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Caring For Our Country- funding applicaton

Throughout much of 2010 the Oyster Committee has been working closely with Oceanwatch Australia (the Proponent), the NSW Food Authority, Industry and Investment NSW, and CMA's from around the State in putting together an application for funding under the Caring for our Country program.

The application advocates an industry driven, state wide project for Oyster Environmental Management Systems (EMS). It aims to focus industry and CMA efforts and resources into a cohesive stimulation of the EMS landscape, reaching at least one third of oyster producers in NSW.

The project, if successful, is centred on the employment of a dedicated project officer who will be responsible for:

- Conducting an audit of the NSW Oyster EMS landscape.
- Identifying opportunities to create EMS for those producer/groups not previously engaged.
- Providing incentive grants for internal & external works targeted at mitigating environmental issues highlighted within the individual risk assessments.
- Conducting a review of mitigation actions highlighted in risk assessments.
- Encouraging producer groups to form estuarine landcare groups and form estuary wide business collaborations

The Oyster Committee believes that this type of project, should it be funded, would result in an improvement in understanding of environmental stewardship responsibilities amongst industry, leading to improved management of the risks identified by the EMS process.

Should the project receive funding under the Caring for our Country program, the Oyster Committee will continue to work closely with Oceanwatch and other stakeholders to ensure that the project delivers the best possible outcomes for the NSW Oyster Industry.

oysterupdate

South Coast Flooding

Another major flooding event has occurred recently, this time in the far South Coast of NSW. In Wapengo and other areas of the Bega Valley the event is being called a 1 in 100 year flood.

Members in Wagonga, Tuross, Pambula and Wapengo have received high levels of damage, in some cases well in excess of \$100,000 of lost infrastructure and stock.

The Association is appealing to any Members or Infrastructure Suppliers that may be able to assist affected growers to contact Richard Widows on (02) 8251 1808 or widowsr@nswfarmers.org.au

Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Oyster Committee Meeting

The NSW Farmers' Association Oyster Committee met in Sydney on 29 March 2010. Some of the key items on the agenda for discussion included:

- Caring for our Country application

As discussed above.

- Marketing

The Committee discussed the need for a standard Sydney Rock Oyster grading system. This is an issue that the Committee has been looking at for over a year now and there was general consensus that something tangible needs to be forthcoming.

The Committee agreed to work on two separate marketing tools, one aimed at processors in the form of a grading chart, the other aimed at consumers in the form of a wall mountable information poster.

The Committee hopes to have a recommended grading chart out to industry for use by mid 2010. It is important to note that this chart will be voluntary and it will be up to growers to decide whether or not

it is something that would suit their marketing needs.

- Triploid Pacific SWOT analysis

The Oyster Committee has been developing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis on the introduction of Triploid Pacific Oysters into NSW estuaries. The idea is that this document will aid in discussions that the Oyster Committee is aware are going on in various parts of the State that are considering growing Triploid Pacific Oysters.

The Oyster Committee agreed to send this document out to Branches for discussion and comment prior to making it available to the entire membership. This SWAT analysis is completely neutral and has a sole purpose of ensuring that as many questions as possible are raised before large investments are made.

- Pricing

The Oyster Committee invited representatives from the ACCC to attend the meeting to discuss the legal requirements for making price recommendations to Members. Geoff Williams, General Manager Enforcement Relations NSW, and Martino Santi, Small Business and Outreach Manager NSW attended the meeting.

ACCC representatives explained to the Committee that under the Trade Practices Act there used to be an exemption for oyster growers to collective bargain, or set a price. It was believed that this agreement would have expired around 20 years ago, probably during the late 1980's to early 90's.

It was explained that the ACCC no longer provides exemptions around price setting and instead there are now 'cartel provisions' that provide potential to set price. The Oyster

Industry would have to seek an authorisation to allow any form of recommended pricing. But, the key factor in any Cartel agreement is that it must demonstrate that the public would benefit from this arrangement.

The Committee agreed that it would be very difficult to demonstrate public benefit in this instance and, therefore, that there is little that the Committee can do in this regard. In light of this information, the Committee agreed to re-publish Production Report figures as well as the Consumer Pricing Index (CPI) figure for information.

FRDC Scholarships and Bursaries – Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development

Each year as part of its People Development Program, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) offers a suite of programs, scholarships and bursaries to build the leadership, technical skills, networks and knowledge of the Australian seafood industry. In line with this investment, applications are now open for the following scholarships and bursaries:

FRDC & SEA Agribusiness Executive Scholarships

The FRDC, through Seafood Experience Australia (SEA), is offering two scholarships for members of the seafood industry to participate in a Monash University Agribusiness Executive program. These week-long programs focus on current issues within the food and meat industries, providing insights into key consumer and retail trends, marketing and brand management, and business development. Winners will receive up to \$5,500 in support from the FRDC, which will help cover the cost of

program instruction, accommodation costs, all meals, books and associated supplies.

