

Aquaculture, a different type of 'farming'

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Hope for new harmony between farmers and watermen is on the horizon, notes Tony P. Mazzaccaro, assistant director for marine advisory programs in the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service.

Traditionally, the two groups have grudgingly tolerated each other. At times, they have shown open hostility in the form of legal battles — primarily reading allegations of agricultural pollution to oyster beds in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

But Mazzaccaro bases his optimism in part on presentations by speakers at a recent Maryland Aquaculture Conference, held at Busch's Chesapeake Inn near Annapolis.

In line with a broad emphasis on aquaculture, the conference included representation from the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Maryland Farm Bureau.

A University of Delaware Sea Grant representative, Kent Price, explained agricultural aspects of the 1980 National Aquaculture Act (PL96-362), and a University of Maine aquaculture specialist told about oyster farming in the Pine Tree State.

Finally, an administrator for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science described farming techniques which have adapted for a promising program on clam culture.

- These included:
- Using an old De Laval cream separator to sort out clam larvae from brackish water;
 - Building a solar greenhouse for housing clam-rearing tanks;
 - Keeping everything "dairy

clean" to avoid bacterial disease problems;

—Utilizing anti-bird plastic webbing made for fruit trees as a barrier to protect clam beds from stingrays, drumfish and other natural enemies. He noted that fouling — a problem with most protective materials — does not occur on the fine plastic mesh.

Mike Castagna, the Virginia speaker, noted that providing adequate nutrition when clams start getting some size to them is the major roadblock to be removed before commercial clam production becomes "a very profitable operation." Castagna is director of the VIMS Marine Laboratory at Wachapreague, Va.

Describing another aquacultural

enterprise, George E. Krantz, Sea Grant research worker at Horn Point for the University of Maryland, presented some promising statistics on oyster farming. His facts came primarily from practical experience in the Deal Island hatchery at the mouth of the Wicomico river on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore.

"For about \$18,000," Krantz said, "you could set up an oyster hatchery that will seed about 60 acres of oysters on tidal flats. This is about the right size for a family operation."

"It could provide a part-time supplement to some other operation, such as crabbing (or a small livestock-crop farm).

"But site-specific problems can make or break you in this game," Krantz warned. He pointed out, for instance, that oysters grow faster at Deal Island than at Horn Point because of better water quality in that area of the Chesapeake Bay.

The man from Maine, Herbert Hidu, also warned about pitfalls in aquaculture—principally because it is a relatively new field. He reported that, after a 10-year educational campaign, Maine now has 20 to 30 successful growers producing oysters on a commercial scale and perhaps a half-dozen commercial blue mussel producers.

He noted the Maine Aquaculture Association, formed in 1977, now conducts an annual aquaculture

conference. And it lobbies in the state legislature.

Also on the organizational side, Bruce Hawley of the American Farm Bureau Federation invited Maryland watermen to consider joining their county Farm Bureau organization to help achieve lobbying power in state and national governments.

The Maryland Aquaculture Conference was sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the University of Maryland's Sea Grant program, the Tidewater Administration of the State Department of Natural Resources, and the Chesapeake Bay Seafood Industries Association.

SCSA meeting looks at resource conflicts

ANKENY, Iowa — Interregional conflicts over management of land and water resources in the western United States and Canada will be the focus of the 36th annual meeting of the Soil Conservation Society of America, August 2-5, 1981, in Spokane, Washington.

Theme of the meeting will be "Land, People and Policy: The Western Connection." Activities will center in the Spokane Convention Center and Sheraton-Spokane Hotel.

Norman Wengert, a professor of political science at Colorado State University, will keynote the meeting. Wengert will present a western viewpoint on the conflicts that have developed over water rights, energy development, management of public lands, and related issues.

Emery Castle, president of Resources for the Future,

Washington, D.C., and J. Blair Seaborn, deputy minister of Environment Canada, Ottawa, will then discuss these same issues from the national points of view.

The meeting program will also feature a panel discussion on building consensus to make natural resource policy. Among the panel participants will be Idaho Governor John Evans; William Ruckelshaus, senior vice-president of Weyerhaeuser Company; William Swan, president-elect of the National Cattleman's Association; John Crowell, Jr., assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and environment; and Bill Young, chief forester for the British Columbia Ministry of Forests. R. Neil Sampson, executive vice-president of the National Association of Conservation Districts, will serve as moderator of the panel

discussion.

A highlight of the program will be the Fourth Annual H. Wayne Pritchard Lecture, delivered by R.G. Downes, retired director of the Australian Ministry of Conservation and a world expert on soil conservation.

The program will also include six sessions planned by SCSA's resource conservation divisions. These sessions will cover a variety of land and water management issues, including soil erosion control, wetlands protection, water

quality management, surface mine reclamation, fish farming, and consequences of the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption.

A preliminary program and registration details are available from SCSA, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021.

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