1623 Whitesville Rd.
Toms River, NJ 08755
www.ecsga.org

Executive Director
Bob Rheault
(401) 783-3360
bob@ecsga.org

President
Daniel J. Grosse
Vice-President
Alex Hay
Secretary
Steve Plant
Treasurer
Gef Filmlin

Connecticut .... Ben Goetsch
Maine ............ Jeff Auger
Maryland ....... Tal Petty
Massachusetts John Brawley
New Jersey ..... Bill Avery
New York ......... Karen Rivara
North Carolina Jay Styron
Rhode Island ... Jeff Gardner
South Carolina Julie Davis
Virginia .......... Chad Ballard

Equipment Dealer
Johnny Shockley
Shellfish Dealer
Chris Sherman
Ex-Officio
Rick Karney, Leslie Sturmer

The Mouth of the Bay
Our Industry is Maturing

Those of us who have been in this industry for the long haul have borne witness to a remarkable evolution. For intensive growers, the invention of plastics was big. Vinyl-coated wire and extruded mesh made growing shellfish much easier than it was in the early days, when we were essentially running field experiments on feeding crabs. More recently we have seen the introduction of exciting new tools like the OysterGro system, SEAPA baskets and now the Hex-cyl cages (story on page 6).

We have also seen the industry grow and mature. About a decade ago we conducted an industry survey and discovered that 80 percent of shellfish farms had fewer than five employees, and most farmers had just a few years of experience. Back then you could count on two hands the number of farms with more than 10 employees.

If we were to repeat that survey today, I know we would find dozens of farms with significant payrolls, with many headed by grizzled and battle-scarred veterans.

The ECSGA has matured as well. When we started the association in 2004 we were neophytes in the political arena, operating on a shoestring budget, led by a half-time director and a cadre of committed volunteers. We learned how to make ourselves heard in D.C. and developed a reputation for holding excellent receptions and forging strong ties with key representatives.

We came tantalizingly close to achieving some remarkable feats. In 2010 we had a $3-million-a-year USDA Shellfish Breeding Center fall apart when Congress failed to pass a budget. In 2013 we came up four votes short on a Farm Bill Amendment that would have granted us specialty-crop status.

Today we still run a lean ship, but now we have a real budget that allows us to weigh in on important legal issues and to hire a professional lobbyist, Matt Mullin, to help us in D.C. (story below) I was deeply gratified to see our members step up to help fund that effort, and I remain optimistic that the investment will pay off and that our association will be able to provide better value for the hard-working members we serve.

For over a decade we have been organizing annual trips to D.C. to educate our elected representatives about the issues that impact our community. Our allies in Congress have told us we’re doing a good job, but if we want to be really effective we need to make ourselves seen more than just once a year. Congressional staffers are swamped with requests, and it’s crucial that we keep pushing to get our issues back to the top of the pile or they will simply get buried.

This year the ECSGA board decided to hire professional lobbyist Matt Mullin of High Street Strategies to help us advance several issues on our legislative priority list. Matt loves our industry and is eager to help us get legislation passed this year to address our top issues. He has many years of experience working with watermen and NGOs in the Chesapeake Bay region under his belt.

Here are the top issues:

1. Clarify language to exempt shellfish farmers working in state waters from the requirements of the Jones Act.
2. Define farmed shellfish as specialty crops under the Farm Bill.

The ECSGA has hired professional lobbyist Matt Mullin to keep our top issues on the front burner with members of Congress.

The ECSGA is Stepping Up to Improve Your Bottom Line

I know you’re busy, but this is important.

For over a decade we have been organizing annual trips to D.C. to educate our elected representatives about the issues that impact our community. Our allies in Congress have told us we’re doing a good job, but if we want to be really effective we need to make ourselves seen more than just once a year. Congressional staffers are swamped with requests, and it’s crucial that we keep pushing to get our issues back to the top of the pile or they will simply get buried.

This year the ECSGA board decided to hire professional lobbyist Matt Mullin of High Street Strategies to help us advance several issues on our legislative priority list. Matt loves our industry and is eager to help us get legislation passed this year to address our top issues. He has many years of experience working with watermen and NGOs in the Chesapeake Bay region under his belt.

Here are the top issues:

1. Clarify language to exempt shellfish farmers working in state waters from the requirements of the Jones Act.

Although growers in different states are impacted by the Jones Act differently, many of our members report that Jones Act seamen’s insurance is outrageously expensive. We believe that our employees are better covered under standard workers’ compensation policies. Growers should not be forced to pay more simply because a 55-year-old statute designed to protect mariners on the high seas can be interpreted to apply to aquaculture employees working in inshore waters in certain states. We are optimistic that we can pass clarifying language that exempts shellfish farmers operating in state waters.

2. Define farmed shellfish as specialty crops under the Farm Bill.

In 2013 we came up four votes short of attaining specialty-crop status. By including other aquaculture crops in addition to shellfish, we have high hopes that we will garner the support needed to get it done in the 2018 Farm Bill. This revenue-neutral change to the specialty-crop definition should bring us better crop insurance as well as access to small, state block grants for marketing and research. The promise of effective and workable crop insurance makes this a very worthy goal!

