

# *The M.A.A. Newsletter*

## *Massachusetts Aquaculture Association*

*“Massachusetts’ Aquaculture Trade Association”*

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**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2004**

### *Chef’s Event for New Marketing Campaign for Cape and Islands Cultured Shellfish a Huge Success*



On Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup> a Chef’s Event was held at the Dan’l Webster Inn, in Sandwich, Massachusetts. The event was sponsored by funding provided by both the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (M.D.A.) and the Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (S.E.M.A.C.).

The purpose of the event was to present the new Cape Cod and the Islands logo and slogan and to taste the distinctive differences among shellfish grown in different harbors, bays and coves from the cold, clean waters of Cape Cod and the Islands.

Seventy guests representing restaurants and seafood wholesalers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island attended the event. The room was elegantly decorated and occupied with restaurant owners, managers, chef’s and wholesalers as well as State Representatives.

An exit survey was conducted and the findings are extremely favorable, exemplifying the success of the event. The findings will be presented to the Board of Directors of SEMAC on October 14, 2004.

### *Regional Marketing Effort*

*(Submitted by Bill Walton/SEMAC)*

The Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (SEMAC), working closely with MAA, has initiated a number of efforts to improve marketing of cultured shellfish. Marketing

Studies of regional shellfish consumers and seafood restaurants, led by Dr. Nora Ganim Barnes of the University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth, found that people wanted shellfish cultured in the cold, clean waters of the Cape Cod region. How could this information be put to use for the benefit of all the region’s shellfish growers?

Following the notion that a rising tide floats all boats, SEMAC had Dr. Barnes develop a logo and promotional materials to promote Cape Cod and the Islands as a high-quality shellfish producing region. This approach assures customers that they will get delicious, top-grade shellfish from any grower in the region, but still allows individual growers to promote their own product as distinctive – much like Napa Valley, which is known for its excellent wine but still has distinctive vineyards.

So why exactly should chefs, consumers and wholesale buyers insist on “Cape Cod and Islands Cultured Shellfish”?

- **Why Shellfish?**

- Shellfish are low on the food chain, filtering out the microscopic plants, phytoplankton, from the ocean’s waters, making them an environmentally-friendly choice.

- Also, shellfish are an excellent nutritional choice. They are high in protein, but low in fat, particularly saturated fat. They also contain a number of important nutrients, such as zinc, iron, copper and omega-3 fatty acids.
- Due to the high omega-3 content in seafood, the American Heart Association recommends eating seafood at least twice a week. Many Americans have shied away from this due to public concern about mercury content in seafood. Fortunately, of all the seafood choices listed on the American Heart Association's web site, oyster and clams are the only choices that do not contain detectable amounts of mercury.
- **Why *Cultured*?**
  - Shellfish aquaculture provides a consistent, high-quality product.
  - Cultured shellfish are usually harvested to order, getting the freshest product to market.
  - The buyer knows exactly where the shellfish come from, assuring them of clean, safe seafood.
  - Shellfish culture avoids some of the problems associated with harvest in the wild, such as habitat damage from dragging.
  - Shellfish aquaculture is relatively environmentally benign aquaculture (no fish food, no chemicals, etc.), and may benefit the environment. In fact, the Chefs Collaborative recommends replacing wild-caught shellfish with cultured shellfish and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch lists farmed shellfish among their 'Best Choices' for consumers.
- **Why *Cape Cod and the Islands*?**
  - As anyone who's sampled the shellfish knows, there are excellent tasting shellfish throughout the region, with subtle to distinctive

differences among embayments and even between shellfish farms. It's the Napa Valley of shellfish.

- The region has a long, proud tradition of shellfishing.
- Jutting out into the cold, clean waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the region is prized for its clean, pristine waters.
- Although shellfish can be shipped safely around the world, customers in New England want fresh, local seafood produced by local people.

With the launch of this campaign, SEMAC hopes that buyers will insist on Cape Cod and Islands Cultured Shellfish – and that this, in turn, will lead to increased demand from wholesalers. The region cultures shellfish that compete well with shellfish from anywhere in the world, and it's time to let consumers know what they're missing. Stay tuned to SEMAC and MAA announcements about the campaign!

