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excellence in seafood
CANADA



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Did you Know?

The tongue of a blue whale is as long as an elephant.

Can you solve this Puzzle?

What is once in a minute, twice in a moment, and never in a thousand years?

Answer on Page 4

SEASON'S GREETINGS



Jamie Gaskill,
Production Director

Harvest Tells the Tale that Things are Looking Up

What's the difference between a pig farmer and a salmon farmer?

Well, more than just the smell of their boots. A pig farmer can walk around

the barn, count the pigs, and look at the condition of the crop on any given day and get a good idea of any improvements. Not as easy with salmon as of course they are mostly out of site and even the best sampling techniques are but just a small representation of what is happening. For us, we must wait until the fish are harvested before we know how well any improvement initiatives have worked.

As covered in last month's Wharfside, we still have room for improvement in growth, size, condition and quality. After 3-5 years of improvement initiatives in FW and SW, the results have really had the impatient among us wondering – "has any of it worked?" It all takes time: a change in feeding at the sea sites could take one if not two years to be realized, a hatchery improvement three years, and a change in broodstock might not produce a benefit for four years or more.

However, with the shift to the current harvest generation we are beginning to see the fruits of our labour. It may be too early to beat the drum, but here is a snap shot of some positive developments:

Plankton losses are down

By any measure 2011 has been a better year for lack of plankton losses. This is in part due to less plankton presence but also due to improved vigilance and mitigation measures by the farms, including sampling and aeration techniques. Year on year extraordinary losses are down by 25%.

Feeding rates and growth are up

The improvement in feeding has been most

impressive with farms now doing a very thorough job. The year started slowly but the second half results show increased feed rates and much better biomass gained vs. budget.

Condition factor has improved

The intent by the farmers to improve feeding and growth in their salmon resulted in better fish condition factor (general plumpness) with the Q4 results 9% higher than the average for the prior three quarters.

Premium % is up

The premium quality in Q4 has increased by 25% over the first three quarters of the year, driven by thicker fuller fish, less undersized fish, and fewer matures. Swanson, Chancellor, and Lee's Bay were at 92, 91, and 91% premium at the time of this writing.

Harvest sizes are greater

By the end of October, harvest sizes were running above book weight and above budget. Two farms, Swanson Island and Chancellor Channel had average weights 10% and 8% greater than budget respectively.

Even in tough times there are usually good things happening and we should pause to remind ourselves of these successes, even if they are just emerging.

Thank you for all of the effort, give yourself a pat on the back, keep up the momentum, and be thankful that we're not pig farmers!

Happy Holidays,

Jamie





No Confirmed cases of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) in BC

In October, unconfirmed results that Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) was found in juvenile wild sockeye salmon from Rivers Inlet were widely publicized by researchers at Simon Fraser University. Immediately after this announcement, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), in close collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Province of BC and the Atlantic Veterinary College, tested the same sample collection plus additional samples collected and confirmed no positive results for ISA.

“This is a significant result for everyone involved: researchers, regulators, wild salmon advocates, salmon farmers and our coastal communities,” said Mary Ellen Walling, British Columbia Salmon Farmers Association (BCSEA) Executive Director. “After seeing the original news distributed in such an inflammatory way, we hope this update will allay those concerns.”

The investigation’s testing has been ongoing since mid-October, when a laboratory at the Atlantic Veterinary College first reported that it had detected the virus.

Since then, DFO has tested all 48 samples received as part of the original reports and the results are all negative for the virus. These results are consistent with the findings of an independent laboratory in Norway, which also tested samples associated with this investigation



and provided a report to the CFIA.

“This is a good example of why proper sampling, testing and reporting procedures are in place and should be followed: the unconfirmed report from Simon Fraser University appeared to be designed to create as much hype as possible. This has cost significant resources in time and money in emergency follow-up while also potentially impacting international markets for our business,” said Walling.

Additional testing continues and results will be provided when ready.

“It has been a difficult few weeks for the fishing industry in British Columbia, and across the country, while waiting for these preliminary test results to come back,” said Keith Ashfield, Federal Minister of DFO. “Because some have chosen to draw conclusions based on

unconfirmed information, this has resulted in British Columbia’s fishing industry and Canada’s reputation being put at risk needlessly.”

As part of the investigation, the CFIA and DFO are also looking at how the samples were collected, handled, transported and stored.

In recent years, over 5,000 wild and farmed salmon in BC have been tested by the Federal Government and the Province of BC and none have ever tested positive for the disease. ISA poses no risk to people.

