

Fish Tales Newsletter

West Virginia's Aquaculture Newsletter is produced to help inform, educate, and update those interested in producing quality aquatic products, in a sustainable manner, for the recreational and food fish markets.

2005 West Virginia Aquaculture Forum

“Growing fish for personal use” is the theme for the 2005 **Aquaculture Forum**. Each January about 100 aquaculture enthusiasts from West Virginia and adjacent states gather for this event. The one-day meeting will be held in the Assembly Hall at the WVU Jackson's Mill Center for Lifelong Learning (<http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/depts/jmill/jmill.htm>) on Saturday, Jan. 15, 2005. The day will consist of presentations, a business meeting of the West Virginia Aquaculture Association, posters describing the latest aquaculture research from West Virginia, vendor booths, a showcase of West Virginia aquaculture products, and an opportunity to meet and speak with fish folks from the region. This year's meeting will be especially useful to people who have not previously grown fish.

Presentations by WVU aquaculture extension staff will explain how to grow fish for personal use. Ken Semmens will describe what fish to grow and how to grow them. He will also give some tips on purchasing live fish. Rodney Kiser will describe how to transport small quantities of live fish and where to get aquaculture materials and supplies. Dan Miller will describe different production systems and provide some tips on pond management. Julie Delabbio of Bluefield State College will present her annual review of developments in the West Virginia aquaculture industry. There will also be a presentation describing the health benefits of eating farm-raised fish. Lunch will showcase West Virginia aquaculture products.

Door prizes, a variety of posters describing aquaculture research projects, and several display booths will be featured. During breaks, participants will have an opportunity to visit with a variety of fish folks.

Registration fees will include a lunch buffet of West Virginia aquaculture products. Early registration is \$10 per person and must be received by Jan. 7, 2005. On-site registration will be \$20. Registration information is posted on the Web at

<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/index.htm>.

You may also contact your county WVU Extension office or Becky Casteel at 304-293-6131, ext. 4231 (e-mail:

Becky.Casteel@mail.wvu.edu). Registration will also be taken at the door beginning at 8:30 a.m. The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m. (continued on last page)

W.Va. Stocking Regulations

Regulating release of fish, water animal and other aquatic organisms; stocking permit.

(a) It is unlawful for any person to release any fish, water animal or other aquatic organism, alive or dead, or any part, nest or egg thereof into the waters of this state except as authorized by a stocking permit issued by the director:

Provided, That nothing in this subsection shall be construed as restricting the release of fish, water animal or other aquatic organism into the waters of this state from which they were taken by lawful methods: Provided, however, That nothing in this subsection shall be construed as restricting the release of native or established species of fish in privately owned ponds.

(b) A stocking permit is not required for the stocking of trout in waters of the state provided that the trout originate from a source within the state or meet the disease free certification requirements for imported salmonidae set forth in section thirteen of this article.

(c) A stocking permit is not required for the stocking of black bass provided that the division of natural resources is notified prior to stocking and is provided a disease free certification.

Did YOU KNOW?

A very inexpensive way to advertise a fee fishing location is to participate in the new W. Va. Fee Fishing Brochure that will be updated and produced by WVU's Extension Service. A grant for \$2500 is available to WVU's Extension Service provided that at least six W.Va. fee fishing locations contribute \$100 each toward the printing and statewide distribution of 30,000 color fee fishing brochures.

The cost of this promotion exceeds \$5000. Most of the cost is paid for by the W. Va. Division of Tourism and West Virginia University to promote the development of aquaculture and tourism in the state. **For those who would like to see this program continue, the deadline for participation is Jan.15, 2005.** Participants must be willing to contribute at least \$100 to the cost of the project, (payments made out to WVU) please send in your money or contact Dan Miller at 304-293-4832 ext. 4465 or dmille31@wvu.edu



An error was found in the Fall 2004 newsletter concerning the Global Aquaculture Alliance's web site. The correct web address is: www.gaalliance.org

Organic Aquaculture Products?

Did you know that the organic food industry is worth over 10 billion dollars in the United States alone? It is growing fast as more and more producers become certified organic growers. In a recent study by WVU's Dr. Cheryl Brown, it was found that the retail value of all certified organic food products was 49% higher than the same non-organic products. How do you qualify to become an organic producer? What are the requirements for becoming a certified organic producer in aquaculture?

Fishtales Newsletter will be addressing this evolving issue here and in future articles. It can be a lucrative market for certain products. If you are thinking about producing an organic fish product keep yourself informed by reading the plethora of information. In this issue *Fishtales Newsletter* will begin to address the many issues facing the organic aquaculture industry.

Organic certification addresses the **processes** involved in production rather than the qualities of the product itself. Organic standards are developed to regulate the practices and materials used in agricultural production. A goal of certified organic production is to verify and communicate to consumers that production systems are in place that will promote biological cycles, and biological activity by managing the production system as an integrated whole.

Land based organic standards cannot be directly applied to aquaculture systems. However, feed ingredients, livestock origin, living conditions, health services, and waste management, share the same principles in the water as well as on the land. Considerable variation can be found in different regions or organizations.