The 2010 Peter Dundas Smith Scholarship

The 2010 Peter Dundas Smith scholarship provides an opportunity for an individual from the recreational or indigenous fishing sectors to undertake a personalised and supported program to further develop their skills, knowledge and networks. The scholarship focuses on improving the recipient's ability to contribute as a leader in their chosen field. Winners will receive up to \$10,000 in support. Past scholarship winners have used the scholarship to attend international conferences, meet with sector industry experts and develop innovative new business tools. The Scholarship rotates on an annual basis between the commercial and recreational/indigenous fishing sectors.

The FRDC Indigenous Development Scholarship

An annual scholarship is offered by the FRDC to an indigenous person who seeks to help shape the social and economic future of their community through engagement with the fishing industry. The scholarship winner will have the opportunity to undertake a program of development that may include mentoring, study or training, work placements and visits with Indigenous development organisations, fisheries management organisations or government departments. The winner of the Scholarship will receive up to \$10,000 through a scholarship host organisation.

The FRDC Emerging Leader Governance Scholarship

The Emerging Leader Governance Scholarship provides a unique opportunity for an emerging, or new, industry leader to undertake the Australian Institute of Company Director's (AICD) Company Directors Course. The Course is recognised as the

definitive program for company directors in Australia. The Scholarship is valued at up to \$15,000. For more information about the AICD and the Company Directors' Course, please see <http://www.companydirectors.com.au/default.htm>

The FRDC Governance Scholarship for Women

The FRDC Governance Scholarship for Women provides a unique opportunity for a female member of the fishing industry to undertake the Australian Institute of Company Director's (AICD) Company Directors Course. The Scholarship recognises the important role that women play in the fishing industry and the continuing need to build the leadership and representative capacity of women in Australia's primary industries. The Course is recognised as the definitive program for company directors in Australia. The Scholarship is valued at up to \$15,000.

FRDC International Travel Bursaries

The FRDC offers four annual international travel bursaries to support individuals to undertake professional development travel. Applications for the bursaries are sought from all fishing industry sectors (commercial, recreational and indigenous); the research community; education and extension organisations; and management agencies. Activities may include attendance at international conferences, industry study tours, international work experience and other opportunities for personal or professional development. FRDC support will be up to \$6 000 per bursary.

FRDC Visiting Experts Bursaries

The FRDC annually offers two competitive annual bursaries to help support international experts to travel to Australia to engage with the local fishing industry, researchers and fisheries managers. Applications for the bursaries are sought from all fishing industry sectors (commercial, recreational

and indigenous); the research community; education and extension organisations; and fisheries management agencies. FRDC support will be up to the value of \$10, 000, with any additional costs to be provided for by industry or research partners.

Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships

The FRDC offers an annual sponsorship to help support a member of the fishing industry to participate in the prestigious Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship program. Scholarships are awarded to primary producers throughout Australia and seek to increase the practical business/industry knowledge and management skills of the scholarship winners. The scholarships give Australian citizens the opportunity to study progressive primary production practices throughout the world. For more information about Nuffield, please visit their website at: <http://www.nuffield.com.au/>

The FRDC WINSC Professional Development Scholarship

An annual scholarship is offered by the FRDC through the Women's Industry Network, Seafood Community (WINSC). The scholarship provides a unique opportunity for a female member of WINSC to undertake a personalised professional development program. Winners of the FRDC WINSC Professional Development Scholarship will receive up to \$6,000 through WINSC. For more information about WINSC and the Award, please visit the Women's Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSC) website at: <http://www.winsc.org.au/>

Further information about the awards (including information on how to apply) can be found at: <http://www.frdc.com.au/communitypeople/scholarships>

Closing Date for Applications

Anyone interested in applying will need to hurry as applications for the majority of the FRDC scholarships and bursaries close at **5pm on Friday, 30 April 2010**. The two exceptions to this deadline are the Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarships, which will close **on 30 June 2010**, and the WINSC Professional Development Scholarship, which will close in **August or September 2010** (see the WINSC website for more information on the closing date).

Carnivorous Sea Snail

A chance observation by far south coast NSW oyster farmer and university student, Sam Rodely, has revealed a silent combatant in the war against wild caught invading pacific oysters in NSW estuaries.

While grading wild caught juvenile Sydney Rock Oysters on the Rodely family's leases, it was noticed that in some cages, a large proportion of the Pacific Oyster by-catch had perished, whilst the Sydney Rock Oysters were left largely untouched. This was particularly apparent as the cages contained over 1000 Sydney Rock Oysters and less than 20 Pacific Oysters.

