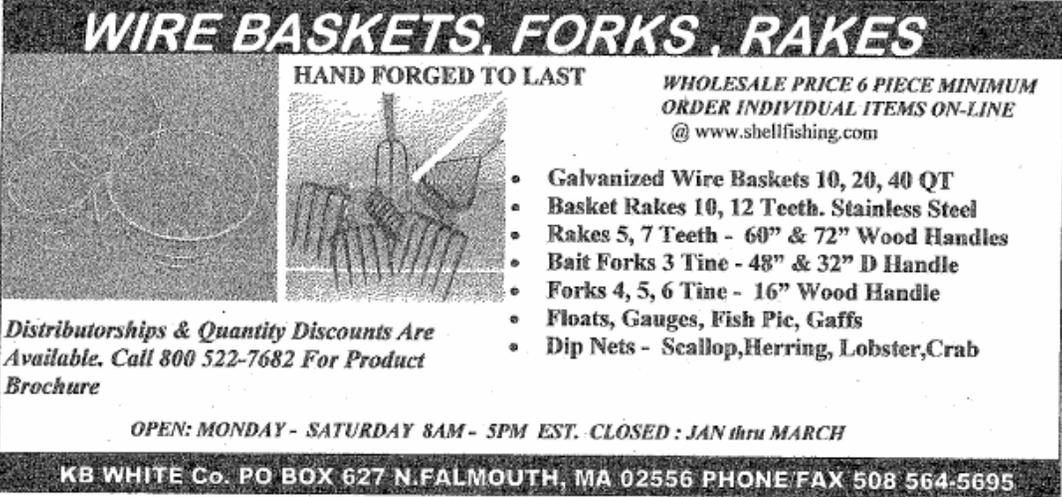
On July 12, 2007, NOAA Administrator Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher testified on behalf of the Administration at a legislative hearing on the 2007 National Offshore Aquaculture bill [H.R. 2010]. Held by the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, the hearing was chaired by Del. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU), and included Congressman Henry Brown, Jr., (R-SC), Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA), and

Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega (D-AS). In addition to the Vice Admiral, the witnesses included Dr. Randy MacMillan of the National Aquaculture Association, Sue Aspelund of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Tim Eichenberg of the Ocean Conservancy, and author Richard Russell. Opening statements and testimony from the hearing have been posted to the committee's website. For a copy of the bill and other background information, go to: www.aquaculture.noaa.gov.

Pay Your 2007 Dues On-line

The ECSGA urges you to pay your 2007 dues on-line. We use a company called Count Me In (CMI) to provide on-line membership services, including the ability to pay your 2007 dues with a credit card or check. If you are not yet a member, you can join on-line as well. Our website has the information you need to use the

CMI system. Log on to <http://www.ecsga.org> and at the top of the home page you will find the link you need to pay dues or to join up. If you prefer, you can still join or pay dues the old fashioned way, and we have provided a membership form and mailing address in this newsletter.



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Nantucket Wine Festival

This year ECSGA harvested \$2000 from the Nantucket Wine Festival. Organizer Denis Toner graciously donated a portion of the ticket proceeds to ECSGA in recognition of our outstanding oyster seminar, quality oysters, and enthusiastic volunteers.

This year saw two improvements for the festival venue. First we were fortunate to pair up with Mike Garvey and Sandy Ingber of Grand Central Oyster Bar for the sold out oyster seminar at the White Elephant Resort on Nantucket's harborfront. Sandy prepared some fantastic Oysters Bienville, Oyster Shooters, and Gazpacho with Oysters as well as a tasting of four raw oysters. The seminar attendees were treated to excellent commentary from Mike Garvey and our growers on the "meroir" of oysters, how they are grown, the benefits of oyster farms, and why everyone should eat more oysters. And Duckhorn Vineyards provided wines paired with each oyster preparation.

The "Grand Tasting" Event this year was held at the Nantucket Yacht Club and ECSGA's booth was certainly a featured location. For the upper-class, we paired up with Veuve Clicquot Champagne and Kerrygold Irish cheeses to offer special tastings in the VIP Room upstairs at the Yacht Club with its private balcony overlooking the harbor.

