News Release

Funds Announced for Collaborative Research in Shellfish Aquaculture

Vancouver, B.C., February 1, 2005
AquaNet, Canada's research network in aquaculture, approved $570,708 to carry out four research and development projects in shellfish aquaculture. The projects involve leading researchers in universities across Canada who have formed partnerships with shellfish aquaculture producers, including First Nations, government, and international experts in the United States, Australia and France. The projects address strategic priorities in site selection, mollusc infectious diseases, improving mussel culture in British Columbia and developing an abalone breeding program.

"AquaNet has been successful in attracting renowned scientists and sector partners who provide their unique expertise and matching funds to support innovation and enhance shellfish aquaculture productivity and competitiveness," states Dr. R. Scott McKinley, Executive Scientific Director of AquaNet. "The projects reflect the Network's increased integration of environmental, animal production and socio-economic aspects, and the increased involvement of coastal communities and international experts in the research program."

All submitted proposals went through AquaNet's strict evaluation process, including an external peer review process and AquaNet's Research Management Committee review process, which is composed of representatives from academia, government, industry and non-government organisations.

AquaNet is funded by the Networks of Centres of Excellence program as part of the federal innovation strategy to foster the sustainable development of Canada's aquaculture sector through high quality research and education.

Encl.: List of Projects

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List of Projects

Title	Lead Investigator	Synopsis	Partners
Advanced technology in diagnostics of economically significant mollusc infectious diseases for improved health management in Canada	Dr. Frank Berthe, Canada Research Chair in Aquatic Health Science – Mollusc Health, Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI	Infectious diseases have become a primary constraint to the growth and sustainability of mollusc aquaculture. This project will combine existing expertise using internet and real time communications to improve diagnostic capabilities and test recent innovations for rapid diagnostics to improve health management in mollusc aquaculture.	Atlantic Veterinary College
Development of a selective breeding program for the Bamfield Huu-Ay-Aht Community Abalone Project	Dr. Elizabeth Boulding, Department of Zoology, University of Guelph	This project will develop a selective breeding program for cultured pinto abalone of the Bamfield Huu-Ay-Aht community abalone project, applying modern animal breeding methodology to improve the cultured populations, minimize inbreeding and focus on important traits to enhance their value.	Bamfield Huu-Ay-Aht, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Pacific Biological Station)
Low-cost optical moorings for continuous assessment of food depletion: a tool for monitoring shellfish feeding activity, forecasting growth and quantifying environmental impact	Dr. John J. Cullen, Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS	This project uses cutting-edge optical technology to measure food concentration and depletion critical for shellfish growth and optimization of production. The research objective is to develop an integrated system, monitor feeding activity, forecast growth and quantify environmental impact using low-cost bio-optical technology	Satlantic Incorporated, AquaPrime Mussel Ranch Limited, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Management of aquaculture site selection via regional habitat classification	Dr. Jon Grant, Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS	Advances in survey instruments and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) can help improve the efficiency and scope of information available and provide a more eco-system view of environmental assessments, which can streamline the site assessment process for both regulators and farmers. This project evaluates using these innovative instruments for site assessments compared to traditional approaches.	ACOA