



<http://www.thedaily.com.au/news/2008/aug/06/dropping-line-aquaculture/>



Dropping a line for aquaculture

12:00a.m. 6th August 2008

For a country surrounded by water, it seems incredible that 70% of fish consumed in Australia is imported.

While the figure may be disturbing, it clearly provides significant opportunities going forward for an industry forecast to have serious growth prospects.

Last weekend, Sunshine Coast TAFE hosted the National Aquaculture Educators conference, and this week in Brisbane, as many as 800 delegates will attend the Australia/South Pacific chapter's biennial World Aquaculture Society conference.

Some of those delegates, including National Aquaculture Council chairman Craig Foster, were on the Sunshine Coast last week to inspect the multi-million dollar EcoFish facility at Glenview.

Mr Foster said Australia's total annual **Aquaculture** production had reached about "60,000 tonnes of fish, crustaceans and molluscs", with about 25,000 tonnes of that being salmon produced for the domestic market.

"Our target by 2015 is for aquaculture to produce 100,000 tonnes - the bulk of that will come from prawns, barramundi, yellowtail kingfish and salmon," he said.

"Aquaculture will certainly be an important part of the seafood industry in the future because it offers the only real opportunity for growth."

Mr Foster, a vet by trade who spent a decade specialising on improving productivity in the salmon industry, and another 10 years running a company that supplied 75% of the fish food needs to businesses in Australia and New Zealand, said for people thinking of getting into aquaculture, or already involved, there were a number of key factors to heed.

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"You need good management skills, staff training is very important, the operation must be clean and you have to know your cost of production," he said.

Mr Foster also said of the three main aquaculture methods - sea pens, ponds and recirculation tanks - the tanks offered the highest growth projections.

"The majority of production at the moment is done in sea pens or ponds. But sea pens are difficult to get going because of conflicts of interest (with fishers), and the Australian coastline is very restricted in the locations available for sea pen farming," he said.

"Tanks on the other hand are an excellent way of controlling things like water temperature and oxygen flow. It's historically been costly, but that's changing and I think good operations like EcoFish are the way of the future."

http://onlinejournal.com/artman/publish/article_3596.shtml

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SPECIAL REPORTS

Last Updated: Aug 8th, 2008 - 00:47:42

Controversial charity plans Sheryl Crow gala

By Martha Rosenberg
Online Journal Contributing Writer

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Aug 8, 2008, 00:20

Sheryl Crow fans at a fundraiser for Heifer International on August 10 at Chicago's Ravinia Park are in for a surprise.

In addition to hearing the singer and sampling "locally grown food," they'll hear former University of Miami basketball star Will Allen talk about how Heifer-supported aquaculture in Milwaukee is giving youth a "future and sustainable lifestyle."

The "living machines" of indoor, farmed fish are providing "a way for people to feed themselves," we're told.



Just don't ask about Heifer's aquaculture projects in Chicago in the 1990s.

The idea sounded great, too -- poor kids living in the Chicago Housing Authority's Robert Taylor Homes would learn aquaculture.

Not only would the tilapia -- a fish bought for 5 cents each from Illinois State University and capable of growing to 2 feet -- provide nice fillets for housing project dwellers, the project would provide young people, "job readiness skills and learning to become stewards of the natural environment and their community," enthused Heifer International's Alison Meares Cohen.

The "natural environment" of fish squeezed into 55 gallon drums could even be extended to Chicago 70,000 vacant

lots and start including sheep, goats and cows said Heifer.

And don't forget the nice income the local restaurants scrambling to buy the fish would provide residents.

Unfortunately the entire population of tilapia was killed.

Twice.

In 1999, all the fish froze to death when the heat and power was cut to the building, some say deliberately.

And in 2001, the fish died of heat when power went off during a storm, some leaping "out of their barrels trying to escape accumulating ammonia and rising temperatures," according to the Chicago Tribune.

Not one fish was sold to a restaurant.

Few charities enjoy the print-the-press-release media coverage of Heifer thanks to Bill and Hillary Clinton, Bill and Melinda Gates, Beatrice Biira of Beatrice's Goat fame and the ubiquitous photos of children hugging their live bequests.

Nor will you hear of Heifer flocks and herds dying of disease or in transit while Heifer's online shock troops, reminiscent of the Moonies, patrol the Internet and conduct viral marketing. (MetaFilter founder Matt Haughey was even forced to expose one online "educator" as posting comments from an internal Heifer International IP address on his personal blog in 2007.)

Even Heifer's cloudy overseas ownership, as reported by Mondaq Business Briefing, and non-sustainable food model fly below the press' radar.

How do destitute families feed the animals?

If they can't "grow enough feed" a Heifer newsletter says, "Families are taught the best substitutes to buy locally" -- skirting how the poor can "buy" anything or why they would grow animal feed rather than edible crops.

What happens when animals get sick?

Families can use “local natural substances that are known to provide specific medicinal benefit,” says Heifer. Maybe they’ll “buy them locally” too or grow them next to the animal feed.

What about the destructive effect of grazing?

Families should build sheds to house the animals says Heifer, using locally available materials.

But philanthropist Philip Wollen, winner of the 2007 Australian of the Year (Victoria) award and the 2006 Australian Humanitarian Award, doesn’t buy Heifer hype.

“This so called ‘aid program’ is killing people, animals, and the planet. It is an obscenity dressed up in dollars and dross,” he says. “Worse, it is entrenching more cruelty, more environmental carnage and more ill health in poor communities.”

Nor is former Indian minister for social welfare and animal protection Maneka Gandhi a fan.