Thanks to Bob Rheault and his world famous Moonstone Oysters; Skip Bennett and his crew from Island Creek Oysters (served at the White House); Ryan, Travis and Kristi Croxton with their Chesapeake Rappahannock River, Old Salt and Stingray Oysters, Jack Blake and his award winning Martha's Vineyard Sweetneck Farm Oysters, Perry Raso's donation of his fine RI Matunuck Oysters and our hard working Executive Shucker, Ed Rhodes. We hope to see more growers next year join in this fun and productive event.

Macroalgal growth on bivalve aquaculture netting enhances nursery habitat for mobile invertebrates and juvenile fishes

This abstract describes another benefit of shellfish aquaculture: the gear provides nursery habitat for animals such as young fish and crabs.

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ABSTRACT: Destruction and degradation of biogenic nursery habitats, such as seagrass and coral/oyster/polychaete reefs, threaten coastal fisheries worldwide. We tested the hypothesis that macroalgae and epifauna growing upwards from protective plastic mesh used in bottom clam culture substitutes for seagrass as a nursery habitat for mobile invertebrates and juvenile fish. By quantifying biomass of epibiota in each season and by seining both day and night on eleven occasions from August 1997 to April 1999, biogenic habitat structure and habitat use by mobile invertebrates and juvenile fishes were quantified on hard clam *Mercenaria mercenaria* aquaculture leases that were using two alternative grow-out methods and on two natural habitats, a seagrass bed (*Zostera marina* and *Halodule wrightii*) and an unstructured sandflat. The macroalgal/epifaunal biomass per unit bottom area was significantly greater on aquaculture mesh than on the sandflat but did not differ significantly from the natural seagrass biomass density on most sampling dates. Community structure of mobile

invertebrates and juvenile fishes utilizing clam leases was more similar to that of seagrass than sandflat habitats. Community similarity among the structured habitats, the seagrass and the two lease types, was greater than the similarity between night and day within any given habitat. The total numbers of mobile invertebrates summed over all eleven dates were 75 times greater in the seagrass than in the sandflat habitat, whereas the structural habitat provided by epibiota attached to bottom mesh on leases provided a 44-fold enhancement of invertebrates over the corresponding counts on unstructured sandflat. Utilization by juvenile fishes was three times greater in seagrass and three to seventimes greater in epibiota on mesh in clam leases than on sandflat habitat. For example, juvenile reef fishes exhibited almost equal utilization of epibiota on leases and seagrass while remaining absent over the sandflat, which lacked emergent structure. Thus, the biogenic habitat provided largely by macroalgal growth on protective bottom mesh of clam leases supports elevated densities of mobile invertebrates and juvenile fishes similar to that of natural seagrass habitat, thereby representing a previously undocumented ecosystem benefit of bivalve aquaculture. This ecological role for structural habitat rising above clam aquaculture leases is consistent with a broader recognition that artificial reefs, plastic seagrass, oyster shell mounds, and other emergent bottom structures provide habitat services.

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Upcoming Events

52nd Atlantic Fisheries Technologists Annual Conference

November 4-7, 2007
Portland, Maine.

Caribbean & Latin American Aquaculture

November 6-9, 2007
San Juan, Puerto Rico.

30th Annual Meeting of the Seafood Science and Technology Society of the Americas

November 7-9, 2007
San Antonio, Texas.

Virginia Aquaculture Conference

November 16-17, 2007
Williamsburg, Virginia

ECSGA annual meeting

January 18-19, 2008

Atlantic Beach, North Carolina

at the North Carolina Aquaculture
Development Conference.

see www.ncaquaculture.org

Walk on the Hill January 21-25, 2008

(Congressional Reception January 23)

**World Aquaculture Society Aquaculture
America Conference**

February 9 - 12, 2008

Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

Milford Aquaculture Seminar

February 25-27, 2008

location TBD

Seafood conference in conjunction with

**Pacific Fisheries Technologists 59th annual
meeting**

February 3-6, 2008

San Francisco, California.