BC Minister of Agriculture, Don McRae stated “It is vitally important that we base our policy decisions on sound science so as to preserve and protect BC’s reputation as a reliable supplier of high quality seafood to the world. This is particularly true for the dozens of coastal communities that rely on wild and farmed fisheries to feed their families and maintain their way of life. Reckless allegations based on incomplete science can be devastating to these communities and unfair to the families that make a living from the sea.”

The CFIA, in collaboration with DFO and the Province of BC, is assessing the current testing levels for this virus in both wild and aquaculture populations in BC and will increase surveillance activities as required.



Arrow Pass farm site, Broughton Archipelago

Want another acronym? BAMP!

Quietly and without fanfare, an utterly unprecedented collaborative research project has begun; a research project involving some very strange and unexpected bedfellows.

Initiated by Marine Harvest Canada (MHC) and the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), the Broughton Area Monitoring Plan has brought together co-sponsors and scientists from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the three largest salmon farming operators in BC (MHC, Mainstream Canada and Grieg Seafood), academic researcher Dr. Martin Krkosek and the

professor of Epidemiology with the University of Prince Edward Island, Dr. Crawford Revie.

Stemming from a related collaborative project developed by MHC and CAAR in 2008, the Broughton Archipelago Monitoring Plan (BAMP) began in 2010 as a multi-year sea lice monitoring and research program involving federal government, salmon farm producers, conservationists and academic researchers.

For more information about this unique research project, please visit www.bamp.ca



A Story of Three Grads—Building a Strong Educational Foundation

By Gina Forsyth

One route into the aquaculture industry is through post-secondary education. For those individuals choosing it, Vancouver Island University's (VIU) Fisheries and Aquaculture program in Nanaimo has provided a plethora of people with not only the theory but the practical knowledge needed to build a lasting career. Let's meet three Marine Harvest employees who are former students to discover the contribution their alma mater played in their current jobs.

If freshwater aquaculture is your primary interest, VIU's program provides the knowledge and tools

to open doors. For **Lance Page**, Hatchery Manager at Freshwater Farms in Duncan, graduating from the two year Fisheries and Aquaculture diploma program in 1993 has given him "the confidence, contacts, and knowledge" to successfully manage



Freshwater Farms hatchery in Duncan since late 2010. Prior to that, he was at United hatchery growing fry for 13 years.

"I started the program wanting to come out the other end with skills that I could put to work right away and I did," he said. Not only that, Lance originally planned to pursue wild salmon enhancement but the program opened his eyes

to aquaculture, an industry he appreciates for its variety of opportunities.

Following graduation, Lance's summer job at a trout hatchery became a permanent position and launched his aquaculture career. Before landing his current management position, Lance worked at two other freshwater facilities for Stolt Sea Farm and Pan Fish.

"VIU gave me the education I needed to make the switch from a job that paid the bills to a career that also pays the bills but which allows me to work with fish, a life-long passion of mine".

Bob Cearns came to the aquaculture industry after his shipping and receiving job at a Parksville non-profit organization was eliminated due to a company restructuring. A childhood spent in Manitoba enjoying the outdoors made the choice of aquaculture a good fit. "I like having the opportunity to work with fish from the smolt stage through to when they're ready for harvesting".



During a summer break from school, Bob worked at a smolt site in the Broughton for Stolt. This opportunity gave him the chance to build on the knowledge he'd gained while doing practicums at various government and private facilities on the Central Island.

"The value of the program for me was having the opportunity to not only gain knowledge in the classroom but to also experience the reality of the industry," he said. Bob reapplied to Stolt and found himself employed full time within two weeks of graduation in 2004. Campbell River North area (where he recently accepted a management position) became Bob's home base.



Graham Cruise, a farm technician at Koskimo Bay in the Quatsino region, chose VIU after extensive research on educational options that would allow him to be on the water, an important consideration for this self-confessed "coastal guy" who has spent nearly all his life near the ocean.

"I wanted something more specialized than a Bachelor of Science and the two year diploma program suited me very well," he said. "It prepared me well for the reality of the day to day tasks faced on the farm."

He particularly appreciated the fish biology course. It was an overview of the broad spectrum of fish, from tropical to freshwater and deep water. Graham saw samples of fish he wouldn't have otherwise.

For more information about the opportunities at VIU, visit www.viu.ca

A life of contrasts fully embraced by Orca Chief team member

By Gina Forsyth



Harry Olafsen, Engineer on the Orca Chief, is a Marine Harvest employee who has made shift work a regular part of his life. But his commute takes him from the coast he loves to his home in the Okanagan Valley, east of Vancouver – one of the driest regions of BC. "I've got the best of both worlds," he said, a smile evident in his voice.