“These charities woo the ethical shopper with pictures of goats wearing Christmas hats and promises of helping the poor in developing countries,” but within two years the communities “have an even poorer lifestyle,” she says.

Even the Department for International Development (DFID) which manages Britain’s aid to poor countries concluded after a study of 280 communities and 4,000 poor households which included Heifer International input, “the majority of animal health projects were not having their intended impact on the poor,” and, “the track record for all forms of livestock development is less than enviable.”

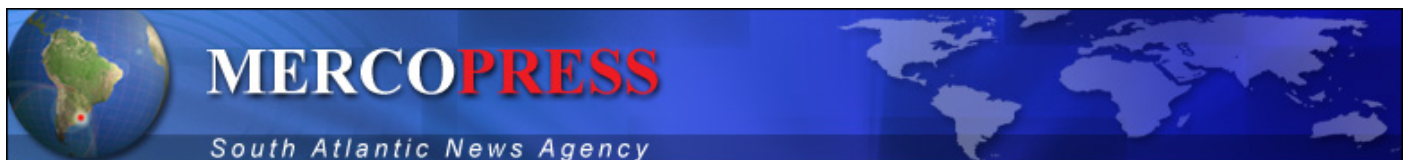
At the Sheryl Crow gala on August 10, speaker Will Allen will probably talk more to guests and local philanthropists about jobs for youth and poverty programs than Heifer’s aquaculture ventures in Milwaukee.

Not only is aquaculture inefficient, wasteful, polluting, dangerous to wildlife and a source of disease -- images of kids hugging fish don’t sell.

Michael James, an Englishman, is a former freelance journalist resident in Germany since 1992 with additional long-haul stays in East Africa, Poland and Switzerland.

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<http://www.mercopress.com/vernoticia.do?id=14157&formato=HTML>



Monday, August 4, 2008

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Growing resistance in Chile to salmon industry impacts

Fed up with what they claim to be environmentally destructive practices by Chile's 2.2 billion US dollars farmed salmon industry, a group of local fishermen in far southern Chile's Region XI is set to launch an international boycott of Chilean farmed salmon.



The group, the Association of Aysén Artisan Fisher Organizations (AGO), plans to begin its boycott this week and is calling on support from environmental organizations both in Chile and abroad. The rapid growth of Chile's farmed salmon industry, the AGO said in a press release, "is the worst environmental and social tragedy to have ever occurred in Region X".

[Zoom](#)

Roughly 70% of all Chilean farmed salmon production takes place in Region X, where industry is a cornerstone of the local economy. But while salmon companies have brought jobs to the region, they have also introduced numerous environmental problems, the industry's many critics claim.

After posting huge and sustained production increases for many years, Chile's salmon industry has slowed of late, due in large part to an outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) that over the past 12 months has spread throughout the country's southernmost regions. ISA is a highly contagious virus that can be lethal to fish, but does not affect humans.

The ISA outbreak, which began in Chile's Region X, has prompted salmon companies to look south – toward the clean and relatively disease-free waters of Regions XI, Aysén and XII, Magallanes.

The pending shift has raised alarm bells among both local and national environmental and social groups, which one by one have called on the government to cease issuing new aquaculture concessions.

Puerto Aysén's AGO was one of the first such groups to demand a so-called "moratorium." Other organizations calling for a halt to the industry's southward expansion include Fundación Terram, Oxfam Chile, the Valparaíso-based National Confederation of Artisan Fishermen (CONAPACH) and, most recently, Oceana.

Groups in Region XII have also begun organizing against the salmon industry. Just last week, the Punta Arenas-based Association of Magallanes Tourism Companies (AUSTROCHILE) issued its own moratorium demand.

"Our concern is that the tourist areas could be erased from the map by the farmed salmon industry. It's even more troubling considering that for the past decade, we've been trying to develop nautical tourism, which depends specifically on the beauty of our fjords and canals," AUSTROCHILE head Jorge Norambuena told Ecoceanos News.

[The Santiago Times](#)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080806.wltilapia06/BNStory/specialScienceandHealth/home>

GlobeLife

Farmed tilapia may be no better for you than a doughnut

From Wednesday's Globe and Mail

August 6, 2008 at 9:00 AM EDT

Fish has become a go-to staple for Canadians who want to have a healthy diet. So it may come as a surprise to learn that eating farmed tilapia, a widely consumed fish that has been steadily growing in popularity, may be no better than dining on bacon, hamburgers or doughnuts.

New U.S. research has found that farmed tilapia have low levels of omega-3 fatty acids - and surprisingly high levels of potentially detrimental omega-6 fatty acids.

It is a finding that could have serious implications for people who suffer from arthritis, asthma and other illnesses or allergies because the omega-6 fatty acids may cause inflammation, which can damage blood vessels and vital organ tissue, according to the findings, published in last month's Journal of the American Dietetic Association.

Omega-6 fatty acids are considered to be essential and must be obtained through diet because they can't be produced by the body.



[Enlarge Image](#)

Farmed tilapia contains more omega-6 fatty acid than is found in doughnuts, pork bacon or hamburgers made with 80-per-cent lean ground beef, according to a new study.



But consuming too much omega-6 can contribute to cancer, asthma, depression and heart disease, among other ailments.

Excessive consumption of omega-6 is common in many Western diets, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center.

By contrast, omega-3 fatty acids are considered good for health because they help to lower the levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein), also known as "bad" cholesterol, in the blood.

