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Scientists and Industry Will Discuss Challenges, Solutions At 30th Milford Aquaculture Seminar

Latest research developments shared with industry, state officials

Restoring oyster populations on Martha's Vineyard, fish and shellfish stock enhancement efforts in Florida, measuring the ecological impact of shellfish cultivation and harvest, and industry response to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) proposed ban on selling raw oysters grown in warm waters are among the more than 50 presentations and poster sessions to be featured at the 30th Milford Aquaculture Seminar Feb. 8 -10 in Shelton, Conn.

More than 100 participants from East Coast states are expected to attend the seminar, sponsored by NOAA's Milford Laboratory in Milford, Conn., part of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center headquartered in Woods Hole, Mass. Additional support for the seminar has been provided by the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC) at the University of Maryland at College Park, and Connecticut Sea Grant.

A special panel session has been organized this year by the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association to address questions about vibrio, a saltwater bacterium that can cause infections in humans who eat contaminated shellfish. The session will focus on public health and regulations proposed by the FDA to reduce risks posed by vibrio infections. Scheduled speakers include Brian Ronholm from Connecticut Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro's office, Michael Hickey of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and Bob Rheault of the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association.

Microbiologist Walter Blogoslawski started the aquaculture seminar in 1975 after receiving a call for advice from a local shellfish grower. The first seminar at the Milford Laboratory had seven attendees, but within five years had outgrown the laboratory facilities and has since been held at larger local meeting facilities. Blogoslawski's favorite aspect of the annual event is working with people who grow shellfish and helping them solve problems.

"I started the seminar because I was getting lots of questions from people about culturing issues, disease, and nutrition," said Blogoslawski, who has worked at the Milford Laboratory for 39 years. "I figured it would be more productive to get people together to share ideas and concerns and talk about all these issues, and it has evolved from there."

Through the years the seminar, chaired by Blogoslawski with colleague Lisa Milke as program chair this year, has addressed a variety of issues faced by those who grow shellfish

and finfish in marine waters. Participants from industry, government, scientific and educational institutions explore ideas and discuss achievements face-to-face. New ideas that contribute to industry success and innovative solutions to baffling problems are the seminar's products.

For Blogoslawski, the seminar is one activity in a long career focused on bacterial diseases that affect the survival of oysters and clam larvae in culture. "I was lucky. I was interviewed for a position here at Milford while I was defending my thesis, accepted the job and haven't left." He received a PhD. in marine microbiology from Fordham University in 1971.

Special seminar events this year include a celebration highlighting the 30 years of the Milford Aquaculture Seminar, and two special presentations. Michael Rubino of NOAA's Aquaculture Program will focus on sustainability and advancing the new federal policy for marine aquaculture. Ken Leber, Director of the Center for Fisheries Enhancement at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Fla., will review case studies on the effectiveness of restocking and stock enhancement of common snook, red drum, and bay scallops in Florida.

Interactions of shellfish aquaculture with the environment in the Northeastern U.S. will be the focus of a special workshop funded by NRAC. The East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, which has many members attending the seminar, will also meet.

Shellfish aquaculture generates more than \$200 million annually in the United States, representing about 20 percent of all domestic aquaculture revenues.

The Milford Laboratory was established in 1931 on the shore of Long Island Sound. The facility includes several laboratory/office buildings, support buildings housing raceway and circular tanks, and a 49-foot vessel, the *R/V Victor Loosanoff*, used for conducting nearshore research. Current research emphasizes aquaculture and habitat-related investigations, including the development of fish and shellfish culture methods suitable for commercial use, as well as methods for stock enhancement and restoration. Nearshore habitats are also being studied to determine what characteristics make a habitat suitable for a particular species.

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Related links:

Milford Aquaculture Seminar: <http://mi.nefsc.noaa.gov/seminarworkshop.html>

Milford Laboratory: <http://mi.nefsc.noaa.gov/>

NOAA's National Aquaculture Program: <http://aquaculture.noaa.gov/>

Aquaculture in the Northeast: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/aquaculture/>

Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC) : <http://www.nrac.umd.edu/>

East Coast Shellfish Growers Association: <http://www.ecsga.org/>