### ***Florida Aquaculture Sales, Participants Fall***

*(Via D. Alves-ASSOCIATED PRESS)*

TALLAHASSEE - Florida aquaculture producers reported sales of \$95.5 million last year, down 4 percent from the last time officials surveyed in 2001, and there were considerably fewer people in the business, state officials said Tuesday.

The likely reason is increased competition from foreign producers, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson said. "Florida agriculture as a whole, including aquaculture, is challenged by increasing global trade," Bronson said. The survey showed aquaculture sales of \$99.5 million in 2001. The high was in 1997 when \$102 million of farmed fish, shellfish, aquatic plants and alligators were sold. State officials said there were 544 aquaculture producers in Florida in 2003, down by 140 from 2001 when there were 684. Sales increased last year for some aquaculture products, including tropical fish, tilapia, and catfish. Sales decreased for aquatic plants, alligators, shrimp, clams and oysters.

On the Net: Aquaculture statistical report:

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>>[www.nass.usda.gov/fl](http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl)

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### ***INSURANCE DEADLINE FOR MASSACHUSETTS CLAMS.***

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The final date to obtain insurance on clams in Massachusetts is November 30, 2004. Current policyholders likewise have until November 30 to make any changes to their existing contracts. Clam insurance is currently available under a pilot program in Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, and Plymouth counties. The amount of coverage is based upon an inventory value of your clam beds with a price election of \$.18 per clam. Crop insurance provides effective protection against losses due to oxygen depletion, disease, freeze, hurricane, decrease of salinity, tidal wave, storm surge and ice floe. Clam producers are strongly urged to contact a local crop insurance agent as soon as possible for more detailed information and premium quotes. For a list of crop insurance agents, contact the local USDA Farm Service Agency office or logon to the following Risk Management Agency web site:

<http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/>

### ***National Survey To Measure Seafood Consumption***

*(By Jenni Glenn Gloucester Daily News June 1, 2004)*

GLOUCESTER - A government study getting underway this fall will survey families across the country to find out what kinds of seafood they eat.

The government has not gathered this kind of demographic information about seafood eaters on a national scale for 23 years. The results of the new survey could help the seafood industry better gauge its customer base and develop new techniques for marketing seafood products.

The researchers will interview about 1,000 households over the course of a year to learn which seafood species and products the families eat and how much they eat, said Teri Frady, spokeswoman for the National Marine Fisheries Service, the

agency conducting the study. The survey also will gather demographic information to see who is eating seafood. The data could help seafood producers target the audience most receptive to their products. Marketing is crucial to states like Massachusetts, which racks up \$3.5 billion annually in seafood sales, said Corey Lewandowski, executive director of the New England Seafood Producers Association. He said the industry is always working to educate people in the region about the economic benefits of eating local seafood products, as well as the healthy benefits of eating fish.

A national survey could help the industry measure the success of its efforts, including a major advertising campaign NESPA is developing, Lewandowski said, "The survey "is a benchmark," he said, "and what it tells you is do people understand the benefit of the industry on both the economy and the diet."

The association conducted its own seafood consumption survey of New England residents two years ago. Of the 100 Massachusetts residents chosen randomly and interviewed, 84 percent said they ate seafood, Lewandowski said.

NMFS already calculates the amount of seafood eaten per capita, but the new survey will give researchers insight into the habits of individual consumers, Frady said. The government hasn't surveyed individual consumers about seafood consumption since the U.S. Department of Agriculture included questions on the topic in a 1981 nationwide survey, Frady said. "This is really getting at the household consumer and what the costs and benefits are to the consumer," she said. Frady said researchers will use similar methods in the new survey so it can be compared to the 1981 data. NMFS hopes to conduct the survey once every three to five years to continue observing trends in seafood consumption, she said. Participating households will be re-interviewed several times during the year. Frady said the survey will record the prices consumers paid for fish and analyze how consumers' eating habits change with fluctuating prices. This information will help federal fishing regulators determine the effect their rules have on people buying fish from grocery stores or ordering seafood dishes in restaurants, Frady said.

