

Twin Valley Aquaculture Students

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fish living in it because of its lack of oxygen.

That's just one aspect to the school's aquaculture program.

According to Harold Dietrich, ag science teacher at Twin Valley, fish were raised in the 1,500 gallon indoor "pond" in the aquaculture facility at the school. The facility will be undergoing renovations in the summer. The tank was home to a variety of species, including large-mouth bass, catfish, bluegills, and tilapia, said Dietrich.

Some fish were supplied by

Kurtz's Fish Hatchery in Elverson. The tilapia were "grown ourselves in tanks," said Dietrich.

The tilapia are grown for about three months in 20-gallon to 50-gallon tanks. Then they are moved to the "raceway" — a large-capacity, narrow tank that takes them to market size (some more than 12 inches long). Some can be moved to the large swimming pool and then marketed.

In the 1,500-gallon pool, before it was drained to make way for renovations, about 80 tilapia made their home, along with 30-50 cat-

fish (sold to Shady Maple Supermarket in Blue Ball). The tilapia still remaining in the raceway measure about 6-8 inches long and were placed there last fall.

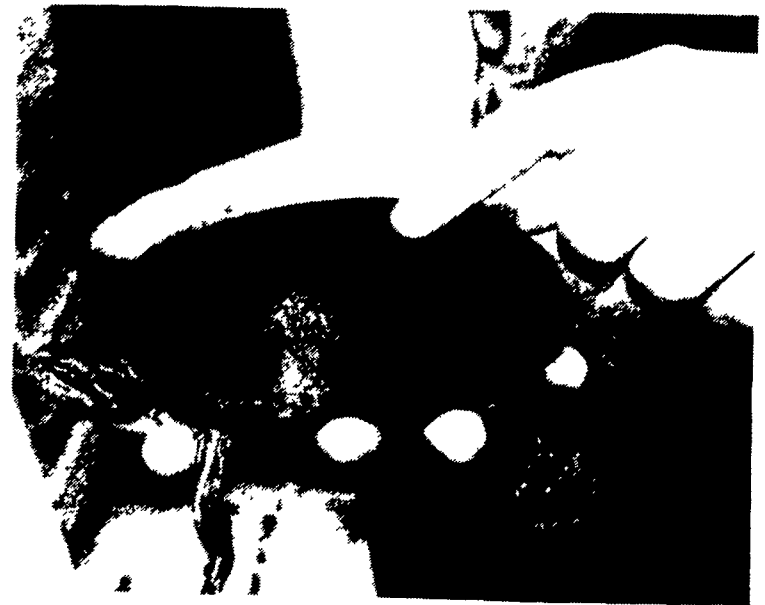
The catfish marketed to the supermarket take about two years to grow. Tilapia make a better fish to market because they can be brought to market sooner — about a year to a year and a half, according to Dietrich.

With the renovations to take place at the facility, the pool, with a 1,500-gallon capacity, will have improved temperature. Where

temperatures were once kept at 65 degrees during the winter, keeping them warmer — at 70 to 80

degrees — will help mature the fish faster. New electrical lines

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How old is Stumpy? Amy said you can tell by the rings on the shell. Each "ring" or block denotes a year in the life of the turtle. On Tuesday this week, with help from fellow aquaculture student Angela Brent, Amy Kline used a scrub brush to take off some algae tank buildup from its outer shell. They counted the blocks — 14 to be exact — on the shell.

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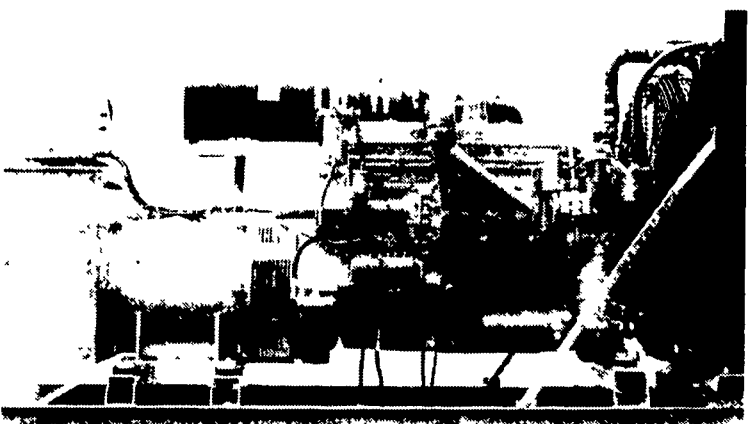
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