

# The Prawn Report



AUSTRALIAN  
**Prawn  
Farmers**  
ASSOCIATION

## Quarterly report of The Australian Prawn Farmers Association

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### AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010 EDITION

#### 2010 APFA & ABFA RIDLEY CONFERENCE

The 2010 Ridley Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) and Australian Barramundi Farmers Association (ABFA) conference has been hailed a great success.

The Conference was this year held at the Sofitel, Gold Coast from August 5 to 6, 2010. The theme "Proudly Australian Produced" attracted more than 200 delegates to the action packed two day event. The program featured high profile international and national speakers run parallel with breakout sessions covering topics such as algae management, vet disease identification, media training and cooking with renowned chef Mark Maric from his new Brisbane restaurant Dish Bistro.

Thanks must go to Graham Dalton, Dr Richard Smullen and Kristian Just who assisted in developing the conference program. Thanks again to Julie Lisle for running the front registration desk and handling enquiries and Wil Con for ensuring speakers ran on time and for those who willingly chaired various sessions.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

The highlight of this year's conference was the numerous breakout sessions. Internationally renowned algae expert Professor Gustaaf Hallegraef (sponsored by NSW Industry and Investment, FRDC and Seafood CRC) took a look at algae species through the microscope. Gustaaf found this educational from his point of view as well and is still shaking his head at how we manage to grow prawns with a mixture of molasses and bicarb!!!

Key points from other high profile speakers included

Coles are shifting the way they sell



Above: Industry Advocate Hagen Stehr.

APFA President Nick Moore gives his opening speech at the Conference calling for support in relation to amend the country of origin labelling laws.

seafood from "We supply basic seafood" to "Proud to be Australia's number 1 supermarket destination for seafood everyday". Mark Simonis and Jon Haggett gave delegates an overview of their consumers – who want to purchase seafood because low in cholesterol and fat, recommended by experts and dieticians, "brain" food for kids, high in omega 3/6 oils, strong demand for local and environmentally sustainable seafood – despite these reasons consumers are overwhelmed by the seafood buying experience. They lack confidence in cooking, confused by fish names, easily ruined during cooking, smell and bones. Coles are looking for hero lines to appeal to these consumers and boneless fillets and prawns fit that category.

Sealord's Jason Plato gave a simple message, although relative to barramundi could be something that we could all learn from – "Too much emphasis on competing against other producers, a number of small players, difficult to have year round marketing and sales programs, more value through cohesion. Jason felt it was important for "Made in Australia" to be more than just a sticker. To give consumers a reason why they should buy local and on imports – there is a place "Differentiate" rather than "Defend".

Gus Dannoun from Sydney Fish Market (SFM) told the audience what was important to them – sustainability principles, consistency of supply, good range, accurate labelling, quality products, SFM is the market of choice, traceability, commitment to quality and service and satisfying



Above: Professor Gustaaf Hallegraef presents the algae workshop

Below: Sydney Fish Market Supply Manager Gus Dannoun

Bottom: National Aquaculture Council's CEO Justin Fromm



customers' needs. SFM should not be treated at a dumping house, does not have the lowest prices for seafood and auction buyers do not seek to drive prices lower. The top requirement for buyers at SFM was Product Quality.



Above: Ben Hale from Queensland's Prawn Promotion

**National Aquaculture Council** - CEO Justin Fromm bravely fronted the audience and told that there was not enough support for the continuation of the NAC as we know it. The NAC Board had met the day before and had made the decision to wind back NAC to an affordable level.

Below: Sam Kekovich gives Conference attendees a dose of his irreverent style urging us to be proud Australians.....



Despite this Justin agreed that "...aquaculture production is subject to an unnecessary complex array of legislation and agencies – covering marine and coastal management, environmental management, land use planning, land tenure, native title and quarantine and translocation.

Day two kicked off with a Water Quality plenary. Associate Professor Niels Jorgensen from Denmark led the presentations with his experience of rainbow trout taints and the recirculated systems used in Denmark. This was followed by Professor Gustaaf Halegraef and the role of algae in water quality and Dr David Smith discussed the results of Australia's biofloc research project to Steven Magarry a PhD student sharing his research on the use of microalgae being a green approach for aquaculture industry diversification.