Tilapia, a lean white fish with a mild taste, is the second-most cultivated fish in the world, after carp, according to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. While China is the world's leading producer of tilapia, British Columbia and Nova Scotia also produce it on a commercial scale. The department said Toronto is North America's largest market for live tilapia, and the World Aquaculture Society predicts that production will rise steadily because of increased demand for the fish.

"Ten years ago, people wouldn't even know what the word [tilapia] meant," said Robert Ackman, professor emeritus in food science and technology at Dalhousie University, who studied fats and oils in fish. "It's on the tabletops here in Nova Scotia for heaven's sakes. It's a popular food that's been written up in food magazines. People come in and ask for it."

Canadians are often encouraged to increase their consumption of fish to take advantage of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids. But certain varieties of fish, and how they are raised, can make a major difference in its health benefits, according to the study.

"For individuals who are eating fish as a method to control inflammatory diseases such as heart disease, it is clear from these numbers that tilapia is not a good choice," according to the study, conducted by researchers from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine in North Carolina.

The study singled out tilapia raised on fish farms as having high levels of the potentially dangerous omega-6 fatty acids. Although researchers didn't compare farmed tilapia with wild tilapia, they noted significant discrepancies between farmed tilapia and other types of farmed fish.

For instance, they found that farmed tilapia contained less than half a gram of omega-3 fatty acids per 100 grams, while farmed salmon and trout had nearly three and four grams per 100 grams, respectively. At the same time, farmed tilapia contained significantly larger amounts of omega-6 acids - higher than the levels found in doughnuts, pork bacon and hamburgers made with 80-per-cent lean ground beef.

One of the major reasons for the abundance of omega-6 is the fact the tilapia involved in the study were raised on farms, Prof. Ackman said.

"This is a serious problem because they tend to feed [the fish] vegetable oils for growth and that's not quite what the tilapia is accustomed to getting in its native state," he said.

Because the abundance of studies in recent years has made it difficult for consumers to decipher which types of fish may provide health benefits and how much they should be eating, Prof. Ackman said the best rule of thumb is to avoid farmed fish.

"Generally speaking, wild fish is always the best bet," he said.

Even though wild fish has been associated with increased levels of mercury, he said, the amounts aren't great enough to cause serious issues in most people.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2008/0808/1218142758850.html>

IRISHTIMES.com

Government trying to destroy aquaculture sector, IFA claims

LORNA SIGGINS

FISH FARMERS have accused the Government of pursuing a campaign to destroy the Irish aquaculture industry.

The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) aquaculture division says delays in issuing licences, a decision to drop aquaculture from the latest EU/State operational programme and unilateral closure of seed mussel areas are elements in the campaign.

A piecemeal introduction of a new EU directive on fish health represents the latest episode in the campaign, according to IFA aquaculture chief executive Richie Flynn.

"The Government by its lack of will or ability to deal with fundamental issues for our industry is creating a situation where jobs are being lost on a weekly basis, significant private investment turned away, export and domestic markets lost to competitors, costs of dealing with Government bureaucracy spiral out of control and remote coastal locations denuded of young families dependent on alternative employment," he said.

"Is this ridiculous situation really what is needed, given the country's current economic circumstances and how can the Government stand over this shambles?" Mr Flynn added in a statement.

The new fish health directive allows for compensation to be paid to fish farmers for an outbreak of a listed disease. A statutory instrument issued by the Government does not allow for such compensation, and should be withdrawn and amended, Mr Flynn said. Such compensation had been allowed for in the EU directive, he added.

"Compensation is not a demand for handouts but is part of a professional contract between industry and State to ensure the effective implementation of a control and management regime, evidenced by the fact that no other livestock sector in Ireland is deprived of this right," Mr Flynn said.

"It is a measure which is used in exceptional circumstances but ensures the highest professional engagement by all parties, without fear or ambiguity clouding the important issue of preserving our vital health status," he said.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries said the statutory instrument was fully consistent with the requirements and obligations under the EU directive, and it did not require member states to pay compensation in circumstances where eradication measures are required for control of fish health disease.

This did not preclude consideration of the position on a case by case basis, if or when any such situations might arise in the future, the department added.

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<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200808/s2324427.htm>

Fundraising scientist at aquaculture conference

Tuesday, 05/08/2008

An Australian scientist is on a mission of a different kind at an international aquaculture conference this week, hoping to raise \$100,000 for a fish farm project in Africa - funded by fellow delegates.

Steve Magarry's been working on the Rwanda Village of Hope project in his own time after hearing about volunteers who'd built homes for widows and orphans who survived the country's genocide in 1994.

He says other countries could also adopt the system but he needs a thousand dollars from a hundred Australian companies to make it happen.

"We're looking at an aquaponics project which is to grow your aquaculture of your fish but also hydroponic fruit vegetables and value added products," he said.

"The bottom line is food security and poverty reduction and the aquaponics and sustainable development is something that we can put towards making a real difference."

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200808/s2323163.htm>

Aquaculture must double to keep pace with demand

Monday, 04/08/2008

A peak aquaculture group predicts Australia's fish farms are going to have to double their output within seven years to keep up with demand.

More than 1500 farmers, scientists, processors and transporters from about 40 countries are at the Australasian Aquaculture Conference in Brisbane this week.

Craig Foster, from the National Aquaculture Council, says fish farms can play an important role in easing the pressure on depleted wild fish stocks worldwide, and he says farming can be done year-round and provide jobs to regional areas.

Most of Australia's \$793 million worth of current production comes from SA and Tasmania but Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia are tipped to be central to the industry doubling production within the next decade.