3. Resolve the European Union trade embargo.

Matt has some ideas about how we can apply congressional pressure on the FDA to finally act on the EU trade issue. The FDA has been dragging their heels on this for far too long.

— Continued on page 13
It’s that time of year again! Planning is already underway for the 43rd annual Milford Oyster Festival on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 18-19, when we hope to serve more than 45,000 oysters and clams to an eager crowd. The festival is our biggest fundraising effort of the year, with the proceeds fueling almost 40 percent of our annual operating expenses, but we can’t pull this off without the help of about 100 volunteers. We work hard, but we also have a lot of fun, which is why we have a dedicated crew that comes back year after year. We have jobs for all levels of ability, so even if you cannot commit to a full day, we would really appreciate any time you can give us.

The festival is also a great opportunity to connect with other growers, gear suppliers and scientists from the Milford Lab. We have a great team of about 25 paid professional shuckers who come from up and down the coast to compete for $1,750 in prize money. If you know someone who is handy with an oyster knife, we are always looking for new entrants. If anyone needs a room for the night, let us know, as we have reserved a block of inexpensive rooms at a local hotel. If you would prefer to come by train to avoid the parking hassles, the Milford Metro North train station is only two blocks from our tent!

At our large booth located in the food court area we serve raw and cooked shellfish on Saturday. Across the harbor at Lisman Landing, we have raw-bar and chowder offerings at the pre-festival “Oyster Eve” on Friday evening and again all day Saturday. And of course, we organize the now-famous Oyster Shucking Contest, inviting some of the world’s fastest shuckers to compete for bragging rights and those ever-popular cash prizes.

The festival will be held, rain or shine, Friday, Aug. 18, 6-9:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Aug. 19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Beer, wine, oysters and other great food will be available both days. Admission to the festival is free, with the band Blackberry Smoke headlining at the festival main stage on Saturday. There is plenty to do for everyone, with children’s entertainment, an antique car show, 200 arts-and-crafts vendors, amusement rides, schooner cruises, and a canoe and kayak race.

Hope to see you there!

For more information visit www.milfordoysterfestival.com

If you can help out for any part of the festival, please contact Trisha Kosloski, (203) 804-4263 or trisha.kozloski@yahoo.com

©2016 PETER HVIZDAK /THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER

The shucking contest is always a horse race. Last year we had 28 professional shuckers come from as far away as Toronto and New Orleans and everywhere in between, and 19 of them competed. Only 11 seconds separated first place from third place. Shuckers are judged on speed and presentation. Points are deducted for not placing the oyster on the shell properly; presenting an oyster on a broken shell, or with grit, blood or another foreign substance on the flesh; a cut oyster; an oyster not completely severed from its shell.
Expensive Rookie Mistakes You’ll Want to Avoid
by Robert Rheault, ECSGA Executive Director

Recently I was talking to a grower who had been in the business for 15 years, but had just made a common rookie mistake. He had received a shipment of 2 million, 1-mm seed and he placed a portion of them into 1-mm spat bags. When he noticed that many were “escaping,” he assumed that the hatchery had shipped a smaller size and called to ask for my advice. My first question was whether the hatchery had sold him seed that was 1 mm in length or seed that had been retained on 1-mm mesh.

I reminded him that 1-mm mesh actually has an opening that measures 1.4-mm on the diagonal. To retain seed that are 1 mm in length you need to use mesh that is 0.6 mm (600um) or smaller! This is true if you are talking about upwellers, spat bags or larger mesh bags.

Hatcheries sell seed that is measured in several different ways, so you need to know exactly what you are getting to avoid repeating this costly mistake. Some hatcheries sell seed that is measured by length — typically the longest axis. For an oyster, the width is about 2/3 the length, so a 3-mm long oyster will be about 2 mm wide; you need to put it on a 1.5-mm mesh “pet screen” if you want to avoid losses.

Some hatcheries sell seed that is retained on a certain mesh size — pretty self-explanatory. Hatcheries sell seed that is measured in different ways, so you need to know exactly what you’re getting to avoid making an expensive mistake. Seed sold as 1 mm in size is very different from seed that is retained on 1-mm mesh.

Oftentimes referred to as R-1 or 1-R for seed retained on 1-mm mesh. I would still recommend putting this seed on mesh that is less than 1 mm, just to be on the safe side.

The same holds true if you are talking about larger seed. If you have oyster seed that measures ½" in length, you cannot put it into a ½"-mesh bag! Especially with oysters, you need to focus on the sieve size that you are sorting on — not the length! And even if you are sieving on ½" mesh you should not put those oysters directly into ½"-mesh bags because many will fall partway through the mesh. Then in a few weeks they will grow into the mesh of the bags and you will need to kill them to get them out. To avoid problems, I recommend using a sieve with an opening 1.5 times the mesh size of the bags you are going into.

This is one of the most common and most expensive mistakes I see new growers make. To avoid other common mistakes (and to save yourself cash and frustration) I recommend spending a few minutes checking out the PowerPoint presentation on Rookie Mistakes in the What’s New box on the ECSGA home page. Or you can link to it directly here: drive.google.com/file/d/0B2jok7eNYTUyaFlsWU1LRmRScVk

Looking for a job? Want to buy or sell seed? ECSGA- SWAPMEET is the LIST for you!