**THANKS**

Our thanks go to Darren and Andrew Bray from Grobest who supplied the welcome reception beverages and finger food. INSERT LOGO



Above: Craig Winkel accepting the award for Best retail and/or restaurant use of farmed Prawns and/or Barramundi

Wines for the Conference were supplied by Graham Dalton – Amber Hill winery

Below: Noel Herbst inaugural inductee into the APFA hall of fame 2010.



Prawns and barramundi were supplied by Gold Coast Marine Aquaculture, Sea farm, Humpty Doo and King Reef Barramundi.

**STUDENT AWARDS POSTER**

Student poster awards sponsored by Mark Oliver of Aquaculture Support Services were awarded to:

- First prize - \$300 Vijay Mareddy
- Second prize - \$200 Paul Palmer
- Third prize - \$100 Steve Magarry & David Lin



Above: CSIRO Scientist Dr Nigel Preston has worked hard over the years to ensure that our industry is sustainable and can keep growing.

Below: Conference attendees gained an insight into some cooking ideas



**APFA AWARDS**

Winner of Best Sustainability Initiative awarded to – Australian Prawn Farms. Proudly sponsored by CSIRO Food Futures Flagship

*Recognition for services to the Barramundi farming industry awarded to – Dr Andy Barnes.* Proudly sponsored by Australian Barramundi Farmers Association.

*Recognition for services to the Prawn farming industry awarded to – Noel Herbst.* Proudly sponsored by Australian Prawn Farmers Association.

*Recognition for support and dedication to the Prawn farming industry awarded to - Dr Nigel Preston.* Proudly sponsored by Australian Prawn Farmers Association.

*Best retail or restaurant use of Australian farmed Prawns or Barramundi awarded to - Fish@Chancellor.* Proudly sponsored by Seafood Services Australia.

*Winner of the Most Innovative Research Paper - Ben Jones a student from JCU.* Proudly sponsored by FRDC.

**APFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Finally the General Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the APFA held on Friday August 6 2010. An excellent turn up of members attended the GM and AGM. The following Executive Committee were elected:

- President – Nick Moore (only for one more year)
- Vice President – Alistair Dick
- Treasurer – Sharon Pullen
- Trevor Anderson
- Matt West
- John Moloney
- Warren Lewis

The R & D Committee changes to note: Lisa Elliot resigned, Tony Childs nominated

Other existing members include:

- Dr Richard Smullen
- Ting Chou Ko
- Brett Swann
- Luke Rossmann
- Andrew Crole
- Brad Callcott

### **PRAWN AND BARRAMUNDI INDUSTRIES CALL FOR CLEAR LABELLING ON COOKED SEAFOOD**

PRAWN and barramundi farmers have this month called on all political parties to support better country-of-origin labelling for the seafood industry in the lead up to the Federal election. At the recent APFA & ABFA conference on the Gold Coast, farmers and industry passed an overwhelming motion of support demanding that all sides of politics support a system of clear labelling for cooked seafood. APFA President Nick Moore said while there were current requirements for labelling in supermarkets, the system was let down by the glaring omission of labelling at restaurants and fish and chip shops. "It's time our politicians sorted this out," he said. "With the Federal Election just a few weeks away, now is the time for politicians to deliver improved country-of-origin labelling for cooked seafood."

On opening the 2010 APFA and ABFA Conference, ABFA President Ken Chapman and APFA President Nick Moore called for a show of hands seeking political support in extending country of origin labelling to all seafood used on menus in restaurants and take away. An overwhelming show of hands passed a resolution for this support.

### **APFA HISTORY SEARCH**

Dos O'Sullivan from Austasia Aquaculture is currently collating and collecting information in regards to the history of the APFA. Dos is keen to keep this as a work in progress and welcomes any photos or stories that he can keep adding to the history records that have now started. For more information, please email Dos at [dosaqua1@internode.on.net](mailto:dosaqua1@internode.on.net).