Species such as yellowtail, kingfish, barramundi and Tasmanian salmon will lead the charge.

<http://www.patagoniatimes.cl/content/view/611/1/>



OCEANA JOINS CALL FOR CHILE SALMON INDUSTRY "MORATORIUM"



Written by Benjamin Witte

Thursday, 31 July 2008



Environmental group calls for an end to salmon farming expansion.
Photo by Julie Sutor

Over 1,200 Concessions Pending In Both Aysén And Magallanes

The international marine conservation organization Oceana on Thursday offered its voice to a growing chorus of environmental and social groups calling for a "moratorium" on southern expansion of Chile's farmed salmon and trout industry.

In a letter addressed to Economy Minister Hugo Lavados, Oceana asked the government to cease issuing concessions

to farmed salmon companies planning operations in Aysén (Region XI) and Magallanes (Region XII).

“Not only does it not make sense to grant aquaculture concessions while the regulation that will govern the salmon sector in future years is being revised, but it also raises doubts about the Salmon Task Force’s willingness to address the industry’s environmental and sanitary problems in depth,” said Alex Muñoz, Oceana vice president for South America.

The Ministry of the Economy convened the Salmon Task Force earlier this year to address acute problems currently facing the country’s US\$2.2 billion salmon industry. Those problems include high concentrations of *Caligus* (sea lice) and a now year-old outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA), a highly contagious virus that can be lethal to fish but does not affect humans.

The Task Force is led by Felipe Sandoval, the former head of the government’s Fishing Undersecretaries Office (SUBPESCA). Other members of the committee include current Fishing Undersecretary Jorge Chocair, Production Promotion Authority Vice President Carlos Alvarez, National Fishing Service (SERNAPESCA) Director Félix Inostroza, Marina Undersecretary Carolina Echeverría, Luis Pichott of the Chile Foundation and scientist Bernabé Santelices (PT, April 24).

Region X continues to house the lion’s share (roughly 70 percent) of the Chilean farmed salmon industry, the world’s second largest after Norway. Overcrowding, parasites and disease, however, have prompted salmon companies to look further south – to the clean and relatively empty waters of Regions XI and XII. Right now SERNAPESCA is considering 1,262 pending aquaculture concession requests in Aysén plus another 1,249 requests in Magallanes.

Oceana and other critics of the industry fear that in expanding south, salmon companies will simply repeat the same environmental mistakes they’ve made in Region X.

“Upon seeing the problems caused in said region (X), it’s clear there needs to be a deep assessment of the costs and environmental and sanitary implications caused in that zone, before deciding to prompt an expansion of the industry toward the south of Chile, especially when there is already news of the first bud of the ISA virus in the zone of Magallanes,” said Muñoz.

Chile’s current ISA woes date back to mid 2007, when authorities first detected the disease on a pair of fish farms near the island of Chiloé. Moving from farm to farm, ISA gradually spread throughout Region X. Then, this past February, SERNAPESCA confirmed that the disease had somehow made it to Region XI as well (PT, Feb. 26). The government fisheries body came out with even more bad news last month, when it admitted an ISA finding in Magallanes (PT, June 18).

The discovery of ISA in both Aysén and Magallanes has mobilized local opposition to the salmon industry. Like Oceana, groups in Regions XI and XII are calling on the government to freeze new concessions. In Puerto Natales (Region XII), a recently formed group called Patagonia without Salmon Farms Social Coordinating Committee (CSPSS) insists an influx of salmon farms would hurt the local fishing and tourism industries. Puerto Natales is the main jumping off point for the region’s famed Torres del Paine National Park.

“We’ve seen what happened when the salmon companies were given free reign to set up shop in Regions X and XI. And that’s what worries us. We don’t want what happened there to be repeated here in our region,” CSPSS member Romano Totoro told the Patagonia Times.

In Region XI, a group calling itself the Aysén Association of Artisan Fishing Organizations has made similar claims. Other organizations demanding a moratorium on the industry’s southward expansion include Fundación Terram,

Oxfam Chile and the Valparaiso-based National Confederation of Artisan Fishermen.

By Benjamin Witte (benwitte@santiagotimes.cl)

<http://news.smh.com.au/business/farmed-fish-production-set-to-double-20080803-3p97.html>

Fairfax Digital

Farmed fish production 'set to double'

August 3, 2008 - 5:33PM

Fish farmers will push to double Australia's aquaculture output by 2015 to meet growing international demand for quality seafood, an industry leader says.

Craig Foster, chairman of the National Aquaculture Council, said regional areas would stand to benefit from the industry's expansion though increased investment and jobs.

The industry will begin its bi-annual forum of the Asia-Pacific aquaculture industry in Brisbane.

Mr Foster said the planned doubling of production came after a decade of investment in research and the environmental sustainability of aquaculture.

"We believe it's readily achievable and we're well on the way to getting there," he said.

"While most of Australian aquaculture's \$793 million value is produced in South Australia and Tasmania now, opportunities are clear for Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory where access to suitable farming sites is available," Mr Foster said.

Species which will drive this increase in fish production include Tasmanian salmon, yellowtail kingfish, barramundi and southern bluefin tuna. New performers mulloway and cobia are also establishing quickly.

Mr Foster said targets of 100,000 tonnes of fish production by 2015, set by industry were realistic and achievable.

He said Tasmanian salmon production would need to double, yellowtail kingfish to increase its output five-fold and barramundi to triple to meet these targets.

The produce of aquaculture is varied and also includes the staples of prawns and oysters. Prawn growers in Queensland are also gearing for major expansion in the next five years.