In an effort to keep the main Listserv relevant for folks interested in issues, growing tips and news you can use, please refrain from cluttering it up with job inquiries and “looking for seed” requests.

Use the new ECSGA-SWAPMEET list instead.

To subscribe visit http://listserv.uri.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=ECSGA-SWAPMEET&A=1

MOOK SEA FARMS

4Cs Breeding Technologies, Inc.

Triploid Technology for the Oyster Industry

BROOKS TRAP MILL & MARINE SUPPLIES
1- 800- 426- 4526
Portland, ME ~ Thomaston, ME ~ West Bath, ME
brookstrapmill.com

AQUAMESH®
The Brand You Can Trust

Riverdale Mills has been the industry leader in welded wire mesh solutions for the aquaculture industry since 1980 and continues to deliver products of unsurpassed quality to clients around the world.
Plastics: We Can’t Live Without Them, but a Backlash is Brewing

by Robert Rheault, ECSGA Executive Director

Back in the April issue of this newsletter I wrote that I feared plastics could become the next battleground for our industry. That fear has become a reality faster than I ever thought possible. I recently spoke with a PhD candidate who was planning to do her thesis on the potential impacts of microplastics on shellfish and shellfish larvae. I told her that while I found her question interesting, I was really afraid of her results being taken out of context by the media. Whether her results reveal that microplastics are bad for shellfish, or are simply another inert particle in the water that shellfish have to deal with, I predict we will soon be reading articles in the news titled, “Yech, plastic in my shellfish.”

As plastic waste in the ocean gets more and more national attention, we have already seen aquaculture opponents using it as one more bludgeon in their arsenal, claiming that aquaculture adds to the plastic debris in the ocean. We really need to stay ahead of this issue by making sure our gear is strapped in tight and we take every precaution possible to ensure that debris is not washing up on beaches.

Microplastics and plastic debris represent two ends of the spectrum of sizes of plastic waste. Microplastics are under 2 mm and come from laundering fleece clothing and from the in toothpaste and cosmetics, but also come from a vast majority of plastic debris in the world’s oceans comes from less-developed countries lacking in proper waste collection, disposal and recycling infrastructure. In nations where millions struggle just to survive and feed their families, people care less about where their trash ends up. An estimated 82 percent of the world’s marine plastic debris comes from Asia, while less than 2 percent comes from the U.S. and Europe. (www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications/the-new-plastics-economy-rethinking-the-future-of-plastics)

Of the 78 million metric tons of plastic produced annually, only 14 percent gets recycled, 14 percent is burned, 40 percent ends up in landfills and 32 percent winds up strewn about land or in the water. An estimated 8 million tons of plastic packaging and debris ends up in the oceans every year.

So what can we do? If the problem lies primarily in Asia, it would make sense to spend resources there in order to maximize our impact. However, the sense of outrage is coming mainly from the developed world, so even though we in the developed world are responsible for less than 2 percent of plastic waste, we will be expected to clean up our act as well.

As we work in the marine realm, any marine debris that we generate will draw fire from environmental groups. I maintain that as stewards of the waters we farm it is our responsibility to make sure our plastics don’t get away. We can minimize the use of cable ties and other plastics that are prone to escaping. We can look for alternatives to plastics made from natural fibers and biodegradable materials. The fact remains that the invention of plastics (vinyl-coated wire, extruded-polystyrene mesh bags and injection-molded containers) is what has made the evolution of shellfish farming possible in the first place. Perhaps the best we can do is participate in regular, visible and public beach clean-ups around the areas we farm.

On a macro-level we can urge policy makers to phase out microplastic beads in cosmetics and toothpaste, and push industry to accelerate the development of compostable and degradable packaging solutions. Replacing styrofoam insulation used in packaging seafood is an especially vexing challenge. Eventually, the MacArthur Foundation report suggests, we will need to create financial incentives to increase recycling alternatives and to develop a sustainable, circular economy for plastics.

Meanwhile, the issue continues to gather steam and generate outrage. Fishermen and shellfish farmers, being visible workers on the water, are a prime target, but denial is not an effective strategy. We need to be seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem. I know that we regularly “harvested” buckets of other peoples’ trash from our lease every time we dragged a dredge. Let’s make sure everyone sees us as good neighbors in the commons. And brace yourself for that inevitable conversation when someone says to you, “Ewww, oysters. I won’t eat them because they have plastics in them.”
ECGSA Membership Categories and Dues

Growers, dealers and equipment suppliers enjoy full voting rights. (If you are both a grower and a dealer simply ask yourself where most of your revenue comes from.) If you don’t fall into one of these industry categories please consider joining as a non-voting associate member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Type</th>
<th>Gross Annual Sales</th>
<th>Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>$0 to 50,000</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>$50,000 to $100,000</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>$100,000 to 300,000</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>$300,000 to 3 million</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grower</td>
<td>Over $3 million</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shellfish Dealers and Equipment Suppliers</td>
<td></td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Ally</td>
<td></td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-voting Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can pay online using PayPal or your credit card on our website [www.ECSGA.org](http://www.ECSGA.org).
Or you can mail in this form with your check to: ECSGA, 1623 Whitesville Rd, Toms River, NJ 08755.