The Orca Chief, one of the Marine Harvest work boats, moves fish to farm sites and also plays a

part in grading fish for size. Harry maintains the vessel and as part of this, he's responsible for ordering equipment and overseeing its successful installation.

Upon leaving high school, Harry became a third generation commercial fisherman, based in his home town of Richmond. A friend who Harry fished with told him about a temporary vacancy for an engineer on the Orca Chief. Harry applied and six years later, he's more than content with how the opportunity worked into a permanent position.

Harry made the move from Richmond to the Okanagan in 1975 and originally settled in Vernon. He now lives in Winfield, near Kelowna. He and his wife of 28 years, Sue, are proud of their three grown sons and small hobby farm. Harry's fruit trees take some upkeep of course but they're clearly something he's devoted to.

He loves sharing the fruity wealth from his Okanagan home with his co-workers whenever possible.

"I don't mind the drive to get home for days off, especially since I've got SIRIUS satellite radio," said Harry.



VIU Scholarship

Ian Roberts (MHC's Communication Manager) stopped by Vancouver Island University last month to award the Marine Harvest Salmon Aquaculture Scholarship to Michelle Bluhm. This endowment is valued at \$1500 and awarded annually to a second year Fisheries and Aquaculture student. Michelle was very pleased to receive the award and thanked MHC very much for the "much needed" assistance to her studies. She was also thrilled to have worked as a summer student at Mahatta West farm and asked Ian to pass along a big "HELLO!" to all staff in the Quatsino area.



MHC staff happy to be 17 again!

MHC staff were pleased to support the Campbell River Hospital Foundation at its latest fundraising event, "Timebenders". Playing hits from the 50's right up to the present, this incredible band played to an enthusiastic and packed crowd. With everyone dressing in clothing from their favourite genre, it was great fun.

MHC's very own Tom Conlon (Finance Director) was also the very lucky winner of the "Heads or Tails" contest. A flight and stay in Las Vegas for two will suit Tom and his wife Helen just fine!



Denise Hayward, Debbie Miller, Kristi Super and Adrienne David looking, like, totally rad.



Thanks Marine Harvest!

North Island College student, Michelle Douglas, was thrilled to have recently received the Bob Minkler Memorial Bursary from Dean Dobrinsky (Human Resources Director at MHC). Michelle wrote “Thank you very much for helping to make it possible for me to reach my education goals!” To learn more about the Bob Minkler Memorial Bursary and other scholarships that MHC funds, please visit http://www.marineharvestcanada.com/careers_scholarships.php

Rock On!



Rick McFarlane (right) and Dean Thulin (centre) dropped by the office to gift MHC with a memorial plaque commemorating their win at the 2010 Canadian Firefighter’s Curling Championships. MHC helped sponsor ‘Team BC’ and provided salmon for one of the dinners.



(l-r) Rick McFarlane (lead), Rob Robinson (second), Dean Thulin (skip), Ken Dawson (third)



2011 Food Bank Challenge

For the third year in a row, the Fish Health & Food Safety team at MHC and St. Jean's Cannery in Nanaimo have stepped up to help out the Food Bank at one of the busiest times of the year. Marine Harvest Canada provided the salmon fillet and the FH&FS team provided the funding to have the product canned at St. Jean's Cannery. St.

Jean's provided free shipping, and a fantastic price to do the canning for us!

To be able to gift over 100 families with such a tasty and healthy source of protein is a wonderful thing, and I encourage all the other department staff to meet or beat our efforts!

My personal thanks go to Nirmal at St. Jean's Cannery, and each and every member of our "Team": Tiffany MacWilliam, Meghan Mills, Brad Boyce, Gilka LaTrace and Diane Morrison. The spirit of generosity of these people has enabled this challenge to be met in a very unique way.

Submitted by Jean Veale



So how about it everyone? Let's take on Jean's challenge! Vancouver Island food banks are always in high demand during the holiday season and MHC strongly encourages each

operating area to coordinate donations to their local food bank, hamper fund or similar charity. MHC will start us off by committing \$2000 to Campbell River initiatives and another

\$2000 to similar drives in Port Hardy. If you have donations being delivered, please let us know via Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/MHCanada>



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Comments about this newsletter?

Please email comments, articles and ideas to Ian Roberts, Communication Manager at ian.roberts@marineharvest.com