"Apart from our own local market, it is the Asian, European and American markets which are hungry for quality Australian seafood," Mr Foster said.

"Aquaculture will play a major role in meeting this demand."

He said aquaculture was necessary to ease pressure on wild-catch fisheries which were increasingly depleted, particularly in Europe and Asia.


"The wild-catch sector cannot meet demand for this premium product so farmed product will step up to fill the gap.

"Farming fish can also be done year-round and so is not restricted to seasonal cycles, as in the wild."

Mr Foster said Tasmanian salmon was a good example of solid business growth in that it had gone from being worth nothing in the early 1980s to more than \$272 million per annum today.

Federal Fisheries Minister Tony Burke will open the conference at Brisbane's Convention and Exhibition Centre at 9am (AEST) Monday.

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<http://www.ruralnetwork.co.nz/maf-abuses-paua/>

MAF ABUSES PAUA

By Philippa Stevenson on Jul 30 , 2008

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Sustainable Farming Fund left a promising East Coast aquaculture operation high and dry for five years after it approved a grant but bureaucratic bungling meant it was never paid it out.

Behind closed doors, MAF has admitted it failed to an embarrassing level to process the successful application and pay the \$230,000 it promised a Gisborne-based iwi organization in 2002 for its far-sighted paua breeding programme.

Five years later in 2007, after screeds of mostly unacknowledged appeals and correspondence, the iwi body finally got its grant. But today MAF and Agriculture Minister Jim Anderton are still trying to hide the bungle and evidence of the project.

National's Agriculture spokesman David Carter, whose sleuthing unearthed the fiasco, [describes it as bureaucratic ineptness](#) and has asked why the SFF manager of the time, Kevin Steel, was later effectively [promoted to the position of private secretary](#) to Agriculture Minister Anderton.

In Parliament this week Anderton [dodged questions](#) about the matter as he did when Carter [questioned him](#) on it in April.

In April, Anderton's reply indicated only that a technical review of the project had held it up.

However, documents Carter obtained under the Official Information Act, including this internal, [MAF Oct 06 memo](#) (pdf) clearly show the [Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa](#), which had the backing of Gisborne Mayor Meng Foon, the Ministry of Maori Affairs, Te Puni Kokiri, the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission and the Cawthron Institute, was given the run around for years.

"The applicant has appeared to have done all that has been asked of them," notes the MAF memo. "All failings – and there has been many of them – appear to have been at MAF's end."

Meanwhile, MAF's [SFF website](#), which normally lists details of all successful projects, shows no detailed record of the Te Runanga o Turanganui a Kiwa venture.

Using the project search facility, *Dig 'n' Stir* searched by both the original project number, [02/133](#), current project number, [07/150](#), and the official description of the project, *New hatchery techniques for Paua settlement and husbandry*, but no matches were found.

The only reference on the site was in [a list of approved projects](#) in 2007-08.

That's consistent with the MAF memo, which detailed the five-year long botch up and concluded that "the SFF team will manage communications around the project as to not to highlight the fact that an aquaculture project is amongst the SFF portfolio".

According to the memo, by 2006 aquaculture projects no longer fitted the SFF criteria for "land-based" projects. Carter rejects this, telling *Dig 'n' Stir* that Anderton specifically told the Primary Production Select Committee that aquaculture projects were eligible for SFF funding.

This serious bungling deserves more than the flippant remarks and obfuscation from Agriculture Minister Jim Anderton and his ministry.

Dig 'n' Stir will watch and wait for developments with interest.

What do *you* think should happen?

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<http://www.commondreams.org/news2008/0730-24.htm>



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2008
4:13 PM

CONTACT: Food & Water Watch

Erin Greenfield or Marianne Cufone (202) 683-2500

Consumer Organization Rebukes NOAA for Propaganda Report about Offshore Fish Farming

WASHINGTON - July 30 - Today, Food & Water Watch, a national consumer advocacy organization, panned a new report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on offshore aquaculture - the industrial production of fish using cages located in open ocean waters. Legislation to create a national program for offshore aquaculture has been discussed in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, but not approved.

"This report is nothing more than a desperate effort by NOAA to pressure Congress into authorizing a bill for a national offshore aquaculture program in our oceans," said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. "We believe real facts clearly show that ocean fish farming could cause serious economic and environmental problems for our country."

NOAA's report contends that the practice of cramming thousands of fish in cages between about three and 200 miles from shore would, among other things, bring fiscal benefits and dramatically reduce U.S. reliance on foreign seafood products.

However, a report released just last month by the independent U.S. Government Accountability Office on the very same topic, indicated otherwise. It showed that "significant barriers still exist in the development of an environmentally safe offshore aquaculture industry," according to a statement from the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee. Representative Nick Rahall, Chair of that Committee, requested the GAO report in 2007.

The evidence that ocean fish farming is problematic goes beyond the GAO findings. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils Congress established to help manage U.S. fisheries, is drafting regulations to allow ocean fish farming in their region, with support from NOAA. Their very own plan concedes that the

increased supply of farmed fish could decrease the prices that fishermen get for their catch. That in turn could harm the economies of coastal communities that depend on fishing and related activities.

In a mad rush to get any big legislative victory, the Bush Administration and NOAA are promoting development of the offshore aquaculture industry, while ignoring trends in the global seafood trade. The United States exports more than 70 percent of its wild-caught and farmed seafood. At the same time, we import cheaper, often lower quality seafood from countries such as China and Thailand for U.S. consumers to eat. These places have recently had questionable food safety records. Meanwhile, Japan and Europe, known for high seafood safety standards, receive nearly half of U.S. exports. This means that if offshore aquaculture is allowed in the U.S. commercially, likely trends will remain the same - U.S. producers will export the majority of ocean farmed fish for higher dollar returns, and consumers here will still eat a lot of imported – and potentially unsafe – farmed fish.

