

# NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRIES

SUMMER 2016

## WELCOME TO OUR QUARTLY NEWSLETTER

At ASI, we're interested in collaboratively advancing the Australian oyster industry.

We've redesigned our website and have started an online newsletter because we want you to have the best information faster. You can sign up for news updates through the ASI website ([www.asioysters.com.au](http://www.asioysters.com.au)). We welcome any feedback and look forward to keeping in touch with you.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 02 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Moving forward, we are standing with industry and ensuring a bright future for everyone.

### 04 CRCP GRANT

The CRCp is bringing together ASI, industry and researchers to work on understanding and managing POMS.

### 08 ASI STOCK PERFORMANCE

We have been getting excellent results Post POMS outbreak with some families surviving up to 90%.

# MOVING FORWARD: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It has been a very busy time at ASI since the outbreak of POMS in Tasmania. It has been a very difficult time for Pacific Oyster growers too, as a result of heavy stock losses in Tasmania and lack of seed supply in South Australia and New South Wales.

In these difficult times please take some comfort in knowing that the team at ASI is doing everything possible to ensure that this industry has a bright future.

Like many in industry, ASI's income stream has been severely reduced by the POMS outbreak, to the point where the board was holding weekly meetings to be satisfied that the company remained solvent. This situation was alleviated when, at the 11th hour, a grant was received from the Australian government to continue our operations. This was a huge relief to all and allows us to continue breeding POMS resistant oysters with the urgency that the situation requires.

A condition of the grant from the government requires ASI to work with Oyster Australia, Oysters Tasmania and SAOGA.



**LEN STEPHENS**  
ASI CHAIR

on implementing some form of emergency disease response for the industry in the event of future disease outbreaks. We are willingly complying with this condition.

An additional positive consequence of the grant was that it provided ASI with the financial stability needed to assume lead organisation status for a new Cooperative Research Centre. This CRC involves all oyster species farmed in Australia but the largest project is the selective breeding of Pacific Oysters, at about 40% of the total budget.

The main objective of the CRC is CRC is to accelerate gains in POMS resistance in all States. More details are provided elsewhere



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in this newsletter. We are also very mindful that at the end of each CRC project the research results must be translated into practical solutions without incurring more costs for growers. Indeed, we would like the R&D to produce cost savings. The spat levy remains in place to ensure ASI will remain financially viable into the future. We recently received a request to reduce the levy for growers who buy large numbers of very small spat. The request came from Oysters Tasmania but we appreciate that some growers in South Australia are considering the same spat purchasing strategy. The ASI Board met by teleconference to discuss the request and resolved not to agree to it because there are too many “unknowns” surrounding ASI’s income over the coming years.

The Board’s primary responsibility is to ensure the company has sufficient cash to continue its operations on behalf of its shareholders. As a result, a conservative approach was taken to minimize any risk to the company. The board we will be

holding a strategic planning session and AGM in November. We would be happy for industry input into the strategic planning process so if you have anything you wish to be considered please email Matt ([matt@asioysters.com.au](mailto:matt@asioysters.com.au)) and we will add it to the agenda.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who helped to lobby the State and Australian governments for financial support for ASI. There was a lot of work behind the scenes to get this across the line.

You as industry must also take a great deal of credit. I firmly believe that the fact that industry itself proactively introduced the POMS breeding levy was a major factor in the Government’s decision to support industry in the way they did. So well done.

Len Stephens  
Chair, ASI



# NEW FUNDS FOR R&D TO BENEFIT INDUSTRY

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The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Programme is bringing together oyster industry and research bodies; a total of five million dollars over the next three years.

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Many of you will be familiar of the successful Oyster industry involvement with the Seafood CRC which wound up last year. CRC-P are the newest incarnation of this cooperative research approach and the Oyster industry has been buoyed by a successful bid in the first round.

So, what is the CRC-P all about? It's a competitive Australian Government grant which funds industry focused projects. In this funding round, 11 out of 90 applicants were successful; one of was the "CRC-P Futures Oysters" project. This project contains three programs: Better Oysters, Healthy Oysters, and More Oysters. ASI is the lead industry participant and is collaborating with other industry and research participants.

If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself - Henry Ford.



## CRC project meeting at IMAS.

CRC Project meeting held at the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) with input from industry, research bodies and universities.



## ITRG meeting in Melbourne.

ITRG meeting held in Melbourne, included representatives from TAS, NSW and SA from industry and technical service providers.

Industry and research provider investments are leveraged by commonwealth. For example, \$2 million are from Industry and research bodies and \$3 million from the Commonwealth across all species (Pacific Oyster, Sydney Rock, etc.) and states. Under Better Oyster program, the Pacific Oyster breeding is the largest project with approximately 40% of the budget and has seven areas of activity:

1

Breeding from POMS survivors

2

Breeding in South Australia for national flow of benefit

3

Developing translocation protocols between states

4

Furthering laboratory challenges

5

Benchmarking spat survival

6

Shortening reproduction times to fast track the breeding program

7

Genetic Identification test to identify ASI lines

Once the project has been finalised we will put the project application on the ASI website and will be giving regular updates on our progress.

# WORKING FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE OYSTER INDUSTRY

ASI's industry technical reference group (ITRG) met in Melbourne on July 5. The group comprises of representatives from industry and technical service providers.

The main focus of this meeting was on adapting to life with POMS and the proposed Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) project.

The ITRG looked at division of breeding efforts between TAS, SA and NSW, breeding activities in TAS/SA and the flow of benefits to NSW in managing POMS. The group formulated 10 recommendations around these issues for consideration to the ASI board. The full meeting minutes can be found on [www.asioysters.com.au](http://www.asioysters.com.au).

