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Oyster Industry EMS Project Launch

OceanWatch Australia, in partnership with the NSW Farmers' Association, has received \$400,000 through the Australian Government's 'Caring for our Country' program, to develop, review and implement Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for the NSW oyster industry. The Southern Rivers CMA (Catchment Management Authority) has also received \$240,000 through the 'Caring for our Country' program to implement an EMS program in their catchment. These projects will complement each other and have been designed to deliver maximum benefits to farmers.

An EMS is a process that allows farmers to identify and manage environmental risks and opportunities that may impact on their business. The process looks at both 'internal' issues (i.e. within shed and lease areas), and also 'external' issues arising from the catchment. Driven by local oyster farmers, the EMS then outlines an action plan to tackle these issues, and improve environmental conditions in oyster producing estuaries. Furthermore, an EMS is a valuable tool that allows the local oyster industry to speak with one voice to achieve common goals.

The EMS project was launched on Thursday 14 April 2011 at Mooney Mooney on the Hawkesbury River, with over one hundred people travelling to the river to attend the event. Among the attendees were top Sydney chefs, local community members, oyster industry representatives and State Government officials, and local councillors, all of whom were treated to a fabulous time tasting oysters, and experiencing a day in the life of an oyster farmer.

The day also celebrated the launch of the Broken Bay Oyster Environmental Management System, as well as the state-wide project being driven by OceanWatch Australia and The NSW Farmers' Association Oyster Committee. Dr Mike Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, was the guest of honour, shucking an oyster to symbolise the official launch of the project.



L-R: Brad Warren, Simon Marnie, Rob Moxham, Dr Mike Kelly, Mark Bulley, Kevin McAsh

oysterupdate

This project is an excellent opportunity for the NSW Oyster industry to support further environmental improvements imperative to the protection and longevity of the oyster industry.

EMS have already been created in the Hastings, Camden Haven, Hawkesbury, Clyde, Wapengo, Merimbula, Pambula & Wonboyn Lakes. Other estuaries developing EMS include Nambucca, Shoalhaven, Tross and Wagonga Inlet.

This EMS project is an excellent opportunity for the NSW Oyster industry to support further environmental improvements imperative to the protection and longevity of the oyster industry.

EMS Grant Applications: NOW OPEN



Across NSW two grants will be available:

- \$100,000 for oyster growers to make environmental improvements to shed & lease areas (capped at \$4,000 per business)
- \$100,000 for land-holders and catchment groups to address water quality issues in oyster producing estuaries (capped at \$4,000 per application)

In Southern River catchments (Shoalhaven to Wonboyn) additional grant funding is available:

- \$150,000 to assist growers who wish to purchase cultivation infrastructure for conversion (e.g. plastic baskets, trays & poles)
- \$50,000 to rehabilitate water quality hotspots in the Pambula catchment

All grant money will be distributed through an 'Expression of Interest' process. For more information, and to express your interest, please contact:

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Oysters Australia

The Oyster Committee is currently considering a proposal for the establishment of Oysters Australia to be the new national body representing oyster growers across Australia. Currently, the NSW Oyster industry's research and development (R&D) is co-ordinated by the Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee (ARAC) and carried out nationally by the Seafood CRC, Oyster Consortium on its behalf. The industry's policy and lobbying is done by the Shellfish Industry Council of Australia (SICOA).

Oysters Australia is proposed to replace both SICOA and the Oyster Consortium, forming a single national body looking after both R&D and policy issues. Having a single streamlined national body to represent the interests and concerns of oyster growers across Australia, means the industry will be 'visible' and will be better able to use its resources. It may also undertake other activities such as marketing and promotion in the future if the industry so wishes.

In Summary, the roles of Oysters Australia include:

- Management of R&D at a national level
- Liaising directly with each State association about R&D priorities and investment
- Communication of outcomes of R&D projects
- Liaising with State based associations on matters of mutual significance
- The potential to move into non R&D activities such as marketing and policy if the industry wishes to invest in these practices

The proposed structure of Oysters Australia is to be:

- Oysters Australia will be comprised of 2 elected representatives from each of the State bodies from New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania
- A grower Chairman will be elected from the State representatives

- Elected representatives may apply observer status to the Queensland oyster industry and any other significant industry bodies.
- An Executive Officer is to be contracted at 0.25 FTE, increasing to 0.375 FTE after 3 years.

Currently, growers pay a R&D levy of \$37.80 per hectare. To fund future R&D for the oyster industry, it is proposed NSW growers will be required to pay \$48.10 per hectare.

The NSW Farmers' Association Oyster Committee believes the Australian Oyster industry will greatly benefit from a national body such as Oysters Australia.

Further information on the implementation of Oysters Australia and the associated levy change will be made available to all members soon.

Mark Bulley appointed to CRM

Mark has been a member of the Oyster Committee for 10 years, of which he was Chairman for 5 years and has recently been appointed to sit on the Conservation Resource Management (CRM) Committee of the NSW Farmers' Association. Mark also sits on the Associations Executive Council, Peak Oyster Advisory Group, Australian Seafood CRC and The Steering Committee for The Caring For Our Country EMS project.