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRY SKILLING UPDATE**

#### **THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR MARK OLIVER**

*A couple of months ago now I was nominated as the Chair of the Queensland Aquaculture Skills Formation Strategy Industry Leadership Group. One of the main reasons I took it on is that I can now approach everything from a neutral perspective. Yes, I was with TAFE for many years but I am no longer there and am not aligned in any way with any government agencies whatsoever. This I believe is a great advantage in my role. I honestly believe that the goals and objectives of the Aquaculture Skills Formation Strategy are the right ones to help progress commercial aquaculture in Queensland. If there was one point I would like to emphasise to all industry members is that the Aquaculture*

*Skills Formation Strategy is YOUR strategy and the results of the strategy will be directly related to the information you give us. So ring us, write to us, email us, say hi to us when we drop in, and when we talk don't sugar coat it, tell us exactly what you want and how you want it. You never know, we just might be able to make something happen.*

*P.S Notice I didn't say the word training once because it's bigger than that. Training is important but it's the end product.*

Mark Oliver

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Chair – Queensland Aquaculture Skills Formation Strategy

### **FROM WIL CON – PROJECT MANAGER (SKILLS FORMATION STRATEGY)**

I hope that all is well, and those members that attended the APFA / ABFA conference in the Gold Coast had an enjoyable time. I have to admit, I am still chuckling at 'Slammin' Sam Kekovich's sense of humour and his skilful way with words.

To carry on from the brief presentation that I gave at the AGM the following report will detail some of the key areas that the Strategy, in conjunction with its Industry Leadership Group, and its Chair, Mark Oliver, is currently addressing with respect to the Queensland aquaculture industry.

#### **PREAMBLE – SFS revisited**

After talking with members at the conference, it was clear that there was a level of uncertainty with respect to the reasoning, alignment and aims of the Strategy. I acknowledge this position and it is one that I will address in this report and longer term through the development of an effective communication strategy in conjunction with Mark Oliver.

*Q. The SFS is trying to benefit.*

The whole of Queensland Aquaculture. It is focused across all industry sectors and the whole of Queensland. This in itself has presented specific challenges that have been met with varying levels of success! For the record the Queensland Aquaculture Industry is currently comprised of the following sectors; Prawns, Barramundi, Freshwater sector including native species, Tropical Abalone, Crabs, Sea Cucumber, Crayfish, Oysters, Pearls, Scallops, Seaweeds. Not to mention hatchery, aquarium, emergent species (e.g. coral / sponges), processing and marketing.

*Q. Current focus of the SFS*

The Industry Leadership Group is identifying and articulating key areas critical to the advancement of the Queensland aquaculture Industry. To determine those areas that the SFS will be able to advance through communication and workforce development initiatives. As these areas are identified and advanced, further representation will be sought from the wider industry to ensure voracity and

endorsement of actions. The current industry members of the Leadership Group are; Helen Jenkins, Alistair Dick, Bruce Sambell, Craig Winkel and Graham Dalton.

*Q. Final outcome?*

The development of a sustainable robust and responsive framework that delivers the capacity for Industry to have a recognised forum whereby it can independently state its needs, affords a high level of involvement in determining how these needs are addressed and to ultimately have a high level of ownership of the resultant pathways and resources that facilitate successful outcomes to Industry identified needs.

## **SELECTION OF CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS OF THE SFS**

• Development of an industry focused approach to training and up-skilling

This is in direct reference to the existing workforce. As mentioned at the conference there is an opportunity for our Industry to develop a training 'package' specific to Industry requirements, in essence a collection of skill sets bundled together. If successful this would be a rare and invaluable opportunity for industry to partake in. A successful outcome, as evidenced by level of uptake of 'the package' could provide for a dynamic change in how our industry is viewed with long standing benefits to all industry members. This is with respect to funded training as provided by the Productivity Places Program, through brokerage by The Queensland Rural Industry Training Council and Cadetships as supported through Agrifood Skills Australia.

During the AGM, management skills were mentioned as comprising the content of these potential packages. It is important to note that final content will be guided by the Leadership Group and feedback from industry members. With Mark Oliver's experience in this area we are striving to arrive at the successful realisation of these 'bespoke' packages for industry.

On a differing level, it has been brought to the SFS's attention that there is an acute need for an increase in the numbers of fully trained aquaculture veterinarians within Queensland and Nationally. I believe that there are three such suitably qualified professionals within Australia. After an approach from Matt Landos of Future Fisheries Veterinary Services, this is a stated concern that we hope to be able to direct resources towards.