Name _______________________________________________
Company ___________________________________________
Street Address _______________________________________
City, State, Zip _______________________________________
Email _______________________________________________
Phone _______________________________________________
Member Type and Level*________________________________
* Rest assured your sales information will be closely guarded and will not be shared!

---

Shellfish Diet®

Shellfish Diet® allows us to grow more and larger shellfish

“We use Reed’s algae concentrates to supplement our own live algae production during the times of year when our shellfish are ‘eating us out of house and home.’ It allows us to grow more and larger oysters and clams early in the season before moving them to the nursery.”

— “Barley” John Dunne, Director, East Hampton Town Shellfish Hatchery, Montauk, NY

Order Shellfish Diet to ensure repeatable production results.

© 2016 REED MARICULTURE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. INSTANT ALGAE, ENSURING HATCHERY SUCCESS AND SHELLFISH DIET ARE TRADEMARKS OR REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF REED MARICULTURE INC.
Member Profile

Hoopers Island Now Offers Hexcyl System Shellfish Baskets

Hoopers Island Oyster Aquaculture Co. (HIOC) sells a wide variety of oyster-growing equipment, ranging from setting tanks to final grow-out gear. The newest addition to their product line is the Hexcyl Shellfish Aquaculture System, designed for adjustable longline shellfish farming and other tidal growing applications.

Hexcyl oyster baskets and products are designed to operate in a wide range of grow-out conditions and orientations, in low-, moderate- and high-energy environments. The plastic formula used in the Hexcyl system makes for a sleek basket that can handle the commercial farmer’s rugged use day after day, and the Hexcyl company stands behind all their products with a five-year guarantee.

With so many different oyster-basket options on the market today, farmers must sort through different clips, doors, pivot pins and other add-ons and upgrades. Hoopers Island chose to sell the Hexcyl product line because the upgrades and modifications to the system are already included. The company has packed 25 years of knowledge in a 15-unit box, so farmers can upgrade their oyster leases without hours of researching which items to order. Everything you need comes in the box — doors, clips and body pieces.

The Hexcyl Pro-Series shellfish baskets earned design recognition at the 2017 Australian Good Design awards — the culmination of 10 years of design excellence. After an extensive evaluation process involving more than 35 Australian and international design experts, the jury picked only the top entries to receive the award, praising the Hexcyl system as, “a brilliant example of innovative design and engineering — this is about as good as it gets.”

Hexcyl Systems debuted in 2006, 10 years or so after the adjustable-longline oyster-farming method was first invented by three pioneering oyster farmers from Cowell in South Australia: Ritchie Baker, Tony Shutz and Geoff Turner (BST Oysters). Pacific oyster growers in many regions in South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales were strong proponents of the adjustable longline system for growing hatchery-reared, single-seed oysters.

This new intertidal farming method quickly gained immediate popularity down under because it yielded consistently high-quality oysters. In addition, the adjustable feature of the longlines enabled farmers for the first time to rapidly and efficiently raise and lower the growing heights of oysters throughout the year, providing an effective on-farm tool to manage shell growth, shell hygiene and meat condition of intertidally-farmed oysters.

Hoopers Island recently welcomed Sean Grizzell to their

---

Features of Hexcyl Shellfish Baskets

- Oyster baskets come in all sizes required for shellfish growth: 3-, 5-, 10-, 15- and 20-mm mesh sizes;
- Patented Hexcyl pivot bank offers multiple attachment positions;
- Attach in linear orientation along the line;
- Attach across two lines approx 600 mm (24”) to 750 mm (30”) apart;
- Access doors at both ends of the basket;
- Positive locking “square axle” feature of the clip when attached to pivot bank;
- Locks when located in the upright operating position;
- Locks when folded down in the storage position for space efficiency;
- Fold-down clips for efficient transport of oyster baskets to and from the farm.

---

HOT AQUACULTURE NEWS!!

Fish Farming News is the aquaculture industry’s national newspaper, devoted exclusively to coverage and the betterment of domestic aquaculture.

Content is geared toward active commercial fish and shellfish farmers, covering all major commercially cultivated species, in freshwater and saltwater, warmwater and coolwater, and both open and closed production systems.

Fish Farming News is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are just $14.95 per year in the US.

---

Member Profile

Hoopers Island Now Offers Hexcyl System Shellfish Baskets

Hoopers Island Oyster Aquaculture Co. (HIOC) sells a wide variety of oyster-growing equipment, ranging from setting tanks to final grow-out gear. The newest addition to their product line is the Hexcyl Shellfish Aquaculture System, designed for adjustable longline shellfish farming and other tidal growing applications.

Hexcyl oyster baskets and products are designed to operate in a wide range of grow-out conditions and orientations, in low-, moderate- and high-energy environments. The plastic formula used in the Hexcyl system makes for a sleek basket that can handle the commercial farmer’s rugged use day after day, and the Hexcyl company stands behind all their products with a five-year guarantee.

With so many different oyster-basket options on the market today, farmers must sort through different clips, doors, pivot pins and other add-ons and upgrades. Hoopers Island chose to sell the Hexcyl product line because the upgrades and modifications to the system are already included. The company has packed 25 years of knowledge in a 15-unit box, so farmers can upgrade their oyster leases without hours of researching which items to order. Everything you need comes in the box — doors, clips and body pieces.