Offshore aquaculture also could cause problems for our marine environment. For example, fish waste, uneaten fish feed, antibiotics used to maintain the health of fish crowded into the farm pens and chemicals that prevent organisms from growing on the nets and cages can pollute the seafloor and surrounding ocean ecosystem.

“Little is known about the assimilative capacity of the marine environment for these pollutants,” concluded a report commissioned by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. “Pollution from a greatly expanded [aquaculture] industry could have significant effects locally and regionally.”

Parasites and disease can spread from fish farms to wild species. In British Columbia, the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council found that fish farms increased the number of parasitic sea lice and likely caused the collapse of pink salmon in the Broughton Archipelago in 2002.

Farmed fish, which can be behaviorally, physically and even genetically different from similar wild fish, escape their pens. Once out in the wild, they could mate with native species, spawning inferior wild fish that could be more susceptible to disease or unable to survive well in the wild. In the alternative, some escaped farmed fish may be super fish – bred to grow bigger, faster and may out-compete wild fish for increasingly scarce food resources, mates and habitat. Either of these scenarios could lead to fewer – and possibly less desirable – wild fish for fishermen to catch and people to eat.

“NOAA is the agency tasked with conserving and managing our living marine resources. Rather than wasting time and taxpayer dollars to crafting reports trying to justify a national program for offshore aquaculture, our government needs to spend time ensuring strong U.S. fisheries and clean, green and safe methods of seafood production for U.S. consumers,” Hauter said.

To learn more about the problems with offshore aquaculture and viable alternatives, visit us at www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish.

Food & Water Watch is a nonprofit consumer rights organization based in Washington, D.C. that challenges the corporate control and abuse of our food and water resources. Visit www.foodandwaterwatch.org.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/northland/4636496a1927.html>



Seabed survey to start in Bay of Islands

By KERI MOLLOY - The Bay Chronicle | Thursday, 31 July 2008



FACT FINDING: The Bay of Islands, pictured here from Paihia, is under increasing pressure from conflicting use.

Related Links

A national survey of seabed habitats and biodiversity will start with a study of the Bay of Islands.

The government has allocated \$5.5 million to the Bay of Islands project to conduct the survey over two years.

The project is part of the Ocean Survey 20/20 programme which is being facilitated by Land Information New Zealand.

This is a long term cross-government initiative to survey New Zealand's total ocean area. It aims to provide greater knowledge of ocean territory to "conserve, protect, manage and sustainably utilise our ocean resources, facilitate safe navigation and enjoyment of the oceans, demonstrate our stewardship and exercise our sovereign rights".

Land Information is in the early stages of planning for the Bay of Islands project which is expected to get underway in the first half of 2009.

A major focus of it will be on seafloor mapping – bathymetry – and surveying of biodiversity. They will be working with local government on the project.

Ocean Survey 20/20 was launched three years ago. Voyages have already been made to the Chatham Rise and Ross Sea.

The Bay of Islands is seen as an iconic area of New Zealand and significant biodiversity area, that is under increasing pressure from conflicting use and development in the coastal marine area. As a tourist destination, it attracts a high number of recreational fishers and divers. It also has an expanding aquaculture industry.

Population growth and an associated increase in coastal development with a proliferation of coastal structures, such as jetties, boatramps and seawalls, are also seen to impact on the marine environment while land use practices have caused sedimentation of estuarine systems, affecting biodiversity.

The rationale of the project is that New Zealand's future prosperity will depend increasingly on ocean resources, such as fisheries, aquaculture, natural products, hydrocarbons and other minerals.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24108868-30538,00.html>

Clean Seas Tuna (CSS) 96.5c

CRITERION: Tim Boreham | *August 01, 2008*

Clean Seas Tuna (CSS) 96.5c Western Kingfish (WKL) 18c WHAT is it about our slimy but tasty piscatorial friends that leads to such frequent disappointment for investors? Every time the sector puts its best fin forward, along comes something to upset the aquarium's fragile balance.

This time it's the Port Lincoln-based Clean Seas, which won a whale-sized vote of faith when it announced the first captive spawning of a southern bluefin tuna. Now, Clean Seas' current production of yellowtail kingfish has been affected by cold water temperatures, which has hit growth rates.

As a result, lower investor valuations will turn a forecast \$1-\$2 million profit into a \$1million loss. Clean Seas chairman Hagen Stehr says he is confident of a "significant" profit improvement by the second (June 2009) half.

Lest it be lumped in the same frigid waters, WA-based rival Western Kingfish yesterday claimed it was experiencing the opposite, as its fish stocks bask in the balmy waters of Jurien Bay. According to executive director Andrew (Herb) Mitton, growth rates have been quicker than planned, while mortalities have been fewer than expected.

Western Kingfish, which is in pilot stage to produce 200 tonnes, should harvest its first batch by January. The company has targeted output of 2000 tonnes per annum, with 50,000 fingerlings in progress.

The only trouble is, it's got only \$2.21 million in the bank and has flagged a "modest" capital raising. Here's hoping deep-pocketed backers such as Lachlan Murdoch, Merv Collinson and aquaculture veteran Stewart Graham have retained their appetite for the fruits of the sea.