**The National Shellfisheries Association 100th
Annual Meeting**

April 6-10, 2008

Providence, Rhode Island.

Links to more information are available on the
Upcoming Events page of the ECSGA website.
www.ECSAG.org

Viagra Oysters Don't Arouse Louisiana Oysterman

SFB Staff (June 8) — Eighth-generation Louisiana oysterman Michael Voisin isn't aroused by his Australian counterpart's decision to feed oysters the anti-impotence drug Viagra.

"This is flat out wasteful," said Michael Voisin, owner of Motivaitit Seafood in Houma, La., and chairman of the Louisiana Oyster Task Force. "I don't know what's wrong with the oysters in Australia, but Louisiana oysters are an all-natural aphrodisiac, the gold standard."

Australian oyster farmer George Noble-May made headlines worldwide last week when he began feeding Viagra to oysters to enhance their aphrodisiacal qualities. Noble-May claims tests show that his oysters, marketed under the Sydney Rock Hard Oysters® brand, contain trace amounts of sildenafil citrate, the active ingredient in Viagra. He registered his product as Viagra Oysters, but Viagra manufacturer Pfizer is threatening legal action.

Voisin shipped five dozen Louisiana oysters to Tony Abbot, minister of Australia's Department of Health and Aging.

"A half dozen Viagra costs about \$200, not to mention the doctor visit required to get a prescription," said Voisin, a married father of five. "I can ship five dozen oysters from Louisiana to anywhere in the world for less than that. Heck, I'll even throw in a bottle of Tabasco."

Voisin encouraged men worldwide to eat Louisiana oysters and send the money they would have spent on Viagra to Gulf of Mexico fishing families still recovering from the 2005 hurricanes.

"Despite the grueling rebuilding effort, most oystermen in Louisiana are smiling," said Voisin. "We'll share the wealth if you do."

NRAC Funding for BMPs Arrives

After a couple of attempts to secure funding to work on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for our east coast industry, the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC) has come through. We have just signed the official documents that will provide us with \$220,000 for this project over a two-year period. Since NRAC money can only be spent in states from Maryland northward, we still have a bit of work to do to get a few more bucks to cover our activities on this project for the states from Virginia to Florida and we have a promise from NOAA to do this.

The proposal calls for the development of a Code of Practice, which is a general statement recognizing that we intend to operate our businesses in a manner that takes the environment into consideration. This should be something that we can all agree on, and its adoption by ECSGA members should be pretty straight forward.

The bulk of the project will be to produce a BMP manual that will contain model BMPs that address the various species we grow, and the different methods we employ. The BMPs are more detailed than the Code of Practice and address specific things that a company will do ensure a safe product and contribute positively to the environment. At the end of the two-year project the goal is to have individual companies use the model BMPs to create one for their business.

Our proposal provides funds to hold two workshops in each of 6 locations. The first workshop series will be held this winter, and will bring together our industry and other stakeholders for some initial discussions on what the BMPs should contain, identify key issues and identify strategies to address them. The BMP team will take these comments and formulate a draft Code of Practice and draft BMPs and these will be further refined through a second set of workshops held back in the original locations.

The ECSGA team on this project include Ed Rhodes, Gef Flimlin and Sandy Macfarlane. Almost all of the shellfish extension agents from the east coast states have also agreed to help with this project.

If this process is successful, and it will be with your help, we see substantial benefits to the shellfish industry to adopt BMPs. Adopting BMPs will:

- * lead to an increase in public support of the industry,
- * make it easier to obtain new sites for shellfish aquaculture,
- * minimize additional government regulation and
- * form the basis for a future environmental certification program that could be used to further promote and expand the industry.

Stay tuned to the ECSGA list-serve for information on the workshop schedule. And please attend!

How About Oysters?

Chocolate may be linked to love, but no food has developed more of a reputation for romance than the oyster.