The Hexcyl Pro-Series shellfish baskets earned design recognition at the 2017 Australian Good Design awards — the culmination of 10 years of design excellence. After an extensive evaluation process involving more than 35 Australian and international design experts, the jury picked only the top entries to receive the award, praising the Hexcyl system as, “a brilliant example of innovative design and engineering — this is about as good as it gets.”

Hexcyl Systems debuted in 2006, 10 years or so after the adjustable-longline oyster-farming method was first invented by three pioneering oyster farmers from Cowell in South Australia: Ritchie Baker, Tony Shutz and Geoff Turner (BST Oysters). Pacific oyster growers in many regions in South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales were strong proponents of the adjustable longline system for growing hatchery-reared, single-seed oysters.

This new intertidal farming method quickly gained immediate popularity down under because it yielded consistently high-quality oysters. In addition, the adjustable feature of the longlines enabled farmers for the first time to rapidly and efficiently raise and lower the growing heights of oysters throughout the year, providing an effective on-farm tool to manage shell growth, shell hygiene and meat condition of intertidally-farmed oysters.

Hoopers Island recently welcomed Sean Grizzell to their
Hexcyl Systems

expanded sales team. Sean is well-versed in many aspects of the adjustable longline system and has a great deal of experience with the various adaptations and uses. Sean, Chris Wyer and the entire Hoopers Island team can provide you with all the assistance you need for site evaluation, line orientation and infrastructure set-up.

Garry Seidl brings 25 years' worth of experience in adjustable long-line oyster farming to help you get the best results from this farming method. The requirements of intertidal oyster farming that will produce both continuity and consistency of high-quality oysters for the high-end, half-shell market are the same world over — only the environmental conditions, site locations and farming methods vary.

Most farmers are looking for help in planning where and how to set up and establish their farming infrastructure. The following information can help us help you with that task:

1. Google map of growing area showing location of proposed site;
2. description of seabed substrate (seagrass, firm sand, soft mud, rocks, etc.);
3. profile (flat, sloping, undulating, etc.);
4. depth of substrate;
5. minimum and maximum tidal range;
6. water flow rates across the site (knots per second);
7. exposure to wind-generated wave energy (high/low/moderate) — is the site protected or exposed?
8. predominant wind directions (max/min wind strengths, if known); and
9. annual temperature range of water and air.

Farmers can achieve maximum growth using this information. The Hexcyl system is also perfect for plug-and-play applications. Some farmers set poles, line and the Hexcyl System and let Mother Nature take care of the rest!

Testimonials

“We have worked very closely with Sean Grizzell (Hoopers Island) integrating Hexcyl basket systems into our overall grow-out methods with very good results — other local farmers are now adapting Hexcyl baskets into their farms after seeing how they work on our farm.”

—Harvey Cataldo, Bluff Hill Cove Oyster Farm

“We've been dealing with HIOAC for the past two months. In that two months, Sean Grizzell has been to my farm twice and is always available when I call him. The sample baskets that HIOAC provided exceeded my expectations. The quality, durability, and price made my decision to outfit my new farm with Hexcyl gear a no-brainer. I've had nothing but positive remarks for HIOAC and especially Sean Grizzell.”

—Hugh McClure, Point Aux Pins Oyster Farm

— Continued from page 6

Hexcyl Systems

Oyster baskets come in mesh sizes of 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 mm to accommodate all stages of oyster grow-out.

Oyster baskets have doors on both ends for easy access.

www.hexcylsystems.com.au

We Need Your Help!

Please lend a hand to help at the Milford Oyster Festival
Friday—Saturday
Aug. 18–19, 2017
(cleanup on Sunday, Aug. 20)
Earnings provide vital funds for ECSGA’s operating budget.
Contact Trisha Kozloski, trisha.kozloski@yahoo.com

Let Allen-Bailey Tag & Label help with all of your Shellfish Tag needs

We will make it easy for you to comply with regulations while maintaining an efficient operation by providing you with your tag, label and fastener needs.

• 4 ½ x 3 Tyvek® Lobster Crate Tags
• Gangs of Tyvek® Tags
• Laser Imprintable, Pinfed, Single, and Thermal Transfer Tags
• Pressure Sensitive Labels
• Diamond Deadlocks
• Recommendations for Compliance with the Food Safety Act

Ron Marley p: (877) 853-0598 f: (877) 369-4442 rmarley@abtl.com www.abtl.com
ECSGA Executive Director
by Robert Rheault,

The Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) meets every other year to debate changes to the Model Ordinance and National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Guide. This year the meeting will be held October 14-19 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. I like to refer to this biennial meeting as “The Superbowl of the shellfish world.” Most people would shudder at the prospect of arguing about regulating shellfish sanitation for six days, but I see this as an opportunity to fix some of the problems with the regulations that rule our businesses. It is incredibly important that this gets done right, since the placement of a comma or the use of the word “shall” vs. “should” can have a huge impact on how these rules impact your operation. This is your chance to speak up and let the regulators know what is working and what isn’t. The system is far from perfect, but at least we have a seat at the table and an opportunity to voice our concerns.