Criterion had Western Kingfish as a speculative buy at 28c, after listing on July 30 last year. Despite the progress, we'll retreat to a hold until we see the terms of the raising.

We had Clean Seas as a speculative buy at \$1.83 and maintain that rating because its tuna spawning breakthrough remains hot property. Clean Seas is also short of the readies, but has a \$13 million undrawn debt facility.

National Australia Bank (NAB) \$24.70

CRITERION will miss John Stewart. On his arrival at the stricken bank in 2004, the affable Scot promised that staff declining to embrace his cultural change agenda would be "machine-gunned" in the back office. We also recall at least one risqué joke in public that managed to elicit a guilty laugh.

But should shareholders lament his passing? NAB shares fell modestly yesterday, but it's hard to tell whether that's a reaction to Stewart going, or Cameron Clyne coming.

On our reckoning, Stewart greatly enhanced the NAB's insufferably arrogant culture -- without having to resort to the Gatling gun -- and reconnected the bank with its customers. But earnings-wise, the bank never really recovered from the Homeside and forex snafus before the credit crunch hit.

CEO comings and goings can be somewhat overplayed, in that corporate culture and strategy rarely turns on a dime (or several million of them). New CEOs rarely behave as expected, while the departee has usually done enough to claim the usual bonuses on offer.

According to NAB chairman Michael Chaney, suggestions that Stewart's departure was linked to last week's \$830 million CDO (collateralised debt obligation) write-down are "completely off the mark".

OK, but the burning question is what further nasties lie in wait for Clyne to "discover". "We don't expect to make further provisions but one never knows what will happen," Chaney says. "The financial world is very fragile at the moment."

Criterion affirms an avoid on the NAB, but not because Stewart -- who was going anyway -- is not staying. As for dark horse Clyne, he may well prove to be the CEO for the times, having weathered the abysmal Kiwi market. As a keen ocean swimmer, Clyne's knowledge of paddling against the tide will prove handy as he weathers further CDOs (Crappy Days at the Office).

Retail stocks

JULY is usually synonymous with sniffles, naked trees and the drudgery of lodging a tax return, but to the retailers it's a month of rebirth and renewed hope.

Just Group (JST, \$3.32) yesterday reported its first-half sales would be \$812 million -- "above the mid point" of its guidance. Big deal. But the embattled group also reports same-store sales growth of 2.7 per cent over the last four weeks.

This week Harvey Norman (HVN, \$3.25) chief Gerry Harvey was not his usual ebullient self, but declared flat-screen TVs were walking out the doors in readiness for the synchronised swimming from Beijing.

As for Woolworths (WOW, \$25.20), CEO Michael Luscombe this month said sales for the first two weeks of July had been "tremendously buoyant", partly due to the tax-cut largesse.

At the premium end, there's only 13 sleeps to go until we learn how David Jones fared in the fourth quarter. CEO Mark McInnes has already referred to a better July because of school holidays, colder weather and "clearance activity". Just, of course, is trumpeting any vaguely positive trend, as it fends off Premier Investment's unwanted advances. But when so many retailers declare a better July, the trend is the investor's friend.

Criterion has Just as a hold leading up to next Wednesday's bid deadline, with a view to accepting the improved Premier offer, if it gets over the line. We recently rated Harvey Norman an avoid at \$3.32, but revert that to a hold.

Woolworths, also a hold, always looks priced for growth. But plonking a sell call on the market darling is like boiling a pet bunny: you just don't do it unless you're a miffed adultress.

Minemakers (MAK) \$1.46

CRITERION can't let the week grind to a close without mentioning the phosphate hopeful's quarterly report.

Minemakers fully owns the Wonarah deposit near Tennant Creek, Australia's best untapped resource, with an inferred main deposit of 72 million tonnes grading 23 per cent.

The contents of Tuesday's disclosure went over your correspondent's vapid head, but according to a keen observer it shows Minemakers has solved its key problems of water supplies and transportation. Handily, the NT Government has announced a \$100 million port upgrade, which means there must be an election in the offing.

According to Minemakers, export prices have risen from \$US350-\$US400 a tonne to \$US450-\$US500 a tonne. "If they produce their expected 3million tonnes a year then this increase is quite significant," says our man.

Criterion got on to this bolter at 56c in January and rode it to a \$2.95 high in mid April. We maintain a speculative buy on the hope it becomes the next Incitec Pivot.

borehamt@theaustralian.com.au

The Australian accepts no responsibility for stock recommendations. Readers should contact a licensed financial adviser. The author holds National Australia Bank shares.

<http://www.dailypost.co.uk/farming-north-wales/farming-news/2008/07/31/buoyant-future-for-welsh-fish-farming-55578-21437647/>

Buoyant future for Welsh fish farming

Jul 31 2008 by Andrew Forgrave, Daily Post

FISH farming can become a major industry in Wales, according to the country's first Fisheries Strategy, launched this week by rural affairs minister Elin Jones.

In-shore commercial fishing can also recover its historic importance if the sector receives sufficient investment in new production and processing facilities, says the report.

The development of recreational angling over the past two decades has shown what can be achieved.

North West Wales is already emerging as the fish farm capital of Wales with traditional mussel harvesting supplemented by new aquaculture technologies to produce marine fin fish such as turbot and sea bass.

Recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), in which fish are grown in large tanks, offer an environmentally-friendly alternative to traditional open cage systems.

The Fisheries Strategy, launched in Aberystwyth, emphasises the need to safeguard the environment when developing Wales' various fishing sectors, now worth £200m a year. But it also stresses that environmental protectionism should not jeopardise the industry's growth: more than 70% of the Welsh coastline is already designated under EU and UK law.