Ancient cultures considered oysters reminiscent of female genitalia in both appearance and texture, leading them to believe that they imparted sexual prowess. Henry Fielding's Tom Jones made the sensuality of devouring oysters unforgettable, and Giacomo Casanova, the eighteenth-century Venetian, reportedly ate dozens of oysters at a time to prepare himself for his legendary assignations.

Consider Casanova's description of feasting on oysters with one of his paramours, Signorina "M.M.," a mistress of the French ambassador to Venice, the Abbe de Bernis, a man so kinky he would often watch from a secret hiding place as Casanova and M.M. made love. "She offered me hers on her tongue at the same time that I put mine between her lips; there is no more lascivious and voluptuous game between two lovers, it is even comic, but comedy does no harm, for laughter is only for the happy. What a sauce that is which dresses an oyster I suck in from the mouth of the woman I love!"

In a word: steamy.

No wonder people have been trying to recreate fits of lovemaking à la Casanova for the last two hundred years. Yet after all this time, the science behind the claim that oysters are the catalyst of passion remains murky.

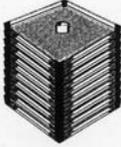
Oysters are high in zinc, and a number of studies have linked zinc deficiencies to impotence and delayed sexual development. Some have found that giving zinc supplements to men who are impotent and have low levels of the mineral can boost their libidos and lead to more frequent sex. But so far no major study has

shown that eating an oyster or two (or a dozen) has any direct impact on arousal in the average person.

One study, conducted by Italian researchers in 2005, came close. It found that Mediterranean mussels contained high levels of two amino acids, D-aspartic acid and N-methyl-D-aspartate, which have been shown to stimulate the release of sex hormones in animals. But the study, though intriguing, had a major flaw: its findings applied only to mussels.

Excerpted from *Never Shower in a Thunderstorm: Surprising Facts and Misleading Myths About Our Health and the World We Live In.* by Anahad O'Connor

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Milford Oyster Festival

For the 3rd consecutive year the ECSGA was a major participant in the Milford (CT) Oyster Festival. The one-day festival, held in August, draws about 100,000 visitors. Our major activity is to set up and operate a raw oyster food booth, and this year we served 10 oyster varieties provided by ECSGA growers. This year we sold 14,400 oysters and made a profit for the organization of nearly \$12,000.

In order to maximize the number of oysters sold, we again invited some of the fastest shuckers in the country to participate in a shucking contest and had them shuck in our booth for the entire day. The festival committee paid 10 shuckers \$250 each to defray their travel costs and to reward them for their labor in the booth! The shucking contest (and a \$1000 prize) was won by Dave Leck from Elliot's Oyster House in Seattle. Second place (\$500) went to Vern Johnson from Maryland and third place (\$250) to Dave Brahimi representing Max's Oyster Bar in Hartford, CT. Dave Leck shucked 24 oysters in 1 minute 58 seconds and picked up just a few penalty seconds in his winning effort. Other notable shuckers in the contest included "Chopper" Young who won last year's contest, Felix Guzman and Louie Iglesias from the Grand Central Oyster Bar, and Gordon Weldon from McGrogan's in Philly.

Our thanks especially to the growers who provided the oysters. These included Cedar Points from Norwalk, CT, Chincoteague Salts, Island Creeks from Duxbury, MA, Salt Works from VA, Moonstone's and Matunuck's from RI, Mystics from CT, Saddlerocks from Delaware Bay, and York River oysters and Olde Salts from VA.

Special thanks to Tom Kehoe from K&B Seafood for providing the refrigerated truck and logistical support that made this all possible.



Professional shuckers and amateur eaters enjoying the Annual Milford Oyster Festival

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**Membership
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Dues Schedule

Gross Sales	Dues
0 to 50K	\$100
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300K to 3M	\$1000
Over 3M	\$1500
Dealers/Suppliers	\$250
Associations	\$10/member
Non-voting	\$35

NB: The best way to join is through Count Me In on the ECSGA web site! www.ecsga.org

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The mission of the ECSGA is to promote responsible commercial shellfish aquaculture through market research and promotion, active involvement in public education, participation in policy formation at the state and national levels, and directed research.

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