The ISSC has posted the proposals that will be reviewed and voted on at www.issc.org/2017-

biennial-meeting. This year we will be debating 51 new proposals, along with 24 proposals from previous years that were sent back to committee for refinement. The goal of these tweaks to the rules is to improve regulations and to better protect public health. There are dozens of subcommittees slated to meet, including Water Quality Classification, Enforcement, Laboratory Methods, Recall Guidance and many more.

For the past few years most of the work of the ISSC seems to have revolved around Vibrio issues, but new water-quality monitoring techniques have ushered in opportunities to address complicated problems, such as viruses coming out of wastewater treatment plants and harmful algal blooms.

About 500 people typically attend these meetings. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) shows up in force, as do state regulators from every producing state. It is crucial that industry folks attend because the regulators often have blind spots. They may have some idea of what we do and some idea of how to protect public health, but crafting good regulations is difficult work and the law of unintended consequences often rears its ugly head. The more folks who can read these regulatory proposals with a critical eye, the better our chances of making fixes before they get written into regulation.

One proposal in the works is a much-needed rewrite of the entire aquaculture chapter. This should prove to be especially challenging, and I expect some of these discussions may be contentious.

Some of the more important proposals that will be discussed this year include:

13-209 Defines “resubmergence” and sets criteria for reconditioning shellstock to bring Vibrio levels down to background levels after having been kept out of the water to control fouling or other purposes.

17-100 and 17-101 both aim to refine the definition of “marina” to exclude mooring fields under certain conditions.

17-206 is an FDA proposal that would reduce the number of Vibrio illnesses that would trigger closures and recalls.

17-115 would allow the reconditioning of product that had been implicated in a Norovirus outbreak so it would not have to be destroyed.

17-216 is an FDA proposal that would require restaurants to label tags to indicate when product was served, and to store them in chronological order.

17-223 is an FDA proposal that would require land-based, wet-storage operations to conduct a validation study to demonstrate that the process does not increase Vibrio parahaemolyticus levels. This would be so expensive that most wet-storage operations would find it difficult to stay in operation.

There are many more proposals to keep an eye on, including the aquaculture chapter rewrite and older proposals that were stuck in committee that attempt to define seed and regulate sources of seed. These will need to be refined in committee meetings before going back for a vote.

I will attempt to craft a summary of key proposals for circulation on the LISTSERV in the weeks ahead. I have also set up a separate LISTSERV dedicated to discussing the proposals. To sign up for this group visit ECSGA.org, click on the “Join Listserv” button on the top menu, and click on the link to join. From the URI Listserv page select the list name: ECSGA-NSSP-REVIEW and follow the prompts.

Shellfish Grower Insurance
Every state on the East Coast, and more.

- General Liability
- Business Auto/Truck
- Workers’ Comp
- Jones Act
- Marine/Boat
- All Others

BANKERS INSURANCE INC.
Insuring today to ensure tomorrow.

(800) 442-6187  www.BankersInsurance.net
Eelgrass is Great

by Robert Rheault, ECSGA Executive Director

Sixteen years ago I presented a controversial paper at an aquaculture conference titled, Eelgrass is Great, but Shellfish Aquaculture is Better. I have nothing against eelgrass (Zostera spp.), but for decades we have seen it used as a tool to block aquaculture development, and I believe that logic is flawed. For decades eelgrass-protection efforts have stymied shellfish culture projects around the country, most recently threatening to shutter a 65-year-old farm in Humboldt Bay, Calif. (If you want to become enraged check out this article in the American Spectator: spectator.org/california-in-an-oyster-shell)

Everyone loves eelgrass because of the ecosystem services it provides. Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) is even protected in federal law because it serves as essential fish habitat and provides prime nursery grounds for dozens of species of fish and invertebrates.

Some of the other ecosystem services attributed to eelgrass include coastal protection and sediment stabilization, providing food, nitrogen uptake and improving water quality. According to a recent publication (Nordlund et al. 2016*) hundreds of researchers globally have published more than 5500 publications on sea grasses (3000 on Zostera alone) and many scientists have made careers of studying SAV.

I don’t dispute any of this, but I contend that all the reasons why we love eelgrass apply equally to shellfish aquaculture, which provides similar ecosystem services. Our animals filter the water, improving clarity and removing nitrogen, mitigating the symptoms of eutrophication. Our gear (and the shellfish inside) provide wonderful habitat for dozens of varieties of juvenile fish and invertebrates, who love the structure and all the hiding spots as well as all the food they glean from fouling organisms.

A study on my farm compared the populations associated with oyster cages to those in a nearby eelgrass bed and found 10 to 10,000 times as many critters in the oyster cages. Another Rhode Island study revealed that for rocky-reef-associated species, the habitat value of oyster cages was at least as good as restored and natural rocky-reef habitat nearby.

Oyster farmers in Humboldt Bay are under fire from hunters who claim that the oyster farms will cause a 3-percent decline in eelgrass coverage, which will in turn result in unacceptable declines in the population of Pacific black brant geese, which forage for eelgrass during their migration between Mexico and the far North. This has the hunters up in arms against the farm, despite several studies showing that forage opportunities for waterfowl around farms are often enhanced.