## ***Neighbors Say Oyster Farm Not Welcome. Falmouth Residents Fear The 2-acre Operation Will Upset Quiet Cove.***

*(By <mailto:alehmert@capecodonline.com>)*

*AMANDA LEHMERT STAFF WRITER Via R. Garrison)*

WOODS HOLE - There's the famous Wellfleet variety served at restaurants worldwide. And a tasty sort from Cotuit is also well-known.

Kevin Murphy, selectman and owner of Shucker's World Famous Raw Bar in Woods Hole, serves oysters from places as near as Cuttyhunk and as far away as Prince Edward Island.

Soon, Quissett oysters may be on the menu, too.

Falmouth selectmen have approved a plan presented by Falmouth's Peter Chase to start a 2-acre oyster farm in Buzzards Bay off Woods Hole, south of Gansett Point and Quissett Harbor.

If it's approved by the state Division of Marine Fisheries and the Army Corps of Engineers, the farm would be only the second licensed aquaculture operation in Falmouth and the first on the Cape Cod side of Buzzards Bay. But there's a catch to this would-be business venture. Some area homeowners, who have used the slightly stony shores along Gansett Point as their own private beach for generations, are worried about a commercial concern moving into the quiet cove. Others say Chase's experiment is a chance for the Upper Cape to grab a bigger chunk of the Cape's shellfish bounty.

Operation would be second "Down in Wellfleet they have 200 of these licenses. Falmouth only has one," Murphy said. "We are world-recognized with our marine studies and our fisheries, but we are tied for last place in this on Cape Cod."

Of the 997 acres of shellfish aquaculture in the state, the bulk of which is on the Cape, Falmouth accounts for just 22 acres, all held by Waquoit Shellfish Corp.

Chase, 27, works for the National Marine Fisheries. A native of Connecticut, Chase first became interested in aquaculture when he studied it at Humboldt State University in northern California.

With the help of former Falmouth Shellfish Supt. Paul Montigue, last December Chase scouted out areas in Falmouth for an oyster farm.

Chase was looking for a place with a sandy bottom, without much vegetation or an already thriving shellfish population.

The 20-foot-deep sandy patch just south of Gansett Point met Chase's needs. It's not a typical kind of place for an aquaculture operation. Much of the state's aquaculture takes place on the intertidal flats of the Outer Cape.

At this Woods Hole spot, Chase plans to tether 4- by 4-foot plastic racks slightly off the ocean floor. When he needs to get to the oysters two or three times a week, he will pull the racks to the surface from his 28-foot boat.

"There is nothing on the surface anyone will see except a boat," Chase said.

But some residents fear that the project may intrude on their space, and they worry about Chase's relative inexperience with aquaculture. The area that frames Chase's proposed 2-acre site is lined with dozens of private homeowners. Even more families lay claim to a large chunk of beach 600 feet away from where the floats would be, where the owners of 60 nearby parcels of land have deeded beach access.

They don't look forward to someone motoring out into the cove a couple of times a week, disturbing their peace.

"I'm always pinching myself, 'Paul, what did you do to deserve this?' " said Paul Colinvau, president of the Gansett Woods Association, the group of homeowners with rights to the beach. "It's absolute heaven. I want to keep it that way."

Some are worried about swimmers who frequent the area, and possible adverse side-effects to the water quality with the oysters.

Bonnie Simon, whose expansive home sits behind the shared beach, sometimes anchors her boat in the very spot Chase plans to drop his racks.

"It's one of the few places in the world where the water hasn't changed," she said. High hopes Others say these fears are unfounded. Chase said the oysters could actually improve the cove's environment by filtering nutrients out of the water.

Swimmers and boaters should be able to float above the racks with little interference, although anchors could damage the oyster equipment, he said.

Colinvaux worries that Chase's relatively small project could pave the way for farms up and down Falmouth's Buzzards Bay coast.

Not everyone thinks more aquaculture would be bad. "I don't think all of these projects are right for Cape Cod, but I think this one is right," said Murphy.