Record keeping is critical to organic certification. Consider just one issue dealing with the final product, in this case a trout. Was the management of the broodstock done according to organic standards? What chemicals are acceptable during egg incubation? Were the fingerlings produced under accepted conditions? What density and flow rate is considered acceptable? Questions abound.

If non-organic fingerlings are purchased and 90% of the biomass gain was under organic management is the trout considered organic? Fish meal is a contentious issue in aquaculture. For organic fish producers, the source of fish meal is an important factor for organic certification. What are the sources of fishmeal? If it comes from the waste stream from a processing plant can it still be organic? All of these questions and many more are being addressed by numerous committees in many different countries. (see **Organic** on page 3)

Ken's Corner

In July of 2004, Ohio implemented new fish health regulations that will affect some of our trout producers (<http://www.ohioagriculture.gov/pubs/divs/anim/curr/law/anim-law-index.stm>). Trout imported into the state of Ohio must be “accompanied by a fish health inspection and testing report signed by a certified fish health inspector or veterinarian verifying that the facility has been inspected by either a licensed accredited veterinarian or a certified fish health inspector and tested by an accredited laboratory” . Fish being imported into Ohio from any state must be tested for Ceratomyxosis (*Ceratomyxa shasta*); Infectious hematopoietic necrosis; Infectious pancreatic necrosis; Infectious salmon anemia, (when originating from a state or zone where it has been reported); Proliferative kidney disease; Viral hemorrhagic septicemia; and Whirling disease (*Myxobolus cerebralis*).

I received a call from a distributor asking if I could help him determine his options if he was to deliver WV trout to his Ohio customers. After calling various people in half a dozen states, I made several recommendations. A list of labs which can test for fish pathogens is at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nvsl/labcertification/aquaapplab.htm> . I found only one lab which did all the tests required – Micro Technologies, Inc (MTI). in Richmond Maine (207.737-2637 <http://www.microtechnologies.biz/index.htm>). The Maryland Fish Health Diagnostic Laboratory can do most of the tests, but I have not been able to determine if they test for Proliferative Kidney Disease. MTI is a private lab which can perform the testing on whole fish shipped to the lab or on samples collected by third party vets, or qualified fish health inspectors.

Fortunately ISA is has not been reported from WV, so our trout growers must test for six of the seven pathogens listed above. As best I can determine, the fee required by the lab to test the 60 fish required for certification ranges from \$700 to about \$1000. To maintain certification, the testing must be done annually. If the fish do not pass the lab test and if the facility does not pass inspection, the trout cannot be imported into Ohio.

Our State Veterinarian is interested in helping our fish growers solve these problems, but the WV Department of Agriculture does not have the ability to certify trout farms free from specific pathogens. In time perhaps our farms shipping across state lines will find a way to obtain the necessary health certification. For the moment though, there is a new barrier to exporting WV trout to Ohio and the price of live trout in Ohio may have increased.

(Organic from page 2)

Organizations in Europe have defined the requirements for certified organic seafood, and the United States Department of Agriculture is looking at what the Europeans have done as they try to determine what can qualify as a certified organic seafood product. The recently formed National Organic Aquaculture Work Group is also expected to make significant contributions toward a national standard. The Aquaculture America 2005 meeting in January will discuss what may be required in the process of producing an organic seafood product.

Presently the United States Department of Agriculture’s organic certification program does not include all seafood products. The U. S. Dept. of Agriculture has certified *Ocean Boy Farms*, a marine shrimp producer in southern Florida, as an organic producer. As a result, Ocean Boy products sell for a premium price. For now, it is a buyer beware market, because it is not illegal (yet) to promote a seafood product as organic, regardless of the process used to produce the product.

It will take time for all of the complexities to be agreed upon. Then the various organizations in different countries will have to try to standardize the certification guidelines to meet the globalization of the markets. For more information please visit: www.organicconsumers.org/

This segment of agriculture is sure to grow in the near future.

Ownership change at Virginia Trout Co.

Bryan Plemmons, owner of Castaline Trout Farm in Goshen, Va recently acquired the Virginia Trout Company located in Monterey, Va. The Virginia Trout Company has two main sites in Highland County and contracts with other producers. The same management and people previously associated with the company, have been retained. They produce 150,000-170,000 pounds per year and sell fish for stocking and processing.

Aquaculture Forum - continued from page 1

The meeting is sponsored by the West Virginia University Extension Service, the West Virginia Aquaculture Association, and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. It is coordinated by Ken Semmens, WVU Extension Specialist – Aquaculture. He can be reached at 304-293-6131, ext. 4211 or via e-mail (Ken.Semmens@mail.wvu.edu).

We are encouraging contributions to Fishtales newsletter by W.Va. residents. If interested in contributing please contact Dan Miller at dmille31@wvu.edu or call 304-293-4832 ext. 4465. The deadline for the next issue of Fishtales is March 15, 2005

This publication is available in a printable format, on the web at:
<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/newsletter.htm>