I recommend regulating based on the ecosystem services of the proposed project. If an oyster farm is going to displace some eelgrass, chances are that from an ecosystem viewpoint this is not a bad thing. If we can get the regulatory agencies to acknowledge that there is habitat equivalence in the value of eelgrass and shellfish farming, then sustainable seafood production can develop in harmony with nature. I believe we have to find a way to get there, and I will continue to push this rock up the hill. You don’t get to be a shellfish farmer without demonstrating extraordinary persistence.

Zip ties and heat-shrink tubing are not just for wiring anymore.

For more than 30 years, Nelco Products has been a pioneer in supplying cable ties and related wire-management products all over the world. Cable ties, more commonly known as zip ties, have thousands of other uses besides the wire management applications they were originally created for.

In recent years, the fishing and shellfish industries have come under more stringent regulations governing the marking and identification of lines and gear. Cable ties and heat-shrink tubing offer a very affordable and simple solution to complying with those regulations.

**Heat-Shrink Tubing**

Heat-shrink tubing is a multi-purpose product available from Nelco. We were first introduced to the fishing industry when the National Marine Fisheries Service announced the requirements for a color system for identifying buoy lines.

Heat shrink can also be custom printed by Nelco’s in-house custom printing department.

**Cable Ties**

Cable ties are made from weather- and corrosion-resistant materials and come in an assortment of different colors and sizes. They offer easy, fast and economical installation for gear, color coding or to seal harvest bags. Nelco also offers custom hot-stamping on cable ties for personalization.

Located in Pembroke, Mass., Nelco is local to many shellfish aquaculture and fishing businesses, making it simple to accommodate the needs of these industries.

For more information contact Nelco at:

(800) 346-3526

sales@nelcoproducts.com

or visit www.nelcoproducts.com.
Custom-Built Grow Cages and Trays
Any Style, Finished or Kits
1/2, 3/4, or 1" Mesh

OysterGro® Floating Farming System
High Capacity Growing
Maintains Level Position

LoProGrow™ System
For Smaller or Newer Farms
Single Person Maintenance
Removeable Floats

interma® Oyster Bags
Highest Quality Bags Available
Square or Diamond-sealed

OysTube™ Duplex Flip Marine Wire Baskets
With Horizontal Divider
Holds More Oysters

Everything You Need for Aquafarming
Caulking - Snares - Clips - Nets - Floats - Bags - Bags - Gaskets - Augers - Tools - and More...

visit us:
111 Myrtle St. New Bedford, MA 02740

follow us:
@KetchamTraps
Pentair Aquatic Eco-Systems offers solutions and expertise to improve growing conditions in any environment from recirculating aquaculture systems to improving water conditions in pens. Pentair AES can help you improve results in any part of the growing cycle.

Pentair AES employs experts in coldwater aquaculture—pioneers in the industry who earned their knowledge by running operations of their own—to provide the best possible solutions for cold-water aquaculture facilities, from hatcheries to grow-out and everything in between.

From new builds, retrofits or even troubleshooting, Pentair AES has expertise and solutions to help your cold-water operation.

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF AQUACULTURE

Pentair Aquatic Eco-Systems offers solutions and expertise to improve growing conditions in any environment from recirculating aquaculture systems to improving water conditions in pens. Pentair AES can help you improve results in any part of the growing cycle.

In an industry with small margins for error, the importance of quality and reliability can’t be overstated. You’ll find every solution you need, including:

- Biofiltration
- Effluent Treatment
- Influent Management
- Gas Balancing
- Disinfection
- Solids Removal
- Oxygenation
- Water Quality & Movement
- Monitoring & Control

PLEASE VISIT PENTAIRAES.COM FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS AND NEW PRODUCTS

Meet the Newly Elected ECSGA Board Members

Johnny Shockley
Equipment Dealer

Johnny Shockley is a third-generation waterman, born and raised on Hoopers Island, Md. After graduating from high school, Johnny became a fulltime waterman, building his first work boat, The Islander. After harvesting blue crabs, oysters and fish on the Chesapeake Bay for several years, he became intrigued with the opportunities developing around oyster aquaculture.

In 2010, Johnny and Ricky Fitzhugh created Hoopers Island Oyster Aquaculture Company, in hopes of establishing a new industry around sustainable aquaculture in Maryland. Johnny developed a full line of oyster aquaculture equipment, customized to meet the needs of a new industry. He currently captains the Chesapeake Gold, harvesting fresh Chesapeake Gold and Holy Grail Oysters.

To learn more, visit www.hoopersisland.com.

Tal founded Hollywood Oyster Company in 2010, became a full-time oyster farmer in 2013 and produces Sweet Jesus and Hollywood oysters. Tal met his wife, Na, on an oyster farm in Thailand; together they shuck and eat many oysters!

Tal enjoys visiting with other oyster farmers around the state, region and country to share tips, threats and techniques; he believes in the farming ethos of scratching each other’s backs. He is active in the ECSGA, participating in the association’s annual Walk on the Hill in Washington, D.C., to promote legislation focused on aquaculture.

To find out what Tal and Na are currently up to, follow them on social media and visit their website, HollywoodOyster.com.
New Lobbyist Hired

The entire board is very excited to have Matt’s help getting these issues passed in D.C. As executive director I can’t travel to Washington every month, but Matt does this for a living and has established solid relationships in key congressional offices.

