



# Centre for Shellfish Research

*Creating Wealth from Knowledge*

## SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE BRAINSTORMING WORKSHOP & INDUSTRY ACTION PLAN

**JUNE 25 & 26, 2002**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emerging industries, such as shellfish aquaculture, require a clear vision, a collective strategy, focused research and developmental support if they are to achieve international competitiveness and enhance environmental sustainability.

To assist in this regard, the Centre for Shellfish Research (CSR) at Malaspina University-College hosted a 'brainstorming workshop' on June 25/26, 2002 to address the question – **How Do We Build a World Class Shellfish Aquaculture Industry in BC?** A diverse and comprehensive mix of over 50 shellfish aquaculture stakeholders were involved in the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to achieve consensus on what would be required to build a world-class shellfish aquaculture industry and ultimately, to develop an industry action plan that could be used by government and industry alike.

The purpose of this report was to document the workshop process as well as outline a comprehensive action plan for achieving industry growth and development.

The workshop process included:

1. Development of a shared 5-year vision for shellfish aquaculture in BC
2. Development of a needs inventory, outlining the issues that must be addressed to support the 5-year vision
3. Development of a needs assessment, outlining which needs are currently being addressed and which industry development needs are outstanding
4. A prioritization exercise to determine how limited resources should be allocated to address key needs

Considering only the currently predominant species such as Pacific oysters and Manila clams, and using a number of key assumptions brought forward in the keynote addresses, the group agreed that a reasonable goal for industry growth was \$50,000,000 in wholesale value in 5 years. However, when the group evaluated the existing plans for new species (mussels, geoducks, varnish clams, scallops) the conservative industry growth projection was raised to \$70,000,000 in wholesale value in 5 years.

Six broad industry "needs" were felt to be critical building blocks to support the vision of "\$70 million in 5". Those 6 needs are as follows: **Leadership and Knowledge,**

***Economic Opportunities, Physical Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability, Marketing and Production.***

Participants were divided into one of 6 “need” groups for a brainstorming session. Each group was asked to determine what supporting factors were related to each need category – i.e. what were the supporting issues that, if addressed, could bring an element of resolution to the topic and ultimately, help industry establish a solid foundation upon which to build a successful industry.

The most significant finding of the brainstorming session was the consistency in key issues and contributing factors that were identified. While each of the 6 groups focused on a different “need” critical to building a world-class shellfish aquaculture industry, there was considerable repetition between the issues and contributing factors required to support the “need”.

It was clear that the key issues, repeatedly raised in each of the 6 groups, would naturally form the basis of the Shellfish Aquaculture Industry Development Action Plan based on the following 8 themes.

**A. Policy & Regulatory Development**

Clear government policies that provide a climate of certainty and support are absolutely fundamental in achieving sustained industry growth and development. Specific examples raised by the workshop participants included the need for policies that would facilitate new tenures, create a streamlined licensing process and provide access to new species broodstock.

**B. Leadership**

Industry and government leadership is essential for the building of a world-class shellfish aquaculture industry in BC. Industry leadership can provide a unified voice on industry issues while government leadership is vital in bringing forward enabling policies and encouraging economic opportunities.

**C. R&D/Training**

Emerging industries such as shellfish aquaculture requires focused long- term research and development to support continued production improvement, technology innovation and enhanced environmental sustainability. It was felt by workshop participants that the capacity of BC institutions to do the necessary research was insufficient. The role of the CSR is to act as catalyst to facilitate various industry research projects, with a priority on those that are specific to the BC environment and industry.

Technology transfer and grower training in production methods, business skills and marketing was also determined to be essential to long- term business viability.

**D. Communication**

Public Education and Communication plays an important role in garnering community support and achieving consensus about the future of shellfish aquaculture development. In turn, the dissemination of accurate industry information leads to improved attitudes,

which helps to attract new investment opportunities to BC coastal communities.

### **E. Marketing**

The shellfish aquaculture industry in BC needs to move from being production driven to market driven, resulting in the concept of "growing for the market". Strategic growing requires a strong relationship between the producer/processor and market. Grading standards, and a focus on improved product quality and consistency is also an important aspect of building long-term markets for BC shellfish products.

### **F. Environmental Sustainability**

Public confidence, leading to expansion of the BC shellfish aquaculture industry will be most easily accomplished by demonstrating the environmental and social sustainability of shellfish culture operations. The implementation of environmental Codes of Practice and the identification, protection and allocation of capable land are also significant components in achieving environmental sustainability for the industry.

### **G. Food Safety**

The continued production of safe, wholesome shellfish products for consumers is of the highest priority for the shellfish aquaculture industry. To this end, industry requires on farm food safety systems to be developed and implemented. There is also a clear need for delivery of appropriate and necessary water quality monitoring programs in more remote areas where shellfish aquaculture is targeted for future growth.

### **H. Business Development**

For businesses to grow and expand, growers need accurate business information to plan effectively. New marketing alliances and partnerships must be explored to create sustained long-term marketing opportunities. Access to capital, increased mechanization and adequate infrastructure are also key aspects of long-term business development.

A Steering Committee was established at the end of the workshop to oversee the compilation of the Workshop Proceedings and assist in the development of an industry Action Plan. It was agreed that the Action Plan should support the "70 in 5" vision, address the prioritized needs and clarify the necessary steps for building a world class industry.

To develop a collaborative industry Action Plan, research requirements were linked with each of the 8 key themes identified in the workshop (see above). This resulted in a list of key projects that if undertaken would measurably increase the chances of reaching the goal of "70 in 5". Details on each project, along with suggested lead and support agencies and organizations, are included in the Action Plan.

Workshop participants confirmed their support for the Proceedings and Action Plan at a follow-up meeting in October. In a "call to action", participants were encouraged to integrate those projects relevant to their mandate within their agencies strategic/service plan. Of the 30 listed projects, 9 were already underway or in the advanced planning stage – indicating strong support and buy-in for this collaborative approach to developing an industry Action Plan. The Centre for Shellfish Research will coordinate an annual meeting to report progress in implementing the Action Plan and achievements in industry development.