The ITRG was invited to give feedback on the activities proposed under the CRC project. All the activities listed were additional to the existing ASI genetic improvement program. The two major priorities were to:

- (1) ensure flow of benefits to all states with translocation protocols supporting broodstock movements and
- (2) develop technologies to allow accelerated genetic gains breeding technologies to increase family line production.



# ASI STOCK PERFORMING VERY WELL



**We found over 90% survival in our best YC14 family consistently across different sites.**

All engines have been full steam ahead since our successful YC15 breeding at IMAS and the POMS outbreak. We've had some incredible support from industry and research bodies carrying out our post POMS work. A big thank you to IMAS, CSIRO and Shellfish Culture in supporting us moving forward.

We've conducted extensive stock counts from all breeding years (2009 – 2014) across all our sites in Tasmania. We were so pleased to see our one year old YC14 elite families survive well under POMS (up to 90% survival) and seeing this pattern repeat across multiple sites.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

There's a lot of activity occurring within ASI. Currently, our focus is on two main areas: YC15 field trial preparation and production of our 2016 family lines. The arrival of POMS has required us to rethink protocols and operation procedures as is the case for all in industry.

ASI will be working hard over this summer, on weekends and holidays to make sure we can deliver the best outcome for industry in an uncertain time.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

## 1 Field Trials

Collecting high quality POMS mortality data requires well designed field trials. POMS outbreak patterns can be haphazard across leases or racks. Design field trials requires randomisation and replicates to mitigate result bias such as spatial effects. The outcome provides robust genetic information on POMS resistance.

Over the past month, we have set up experiments in three locations: Pipeclay, Pittwater and Little Swanport. A big thanks to Peter Kube (CSIRO), Justin Goc (Barilla Bay), Scott Parkinson / Michael Riley (Shellfish Culture), Hayden Dyke (Oyster Bay Oysters) for working with ASI on these trials.

Additionally, we will also be collecting data from commercially produced ASI lines to allow us to make robust predictions of performance on younger spat. We are in conversation with commercial producers which will be an opportunistic approach backed up by good stock record keeping.



## 2 YC16 Breeding

We are thankful for Gregg Smith and his team at IMAS. They've been working hard on overhauling the IMAS facility into a biosecure hatchery, allowing the successful production of YC16 families. The broodstock conditioning area is now finished and most of our YC13 and YC14 resistant lines are held in this dedicated room with strict biosecurity protocols.

Extensive work is now being done on larval rearing and spat settlement areas. Due to the significant amount of work required at the facility, our spawning dates have been pushed back. Spawning will kick off on the 21st November and the last of the families will hopefully be settled New Year's day.

## SPECIAL THANK YOU

We thank all ASI's partner organisations for their efforts so far, but in particular Peter Kube from CSIRO. ASI is a small organisation with an operational team of three. We gain strength from our collaborative groups such as CSIRO. Peter has been involved in the selective breeding program for over 10 years and his technical input and support has been a major reason for the successful outcomes we have achieved so far.

## YC15 broodstock catalogue is available online.

ASI is constantly striving to better communicate our family line production. As a follow on from our first annual broodstock catalogue, we have created a new redesigned catalogue for 2015; volume 2. This contains information on ASI and our stock selection techniques, photographs, descriptions and statistical information about our strongest performing lines. The current catalogue can be viewed on the ASI website. Our next edition for YC16 will be available soon.



# WELCOMING NEW STAFF

ASI has welcomed three new employees to their team, Lewa Pertl (Research Officer) and Graham Marshall (Company Secretary and Finance Manager), replacing Gabby Bennett and Box Cox. We thank both Gabby and Bob for their great work at ASI. We also welcome a new member to the team Nick Griggs as Operations Officer. See our website for their full profiles.

### **LEWA PERTL** Research Officer



You will often hear Lewa introducing herself as “Hi my name is Lewa (pronounced: Lev-vah), it rhymes with Trevor.” Lewa earned her Bachelor of Marine Science with First Class Honours from the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). She pursued the interdisciplinary major of Marine Science from IMAS and Geographical Information Systems from University of Tasmania. Lewa set up her own successful business in 2012 whilst working with numerous government, universities and private organisations in environment and marine sectors. As Research Officer she is responsible for ensure the successful operation of the ASI selective breeding program, database management, administration and marketing.

## GRAHAM MARSHALL

Finance Manager and Company Secretary



Graham has twenty years of experience in increasingly responsible roles within finance, secretarial and risk management. Graham is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and was a member of the Board for nine years, a Fellow of CPA Australia, a Member of the Risk Management Institute of Australasia and a Certified Risk Management Technician. He has held several Senior Management positions. His roles at ASI are Company secretary and Finance Manager.

## NICK GRIGGS (AKA ROMEO)

Operations Officer



Notoriously known for saying “Romeo” and “Rodgie”, Nick comes to ASI with a strong industry focus. He graduated from University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Aquaculture and started his career at Camerons as a Hatchery Technician. After 3 years, he moved on to work with Barramundi with Mainstream Aquaculture as an Aquaculture Technician. Returning to Tassie in 2014, Nick took up a position with Tassal. He worked in the production of Atlantic Salmon in Macquarie Harbour and after 2 years, transferred to the Technical Team in the Channel Zone performing fish health checks. Nick joins ASI as a operations officer, focusing on field and hatchery operations as well as ASI biosecurity planning.

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION,  
CONTACT US.**



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