Crucial to the sector's success will be its ability to access money via the 16m-euro European Fisheries Fund, with the prospect of match-funding from Cardiff.

Elin Jones said the strategy offered a blueprint for modernising the industry whilst safeguarding marine environments. She said: "It also recognises the rapidly developing Welsh aquaculture sector.

"The sector is widely recognised as being at the cutting edge, which has resulted in inward investment, particularly to Anglesey, with a real prospect of further investment to follow."

There are currently two RAS facilities in North Wales. A commercial fish farm on Anglesey produces about 200 tonnes of turbot each year, with another 1,000-tonne multi-species farm under construction. A pilot plant to assess the production of new species also operates in Gwynedd.

<http://www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/news/Colony-rare-crayfish-wiped-plague/article-248178-detail/article.html>



Colony of rare crayfish wiped out by plague

07:30 - 02-August-2008

A COLONY of rare white-clawed crayfish in a Derbyshire river has been wiped out.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that hundreds were killed by crayfish plague in the River Manifold.

The disease can be spread by the introduction of infected crayfish into water previously free of the disease, or on people's wet footwear or equipment.

Plague spores can survive for up to two weeks in water, but can be killed by drying or disinfecting.

The agency said any remaining crayfish downstream of the outbreak were likely to suffer the same fate.

Fisheries and recreation team leader Phil Wormald said: "This is a tragedy for one of our rare native species. It highlights the importance of protecting native crayfish populations and preventing the spread of diseases between river catchments."

To help protect the local crayfish, non-native species of fish or crayfish must not be introduced into waterways except under licence from the Environment Agency.

Also, if any native crayfish is caught inadvertently, it must be returned immediately to the water it came from.

Further advice on how to help protect crayfish is available by calling 08708 506 506 or by visiting www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fish.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/northland/4635330a22378.html>



Fresh fish farm fears

By RICHARD EDMONDSON - Dargaville News | Wednesday, 30 July 2008

Concerns over the possibility of a 29 hectare fin fish farm being established in Whangaroa Harbour have prompted fresh calls for a ban on new marine farms in the harbour.

Tara Bri Tamure, an unregistered company with links to Te Runanga o Whaingaroa, applied to the Northland Regional Council in 1996 for a resource consent to farm snapper east of Peach Island.

The council put the application on hold while it awaited information, then 'froze' the application when the government introduced a moratorium on new marine farms in 2001.

A group trying to ban new marine farms in the harbour worries that the company will try to go ahead with the marine farm now that council rules allow areas of the harbour to be zoned for new farms.

"I wrote to the council asking them if anything had changed on the file and they said no, but we've heard stories that the runanga have been out viewing the site," says Whangaroa Maritime Recreational Park steering group spokesman David Keys.

The steering group is trying to get the council to strike out Tara Bri Tamure's consent application so that nothing is 'preordained' or deemed to be 'in process', he says.

"The legislative environment has changed entirely since then, the company hasn't been formed and they didn't provide the information required."

The group has joined those appealing the regional council's new aquaculture planning framework.

"We wanted the council to make the harbour a no-go area for aquaculture management areas, which they didn't do, although they've made quite a few no-go areas elsewhere in Northland."

It is also pushing ahead with a proposal to designate the harbour a maritime park.

"If we are successful with the proposal it will eliminate any future aquaculture management areas in the park area. It's a three-pronged attack really."

Northland Regional Council coastal planning team leader Ben Lee says the council hasn't received an application to create an aquaculture management area near Peach Island.

He will not be drawn on whether the applicant has recently made inquiries about continuing with its 1996 consent application.

"I can't comment on that one," says Mr Lee.

The public will be able to make submissions to any application to create an aquaculture management area in the harbour, he says.

Te Runanga o Whaingaroa chief executive Judy Steele says Tara Bri Tamure has no plans to apply for permission to establish a fish farm in the harbour.

"They're just looking at options and had the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research in doing some research, but that's about it."

Businessman Peter Brierley, who has an interest in Tara Bri Tamure, says the company's 1996 consent application is still on hold.

He won't comment on rumours that the company plans to proceed with the fish farm.

"I live in Nelson and I'm not privy to all these rumours. As such I would be speculating on speculation."

His company Muri-Tai Tio will, however, exercise a 2006 Fisheries Ministry permit that allows it to establish an eight hectare oyster farm near Ferguson Point at the southern end of the harbour.

"It's just a normal commercial permit like everyone else's. We're perfectly entitled to exercise it. It is our intention to do that."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/30/2318469.htm?section=business>



Aquaculture industry set to double production by 2015

Posted Wed Jul 30, 2008 9:00am AEST

Updated Wed Jul 30, 2008 9:19am AEST



Aquaculture production of fish, shellfish and crustaceans is expected to double. (DPIW Tasmania)

Australia's aquaculture industry plans to almost double production by 2015 to meet growing demand.

The chairman of the peak body representing the aquaculture industry says 60,000 tonnes of fish, shellfish and crustaceans are produced in Australia each year.

Craig Foster says it is hoped this can be increased to 100,000 tonnes annually.

He says this will be done through expansion of salmon operations in Tasmania, kingfish in South Australia and prawns in Queensland.

"The current production of farm prawns is about 3,200 tonnes ... we believe that that will extend to about 7,000 tonnes," he said.

"We also see the barramundi industry growing. Queensland is a large part of the barramundi industry."

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/northland/4635330a22378.html>



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