• Aquaculture and Electrical (ongoing)

Work continues to ensure progress on this industry wide priority. As reported previously, current focus is on the production and presentation of a 'Check List Book' to industry members. This will deliver information and a step through guide to undertaking electrical work in aquaculture operations. This should allow members to scan the readiness and capacity of their workplaces with respect to electrical operations and undertake the necessary measures to

ensure compliance with current regulation and legislation. A funding application is being submitted on the 1st October 2010 with a roll out of the book and associated workshops touted for February 2011. The application contains the support and commitment of the following;

1. Queensland Aquaculture Industry Federation
2. Queensland Aquaculture Skills Formation Strategy
3. Dept. Employment Economic Development and Innovation – Industry Development – Innovation Dept – Queensland Fisheries
4. Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.
5. Northern Territory Seafood Council
6. DEEDI - Rural Skills and Labour Strategy
7. Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE
8. Australian Agricultural College Corporation
9. Registered Training organisations
10. (Please excuse industry sector acronyms) APFA / ABFA / AAQ / QOGA / QPI / QCFA / ATA / QSS / SPS

• Alignment of Research and Development with that of Industry stated needs

Greg Crossan (DEEDI), as a member of the SFS Leadership Group and in his capacity as Manager of Skills Formation Strategies has had initial talks with stakeholders on the possibility of holding a forum to discuss the alignment of R&D direction with that of our industry's stated needs.

Whilst in its early stages this could afford an opportunity for industry members through representation on a relevant panel to state industry's R&D priorities. This could allow for the production of 'farm ready' technology / practices that can be incorporated into the operational practices of farms to deliver immediate and tangible benefits to the industry. This could also provide for an opportunity to develop required training to enhance the uptake and management of R&D advancements. An example of this could be directly applicable to the development of novel water technologies to allow sustainable growth of our industry within current operational and environmental legislation.

• Promotion of our industry – Attraction and Retention of workers

With no new significant farm entrant into our industry in the last ten years, our workforce size has remained relatively stable over that time period. This trend places specific demands on the current workforce and on to potential new entrants into the industry.

Work is being undertaken to ascertain the human resource need of our industry in order to realise stated sector and industry development plans. What is our capacity to place new entrants into the industry and what actions need to be taken to maximise the retention and further development of existing experienced workers?

Why is this important? In the context of static workforce growth a recent report states that our industry displays one of the highest median age workforces in Australia at 48 years. Our Industry contains a particularly high

proportion of workers aged over 55 years (35.8%) and disproportionately low number of workers aged less than 35 years (23.6%).

The above dynamic is not one that supports inadequate attraction of new blood to our industry or poor performance in retention of existing skilled workers. Whilst not a priority for some, the topic of succession, and how it applies to all levels of worker within our industry, needs to be addressed.

At the recent conference, banners stated that barramundi and prawns were "Proudly Australian Produced". Our industry workers are also proudly Australian produced and this body of work hopes to ensure that the calibre of entrant into our industry and the progression of existing workers is every bit equal to that of the acknowledged quality of produce and dynamic attitude of the industry at large.

Till next time, co-operate, collaborate and innovate!

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **VISITING EXPERTS**

Thanks to a successful application to the FRDC the APFA were able to part fund Professor Niels Jorgensen from Denmark and water-quality expert Professor Claude Boyd to visit Australia shortly. Prof Boyd will visit from September 27 to October 1 and will visit farms in across Queensland and NSW as well as a host of government agencies to discuss water quality science with regard to aquaculture and development. Both men will also attend "*The way forward with discharge licensing for the Queensland aquaculture industry*", which will be held on September 29 at the Department of Economic Employment, Development and Innovation in Brisbane.

### **NOVEMBER MELBOURNE CONFERENCE**

APFA members are being invited to attend the upcoming International Seafood and Health Conference to be held from November 6 to 10 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. The APFA is prepared to host a booth where our members can be on hand to educate the public about our wonderful farmed produce.

Executive Officer Helen Jenkins has asked for a commitment from farm members of the APFA to contribute prawns to the World's Biggest Prawn Cocktail which will be held during this conference - with an attempt to beat the current Guinness Book of Records attempt and will need at least 100kg of prawns.

Sydney Fish Market has offered to support this event and will share half the costs and be involved in the promotion. This will definitely get publicity and it is estimated that 30,000 people will be educated in the process. For more information, please contact Helen Jenkins at [info@apfa.com.au](mailto:info@apfa.com.au) for more details or go the conference website [www.seafoodhealthconference.com](http://www.seafoodhealthconference.com).

### **WANT TO BE A BETTER, MORE PERSUASIVE BUSINESS LEADER?**

As part of the Seafood CRC's commitment to provide training in business skills (with a strong seafood focus),

we are pleased to help you improve your business communication skills! Come and improve your skills in different business topics with the CRC and with other "seafoodies" in a fun, relaxed and interactive environment with some fantastic and inspiring business coaches. As a bonus, if you wish to complete other modules in our Business Skills 101 course and do "homework" you can walk away with a Seafood CRC Professional Diploma in Entrepreneurship!

