



AQUACULTURE IN AUSTRALIA

Aquaculture is the fastest growing primary industry in Australia; in fact it is the fastest growing food production sector in the world. With limited room for expansion in wild catch fisheries together with an ever-increasing world population, there is a heavy reliance on aquaculture as the means for fish production to meet world demand.

The Australian aquaculture industry in 2007-2008 was valued at \$868 million, and accounted for approximately a third of the total gross value production of the seafood industry. Most of the aquaculture species in Australia are high value species aiming for export markets. Australian aquaculture producers comply with a range of federal, state and local government environmental laws and codes of practice that ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry and the environment.

According to FAO (2011) the total Australian aquaculture production has evolved:

- 1986: 9,083 t - when production was mostly Oysters, and Atlantic Salmon farming was embryonic (10 t);
- 1999: 29,303 t;
- 2009: 64,535 t - by which time Atlantic Salmon production had reached nearly 30,000 t and the production of farmed Tuna, marine Shrimp and marine fish were significant sectors of Australian aquaculture.

Aquaculture Species

There are over forty species being commercially produced in Australian aquaculture, most of the production comes from high value species. The top five species are Tuna; Pearl Oysters; Atlantic Salmon; Edible Oysters and Prawns.

The aquaculture industry is largely based in regional Australia and makes a significant and positive contribution to regional development. State industry profiles (see separate sheet on Victoria):

South Australia

South Australia is a State of opportunity, and few sectors demonstrate this more clearly than the aquaculture industry hence World Aquaculture 2014 will take place in Adelaide 7-11 June 2014.

The farming of Southern Bluefin Tuna is currently the single most valuable sector of South Australia's aquaculture industry. Southern Bluefin Tuna farming is unique to South Australia and its development in 1991 initially put South Australian aquaculture on the map. Inland Aquaculture is probably the most diverse sector in South Australia, in terms of the variety of species grown and production methods employed. There are currently around 250 inland aquaculture licence holders in South Australia growing a range of aquatic organisms including Finfish; Barramundi, Murray Cod, Rainbow/Brown Trout, Black Bream and Crustaceans; Yabbies and Marron. Recently there has been a significant increase in the production of ornamental species and Brine Shrimp. Other key species farmed include; Abalone, Freshwater Crayfish (Yabby and Marron), Mussels and Oysters.

Tasmania

The cool, clean Southern Ocean encircles Tasmania, providing one of the world's most pristine environments for the raising of succulent Shellfish and table fish of delicate flavour as those of you who came to AA2010 can attest.

Aquaculture comes naturally to Tasmanians. They have 3200km of unpolluted coastline. The Tasmanians have developed world-class handling methods; sophisticated quality assurance and transport systems; and they have excellent research. Atlantic Salmon, sea-raised Rainbow Trout, Pacific Oysters and Mussels are big business. Abalone farms are multiplying and good progress has been made with Sea Horses.

New South Wales

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A diverse range of sensational seafood including Oysters, Prawns, marine, and freshwater Finfish, Yabbies and Mussels is the result of aquaculture in New South Wales. Industry & Investment NSW (State Govt. Fisheries Dept.) is actively working with industry, the community and other agencies to ensure aquaculture develops in a sustainable manner - both environmentally and economically. Policies and guidelines have been developed to ensure all farming practices are environmentally sustainable, and benefit the community.

The department also conducts aquaculture research, pioneering farming of a number of species in this state, including Oysters, Silver Perch, Snapper, Mulloway, and Pearl Oysters. As well as a number of additional aquaculture related projects, such as aquaculture diet formulation, hatchery techniques, breeding for restocking purposes, and ranching techniques for Abalone.

Queensland

The Queensland aquaculture industry has grown over the last two decades and its importance to seafood production has become more significant. Over the last decade, aquaculture production in Queensland increased in value and currently accounts for about 10 per cent of Australia's total aquaculture production.

The following list of species cultured in Queensland illustrates the variety and scope of the aquaculture industry. These include: Prawns (Black Tiger, Banana, Kuruma), Barramundi, Freshwater species (Silver/Jade/Golden Perch and Murray Cod), Redclaw Crayfish, Eels, edible Oysters (Sydney Rock Oyster), South Sea Pearl Oysters and production in the Hatchery and aquarium sector.

Western Australia

Although small by global standards, the aquaculture industry in Western Australia is diverse, sustainable and growing. The major species produced include Barramundi, Mussels, Abalone, Western Rock Oysters, Silver Perch, Trout, Pearl Oysters, Yellowtail Kingfish, Mulloway, Marron, Yabbies, ornamental species, Artemia and marine Microalgae (for the production of beta carotene, bio-fuel and other products).

Further investment in the industry will be stimulated by more efficient, targeted and accountable environmental monitoring and reporting processes, which encompass the development and implementation of relevant industry codes of practice and environmental management and monitoring processes.

Northern Territory

Current research involves the commercialisation of Mud Crab and Sea Cucumber aquaculture technology, while the Northern Territory Government's commercial arm is producing Barramundi fingerlings for industry. The economically proven aquaculture industries in the Northern Territory are currently based on Pearls, Prawns and Barramundi.

Indigenous peoples in the NT have expressed interest in aquaculture pursuits. Around the world and in Australia, aquaculture has proven itself to be one of the few developing industries that can be successfully undertaken in rural and/remote areas and has brought economic development to areas away from cities.

Plans and Goals

It is estimated that Australia will need an extra 37 million tonnes of fish in the next 20 years to meet global seafood demand. If Australia is to be self sufficient then most of the additional supply will have to come from aquaculture.

The goal for the Australian Aquaculture industry is to aim for 100,000 tonnes of finfish by 2015.

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