Unfortunately, this will put a serious dent in our budget. We are appealing to our members to step up and help achieve our target of $25,000 raised through donations and new memberships.

Please let me know if you can help to recruit a few new members or if you can send in a supplemental donation.

We already have received $19,200, and the ECSGA board has committed to match member donations. The more we raise, the longer we can keep our lobbyist working on our behalf.

We invite you to mail in a supplemental donation today so we can continue to support these important (and expensive) initiatives that have the potential to really improve your bottom line. In the box at right are some of the ECSGA members who have already donated.

Questions? Contact:
Bob Rheault,
(401) 783-3360.
Checks can be mailed to our treasurer at:
ECSGA,
1623 Whitesville Rd.,
Toms River, NJ 08755

Special Thanks to These Members for Their Support of ECSGA Lobbying

Total Donations $19,200
$ 5,000 Chad Ballard, Cherrystone Aqua Farms
$ 4,000 Tonie Simmons, Muscongus Bay Aquaculture
$ 2,500 Island Creek Oyster Co.
$ 2,500 Ocean State Aquaculture Association
$ 2,000 SPAT (Wellfleet Shellfish Promotion and Tasting)
$ 1,000 Ben Lloyd, Pangea Shellfish
$ 500 Alex Hay, Wellfleet Shellfish Co.
$ 500 Bob Ketcham, Ketcham Trap
$ 500 Bill Mook/Jeff Auger, Mook Seafarm
$ 500 Bill Silkes, Salt Water Farms, LLC
$ 200 Nancy Follini and Joe Gilbert, Briarpatch Enterprises, Inc.

We’d love to add you to the list!

Get growing today!

OysterGro® makes aquafarming productive and rewarding.

Proven system
Turnkey operation
Predictable investment
Environmentally friendly
Dedicated support
Profitable results

www.OysterGro.com

FREE CONSULTATION
1(506) 743-5455

Partners in success
Our experts are ready to assist with all aspects of your business, including site selection and growth planning.

3 models to choose from:

OysterGro®
OYSTER FARMING EQUIPMENT
WORLDWIDE SHIPPING

NURSERY TANKS - FLUPSY'S TUMBLER SYSTEMS - 3D GRADERS SEED SORTERS - CAGES

Equipment utilizes the latest technology and as a result increase yields and quality of your oysters. Combining experience and research, all of our equipment has been tested in the field and endures vigorous daily use with great results.

PEARLCEPTION
3-D OYSTER GRADER

2500 Old House Point Road
Fishing Creek, MD 21634
410-397-3664
www.hioac.com
info@hioac.com
chris@hioac.com

Hoopers Island Oyster Aquaculture Co.
Products for Marking & Identifying Shellfish Aquaculture Lines & Gear

Heat Shrink Tubing
Permanent hot stamped markers for gear marking are durable & submersible. Polyolefin heat shrink tubing endures harsh environments such as salt water, fungus and extreme temperatures (-55°C to 135°C).

Ordering Information:
Heat Shrink Tubing: 3/64” to 4” I.D.
Available in bright colors such as orange & yellow for easy visibility and also available in clear to go over printed markers, protecting the print.

Weather Resistant Zip Ties
Zip Ties are weather resistant and offer easy, fast and economical installation for gear, color-coding or to seal bags.

Ordering Information:
Sizes from 4” to 60” Tensile strength 18 lb. to 250 lb.
Ball-lock stainless steel ties are also available.
Custom hot stamping on nylon cable ties is also available.

Contact us for questions, samples or sales inquiries:
Andy Moss, amoss@nelcoproducts.com
800-346-3526 x136

So You Think You Want to Be a Shellfish Farmer…
What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

Permitting agency loses application; opponent lies at nine public hearings; permitting agency loses check (twice); customer doesn’t pay; can’t locate seed; sunburn; delivery truck kills seed shipment on heater; back injury; shellfish allergy; wife leaves you because of inadequate income; finger cut off in winch; slip and fall on ice; skin cancer; laceration; hearing loss; pressure washer injury; diving accident; electrocution; insanity; shucking injury; cataracts; arrested for hiring undocumented workers; boring sponge and/or mud blister renders crop worthless; mass mortality due to disease; oil spill; bookkeeper embezzles funds; “Perfect Storm” destroys gear and smother crop; Cease and Desist Order and fine for conducting “Illegal Aquaculture;” life threatened by imposing fishermen; sick customer sues; Jones Act lawsuit; trucker freezes shipment; break left elbow jumping out of truck; seasonal hypoxia kills crop; trademark abuse; poachers; bad press linking you to illness; argument with regulator leads to repeated violations and expensive legal fees; frostbite; employee sues for sexual harassment; hit a rock (again); boat sinks; near drowning; seaweed smother crop; depression; boat comes loose in a storm damaging expensive yacht; hypothermia; heat exhaustion; tendonitis; shipment lost in transit; replacement shipment lost in transit; cell phone falls overboard (again); infected laceration; hatchery sends wrong species; angry fisherman cuts mooring and marker buoys; restaurant owing you thousands files Chapter 11.