Our September Module Facilitator will be presented by Aubrey Warren, an experienced learning and development professional who develops and delivers training in the areas of leadership, communication and coaching.

**Cost:** Free

**When:** 12pm Saturday September 18 to 1pm Monday September 20.

**Where:** Brisbane. Venue and other details will be provided upon your RSVP.

For more information contact Emily Mantilla by Monday September 13 2010 on 08 8201 7652 or [emily.mantilla@seafoodcrc.com](mailto:emily.mantilla@seafoodcrc.com).

### **ENERGY COSTS ARE RISING – WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

This new "Farm-Ready" project, part funded by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, will this season see CSIRO Energy Technology specialists examine energy use at a variety of prawn farms. Options for how the industry might respond to rising energy costs will be developed using the information gained.

The Farm-Ready Scheme is designed to help farmers examine information to hand and farming practices to help them adapt to Climate Change. This project is an opportunity for prawn farmers to step back and decide where it's best to spend their energy dollar.

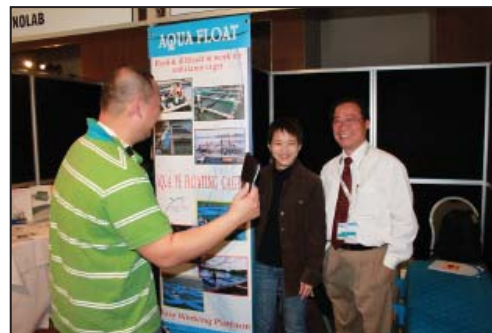
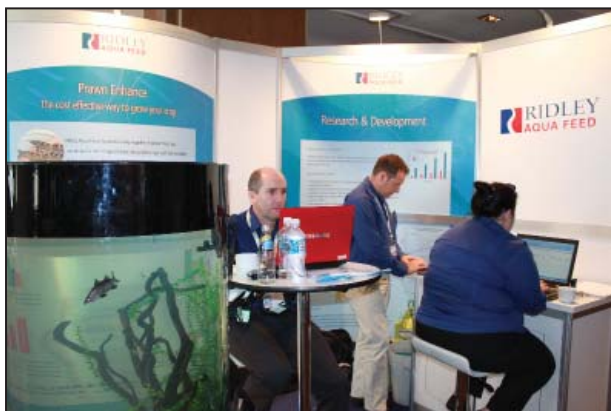
The project will examine energy usage at several prawn farms throughout the state, incorporating practices such as hatchery, grow-out and postharvest processing and storage and build this into a series of generic farms (say of different size, with removable hatchery/processing components) which can then be matched against renewable or alternative energy systems. The project will make some recommendations about innovations and modifications that could help farmers in general but it won't be a farm by farm "energy efficiency" audit.

### **AQUATIC ANIMAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

The FRDC Aquatic Animal Health Subprogram (AAHS) is pleased to announce the First Australasian Scientific Conference on Aquatic Animal Health to be held at the Pullman Reef Hotel in Cairns, from July 5 to 8, 2011.

The conference will provide a forum for presentation of diagnostic, research, management and policy issues encompassing all areas of aquatic animal health and bio-security. If you would like to receive more information please contact Joanne Slater, FRDC Aquatic Animal Health Subprogram Coordinator to [joanne.slater@csiro.au](mailto:joanne.slater@csiro.au).

Some more photos from the Conference....



Top left: Conference Gold Sponsor Ridley representatives get ready for conference attendees. Far Right: Bruce from Aquasonic puts the final touches on his stand. 2nd Right from top: Bluey from Rotomas secures a sale. Left 2nd from top: A Seafood Services Australia (SSA) representative sets up their display. 3rd from top, left: Scott from Technolab sets up his display. Centre (main): Julie Lisle takes care of the front desk Centre (bottom): Representatives from Grobest Australia Grobest were sponsors of the Welcome Reception. 3rd from top, right: Representatives from Amcor. 4th from top: Abigail Elizur accepts the award from Mark Oliver on behalf of Vijay Mareddy. Bottom left: The networking sessions seemed fairly popular. Bottom Right: Reg from TTP Plastics seems pretty happy with his display. *Photos courtesy Brad Pfeffer QFF.*