Mark stated *"when the opportunity arose to be part of the NSW Farmers' Executive Council and of late the CRM Committee, I saw this as a major step forward for the Oyster Industry. This provides the Oyster Industry the opportunity to work with other Primary Industries to help solve the issues that impact upon them that could ultimately affect our waterways, because some of their issues today could be ours tomorrow, prevention is cheaper than cure"*.

The CRM Committee deals with issues such as mining, coal seam gas, planning, water and native vegetation across NSW.

"One of the intentions in my quest is to highlight to Government and Community the importance the Oyster Industry has as being an indicator of estuarine health, at the same time, extol the virtues of having an Oyster Industry in their local Estuary because the Oyster Farmers are the sentinels of the waterways. I believe one of the best ways to achieve this is to be active in as many of the Oyster Industry consultative groups as possible. This in turn will keep the regulators honest in maintaining a pollution free environment for all stakeholders and recreational users of the waterways on the NSW coastline", Mark said.

"The biggest issues that I wanted to have completed during my time as Chair of the Oyster Committee were security of tenure with the Foreshore depot sites and the oyster farms, as well as lock in the Shellfish Program Cost Sharing (SPCS) arrangements" Mark outlined.

As committee chair, Mark was heavily involved in the Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy (OISAS). OISAS has given the Oyster Industry the best security up until this time through the State Environmental Planning Policy Number 62 – Sustainable Aquaculture. OISAS is now up for its 5 year review and the Oyster Committee intends to embrace the opportunity to lobby Government to give OISAS more power.

The NSW OISAS is setting a precedent in the World of Aquaculture, and variations from it may soon be seen globally. OISAS is something the Oyster Industry should be proud of.

The first of the Foreshore Depot Sites administered by the Department of Lands had started to expire in the late 1990's. Some sites were given a 5 year interim license in the short term while the Department of Lands sorted through their assessment process. Some areas of concern were those sites that were

being surrounded by urban development and that the Department of Lands were considering a better usage of these areas.

Security was eventually achieved after years of lobbying, with a 25 year term including the option of another 25 year term, as well as the abolition of the security bond for those members of Industry with depot sites.

Mark mentioned *"The final step is to have the Department of Lands include the depot sites into OISAS. This will complete the package and hopefully this will be complete before the end of 2011"*.

The Oyster Committee believes the Oyster Industry should not have to pay to monitor pollution from external sources. Whether it is point or diffuse sourced pollution, it should not be entering estuaries and Oyster growers should not have to suffer the full financial burden.

"The Governments contribution to the SPCS was going to diminish as to where the Oyster Industry was to bear all the costs associated with the program. One of the key issues was the "Polluter Pays Principle". The current standing is that the Government is contributing just under 50% to the SPCS and another 3 year term is in progress" Mark said.

Mark has made a significant contribution to the Oyster Industry. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to protect the Oyster industry and ensure it has a long and productive future in NSW and Australia.

"On the research front, we are lucky to have a great Committee in the Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee (ARAC). Research is fundamental for the future of the oyster industry and we do not want to trudge blindly forward. The Australian Seafood CRC is helping Industry fast track research projects, as well as create greater scope and opportunities through a national network of researchers and scientists. We need to maintain the momentum when Australian Seafood CRC finishes. Government

and Industry funding is paramount for the longevity of the Industry" Mark said

"The development of the Select Oyster Co (SOCo) is a major step in the right direction, and has been a significant contributor to the growth and sustainability of the industry. The option to introduce stock onto the farm at a time that fits the requirements of industry, and to have the choice of stock with special traits that helps growers counter the vagaries of nature and achieve a better bottom line. These benefits have been a significant contributor to the success of the industry. Industry needs to have options to be able to meet the future demands that will be placed upon it" Mark said.

"We are part of a unique industry and it is great to be able to work for, and with, a group who are proud and passionate about their industry" Mark outlined.

"The greatest opportunity I have had in my time on the Oyster Committee is to be able to work with some fantastic people. This includes past and present Committee members, members of the Oyster Industry, members of Government who we have worked shoulder to shoulder with to achieve Industry requests and requirements, as well as those members of the public who are just as supportive and passionate about oysters as we are".

"I take my hat off to those Oyster Farmers who have, and who are, serving on the Oyster Committee, for the hundreds of hours that they donate to the Industry annually".

"I implore the Oyster Industry to support the Oyster Committee members wherever possible. They live busy lives and are willing to sacrifice their time for the longevity of the Oyster Industry. If you cannot support them in a physical way, at least support them through your membership subscriptions, because what they are doing is for the benefit of everyone" Mark stated.

NSW Oyster Field Days and AGM

The NSW Oyster Field Days will be held again this year. The Northern Field Day will be held at Port Macquarie at Port Macquarie Panthers on **Tuesday 20 September 2011** and the Southern Field Day will be held at Batemans Bay at the Catalina Golf Club on **Thursday 22 September 2011**, with the Oyster section AGM in the afternoon.

