

IMPACT ON INDUSTRY: SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE – FANNY BAY



CASE STUDY

Shellfish aquaculture is an important piece of the Island and Coastal economy. In recent years, the industry has expanded rapidly and the aging infrastructure has not been able to accommodate the growth needed to meet market demand.

In order to support increased sector and business growth, ICET provided funding to the Fanny Bay, Heriot Bay and Deep Bay harbours to complete productivity improvements and allow the industry to address offloading and food safety issues related to lack of appropriate infrastructure.

CASE STUDY: FANNY BAY HARBOUR

The project's primary objective was to increase shellfish offloading capacity. It involved the replacement of the existing wood wharf and installation of a new, floating concrete wharf with ramp access. The improvements enabled an increase in the load bearing capacity and dock space to allow multiple trucks to drive on and offload at the same time, thus improving product handling times and meeting food inspection regulations.

INCREASED SHELLFISH PRODUCTION

One of the key economic impacts for area producers and the industry in general is the ability to increase shellfish production. With increasing demand for seafood from Asia and world markets, demand for shellfish products exceeds the region's current production capacity.

In response to this increasing demand, shellfish operators in the Fanny Bay area are boosting their production as quickly as possible in order to take full advantage of this growing market share opportunity. Offloading capacity at Fanny Bay has increased by 50% to date and is expected to increase by more than 300% by 2014.

INCREASED PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND MORE SECURE STABLE INDUSTRY

One of the ongoing operational challenges of BC's shellfish aquaculture sector is securing a reliable supply of seed. Producers have collaborated on several projects to increase the amount of seed production and "seed boosting," for example, constructing a large oyster setting barge in the summer of 2012 which yielded a stimulus impact of 8 full-time jobs for two months. A former Alaska ferry was moored off Fanny Bay for three months employing 12 people in an "intermediate seed boosting" process. A group of oyster growers is considering investing in a different barge technology for single-seed or tray culture seed production.

All of these activities are examples of vertical integration within the shellfish aquaculture sector that are providing the local industry with greater security of supply and ultimately enhancing quality and stability of production on an annual basis, which would not have been possible without the improvements.