A bay scallop project was rejected years ago because it would have operated on top of the water. "He's going to have some stumbling blocks because he is in more of an open area. We've got to wait and see. That's why we are going slowly with him," Murphy said.

Dale Leavitt, a Falmouth aquaculture specialist, said other people who wanted a town permit in the past were scared off by the lengthy process involved in gaining approval.

"We've been sitting and waiting for someone with a credible application to come into Falmouth. I think it will open some door as people see what happens to Peter," Leavitt said.

The conservation commission has limited Chase to 50 racks of oysters at a depth no shallower than 15 feet.

Chase must undergo a state biological survey and get approval from the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure there are no navigational hazards before he can move forward, said Jerry Moles, the aquaculture coordinator for the state Division of Marine Fisheries.

Leavitt said Chase's proposal uses proven technology that has a good chance of passing the state and federal tests.

Chase hopes to raise 300,000 oysters a year. He said it will take three years before the first batch can be harvested. And should that happen, he'd still have years more to get the kind of recognition that Wellfleet's oysters and other oysters have garnered over decades.

### ***To: Seafood HACCP Community***

*(From: Pamela Tom, Univ. of California, Sea Grant Extension Program)*

The long awaited USDA Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) interim final rule was posted today on the USDA Web Site at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>.

The interim final rule for country of origin labeling for fish and shellfish is 201 pages: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL/ls0304ifr.pdf>

Examples of records wild fish, farm-raised fish, and farm-raised shellfish) that may be useful for COOL verification purposes is on the web at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL/records.htm>

Here's what today's USDA news release has to say about the interim final rule:

*"USDA Issues Regulatory Action on Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling for Fish and Shellfish"*

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30, 2004 The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued an interim final rule for the mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) program for fish and shellfish as required by the 2002 Farm Bill. The 2004 Appropriations Act delayed the applicability of mandatory COOL to the other covered commodities, other than fish and shellfish, until Sept. 30, 2006. Under the interim final rule, fish and shellfish covered commodities must be labeled at retail to indicate their country of origin and method of production (wild and/or farm raised). However, covered commodities are excluded from mandatory COOL if they are an ingredient in a processed food item.

Also, the definition of a processed food item has been revised from the proposed rule. Items derived from a covered commodity that has undergone a change (e.g., cooking, curing, smoking) or that has been combined with other covered commodities or other substantive food components (e.g., breading, tomato sauce) are excluded from COOL labeling.

Food service establishments, such as restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias, food stands, bars, lounges and similar enterprises are exempt from the mandatory COOL requirements.

The interim final rule outlines the requirements for labeling covered commodities. It reduces the recordkeeping retention requirements for suppliers and centrally located retail records to one year and reduces the time during which store level records must be made available to when product is on hand.

The interim final rule will become effective six months from the date of publication. This delay will permit existing inventories to clear through the channels of commerce and allow industry members

to conform their operations to the new requirements. USDA plans to conduct outreach and education activities during the first year to assist the industry in achieving compliance with requirements of the rule.

The full text of the interim final rule will be published in a forthcoming Federal Register. As an interim final rule, further comments are invited and must be submitted within 90 days of publication. Copies of the interim final rule and additional information can be found at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL>.

### ***A Note From Bob Wallace***

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Heidi Gallo and all she has done for the MAA. This newsletter will be Heidi's last as she steps down to further pursue her career as an artist.

Heidi will be sorely missed by this organization; indeed, she has been the backbone of the MAA for over ten years. During her many terms as the Treasurer this organization has grown and matured. She has brought a level of professionalism with each edition of this newsletter as well as writing numerous grants on behalf of the MAA.

I wouldn't hesitate to say that Heidi Gallo has kept the ball rolling for the shellfish growers of Massachusetts. Heidi will leave a serious void as she steps down from office this September. All of us will have to stand up to the plate in order to make sure her efforts continue to improve this association long after her departure. It will take several people to take up the slack.

If the growers want this organization to go forward it will take a concerted effort from all of us as it should be. I'm confident the MAA will continue its course and become a stronger and cohesive group of aquaculturists. We owe that much to Heidi and ourselves.

Fair winds,  
Bob Wallace

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