A small (approx. 1-3cm) carnivorous sea snail was found to be responsible for the Pacific Oyster mortality. This sea snail, *Bedevea hanleyi*, which is widespread on the NSW coastline, gains access to oysters by drilling a small hole through their shell and inserting an organ called a proboscis with which it feeds upon the flesh, killing the oyster. The sea snail (which are common at the Rodely's catching leases) had originally entered the cages when the wild caught spat was removed from the catching slats.

With the supervision of Associate Professor Andy Davis, from the University of Wollongong, Sam ran

feeding trials in the university's marine laboratories, where both Sydney Rock Oysters and Pacific Oysters were offered to the carnivorous snail. This research supported the observations made on the oyster leases, again finding a strong feeding preference for the Pacific Oyster. This discovery is particularly interesting, as *B. hanleyi* may in fact be restricting or slowing the invasion of the Pacific Oyster in NSW estuaries.

Sam is anxious to hear from other farmers who have noticed either *B. hanleyi*, or the egg case, which it often leaves on oyster shells. Sam would be particularly interested in any observations that other farmers may have made on the activities of *B. hanleyi*.

Sam is also contemplating some research on Mudworm with a view to a more accurate prediction of the timing of the infestation period of their lifecycle. He would like to hear from other farmers who might be interested in this research. Sam can be contacted by email: srodely@gmail.com

Classifieds

FOR SALE

- Oyster Business Manning River
- 8 Leases in total
- All single seed ranging from caught slats through to plate oysters
- All plastic trays & baskets
- Oystex computer grader, shaker grader, pumps ECT
- Plus much more equipment
- 1x 30ft punt with hydraulic crane & 90hp Honda
- 1x 20ft punt with manual lifting gear & 50hp Honda
- **Sell** complete business, or will separate

PH (02) 65532765

Australasian Aquaculture 2010
keeping pace with change



Oysters: More \$ from a slippery product in a slippery market

Monday 24 May, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart

Session 1 - "Slippery produce in slippery markets" 10:40am – 12:20pm	
<p>Peter Redmond Vice President Development & Communications, Global Aquaculture Alliance, Arkansas, US previously Vice President/Divisional Merchandise Manager, Deli and Seafood, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc, US</p>	<p>"Making Australian oysters relevant" International consumer trends & demands for luxury seafood items eg oysters Practical ideas how that could be met with Australian product (primarily domestic with a focus on international ie Australia's highest priority export markets are China, Hong Kong, Singapore future possibilities in EU, US</p>
<p>Dr Cath MacLeod Senior Scientist (Shellfish Food Safety), SA Research and Development Institute . years of experience in the international shellfish safety scene</p>	<p>"Safe shellfish in Australia?" Australia vs international shellfish safety expectations: plans for change, issues to address</p>
<p>Professor Mark Tamplin Professor Food Microbiology; Director, Food Safety Centre, School of Agric Science/Tas Institute of Agric Research, Uni of Tasmania</p>	<p>"Shelf life = time & temp in transit" The results: How long will an oyster's shelf life be after being stored and transported? The predictive tool revealed</p>
<p>Professor Chris Langdon Professor of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries & Wildlife and the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station, Oregon State University</p>	<p>"Breeding Pacific oysters to meet US environmental & industry demands" How is the US industry coping with Impacts of ocean acidification on both hatcheries and wild set? Molluscan Broodstock Program</p>
<p>James Calvert James Calvert, Tas Prime Oysters, Cambridge, Tas</p>	<p>"Getting oysters to China" Is the China market viable and accessible and what are the quality control issues to tackle?</p>
Session 2 - "Working the \$ harder" 1:40pm – 3:20pm	
<p>Shane Comiskey Director, Food & Agribusiness Consultant, CDI Pinnacle Management with over 17 years of experience in the food and agri-business industry</p>	<p>"Who's making \$ & who's not? Which growers & buyers?" Pointy end summary of benchmarking & supply chain projects with plans for future ie where are we headed & what are the industry's highest priority strategies)</p>
<p>Ewan McAsh & Jon Poke Ewan McAsh, McAsh Oysters, Batemans Bay, NSW Jon Poke, General Manager, Bolduans Bay Oysters, Smithton, Tas</p>	<p>"Making more \$ in practice" Vertical integration? SRO vs Pacific? On farm mechanisation Stock management? Wage to sale ratio. On farm mechanisation</p>
<p>Dr Jeff Ross Research Fellow, Marine Research Laboratory, Tasmanian Aquaculture & Fisheries Institute</p>	<p>"Environmental water requirements of estuaries: implications for oysters in Little Swanport"</p>

Go to www.australian-aquacultureportal.com to register to attend all 3 days of the event and to see the conference agenda. For alternative registration options, please contact the conference office.