The Oyster Field Days are one of the premier events on the oyster industry calendar. They provide the oyster industry with an interactive forum, where recent advances in technology and industry issues can be presented and discussed.

Previous field days have seen attendances of well over 100 oyster growers at each event. This year, we are asking all oyster growers to come along and make the day bigger and better than ever.

Following the Southern Field Day, the Oyster Section AGM is a great opportunity for all members to be involved and have a say. The Oyster Committee is encouraging all oyster Members to come along to the AGM and be involved in the proceedings. For those members from the North that may not be able to attend the AGM, there will be a policy discussion session immediately following the Port Macquarie Oyster Industry Field Day on Tuesday 20 September 2011. Members attending the Field Day will be able to appoint proxies to represent their positions at the AGM.

Further details will be available over the coming months for both the Field Days and AGM. If you are a business and would like to have a display at the industry Field Days, please contact Emily Kearns (02) 8251 1825 or kearnse@nswfarmers.org.au

SAVE THE DATES

Oyster Field Days

20 September: Port Macquarie

22 September: Batemans Bay

Oyster Section AGM

22 September (Following
Batemans Bay Field Day)

Oysters in the Ivy

10 November: The Ivy, Sydney

Oysters in the House Ivy

Oysters in the House was held for the first time in 2006 and was a result of the NSW Farmers' Association Oyster Committee wanting to move away from traditional events targeting only the industry, to focusing more on raising the level of promotion of the Sydney Rock Oyster. It was determined that this would be achieved through a promotional / marketing style event that would target Sydney's corporate sector, Government representatives and the industry.

Since its introduction in 2006, Oysters in the House has attracted in excess of 1,000 people from across NSW. Event Manager Kirsty John, attended a committee meeting in April to discuss plans for the 2011 event.

This year, Oysters in the House will be held on **Thursday 10 November 2011** at *The Ivy*, an exclusive venue located in the heart of Sydney. Hence, ***Oysters in the Ivy*** was born. Oysters in the Ivy is a great opportunity to promote the oyster industry and most importantly, encourage people to eat more Oysters!

More information on Oysters in the Ivy will be available over the coming months, so make sure you save the date!

Derelict Oyster Lease Cleanup Project Continues

Ian Lyall, Manager Aquaculture, Department of Primary Industries

The NSW DPI derelict oyster lease clean-up officer has been re-appointed for a further 12 months. Since July 2009, 185 leases (approx 260 Ha) have been removed through a mixture of:

- □ NSW DPI clean-ups funded by Catchment Management Authorities,
- □ Grower initiated clean-ups in line with EMS targets (Clyde River Community Coast Care Grant)
- □ The re-leasing of derelict areas to current farmers (through derelict lease offers and other incentives) and
- □ NSW DPI compliance action.

NSW DPI has employed contractors to undertake clean-up work and have successfully taken action to recover costs against two growers. Action against a third grower is now with a debt collection agency. Chasing growers to meet their clean-up obligations will be a focus for the clean up officer over the next twelve months.

Changes to I&I NSW

Ian Lyall, Manager Aquaculture, Department of Primary Industries

Following the recent State Election, Dr Richard Sheldrake has been appointed Director-General Primary Industries. Within Primary Industries the Fisheries division has been re-established that incorporates aquaculture/commercial/recreational management, conservation, research, compliance and Marine Parks. The former Principal Director, Fisheries and Compliance, Mr Paul O'Connor has accepted a new position of Director of Policy and Strategy with the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. The new position of Principal Director, Fisheries will be filled by Dr Geoff Allan. Geoff will take this role on an acting basis and will be based at Port Stephens.

Tender of aquaculture leases

Ian Lyall, Manager Aquaculture, Department of Primary Industries

Oyster leases were offered by tender in September 2010 and March 2011. In total, 18 tenders were received for 10 leases of which 9 were granted over approximately 16 hectares of ground. The new tender process addresses issues raised by industry about notification and realising the true value of leases offered. One recent tender was rejected, as it failed to meet tender standards. The next scheduled tender of aquaculture leases is September 2011. You may submit an application for an aquaculture lease at any time during the year and you will not be required to pay the application fee at that time. Only the successful tenderer/applicant pays the application fee. Lease application forms and the aquaculture lease allocation policy are available on the Fisheries website.

See

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture

Contact: Aquaculture Administration (02) 4982 1232

Classifieds

CIRCULAR WEIGHT GRADER FOR OYSTERS

KW Automation

\$10 000

Contact John – (02) 4447 1226

OYSTER FARMING BUSINESS SALE WALLIS LAKE

22 Ha of leases comprising of two tray/fattening leases with holding capacity of over 3000, 8 foot trays. One of these leases is in the most sought after area in Wallis Lake. Stick leases with various ages of stock.

Currently 11000 sticks in catch and 6000 slats. Comes with 2300 sq meter block with shed 50 bag tank, 12 ton loader, 3 ton fork, 11 metre aluminum punt, 5 metre aluminum punt and associated gear. \$750.000

Also can split up leases for part sale for a going concern operation, this to be negotiated.

Call Trevor Dent 0411 209 290 or (02) 65556540.