September 2025 Newsletter

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IMPORTANT DATES

Q4 Light audit due
31 October 2025

ECSC meeting
19 September 2025

Havelock Mussel Festival
14 March 2026

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GM's comment

September is upon us, and just like that, we've made it through another winter. In Te Tau Ihu, the arrival of the wind was almost uncanny as it aligned perfectly with the official change of season.

Thank you to all members who attended the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Marine Farming Association. The Association's governance remains strong, with Jonathan Large re-elected as President and Mark Burnaby as Vice President. I would like to welcome Brian Godsiff to the Board, it's great to have the Godsiff name back in the MFA mix and to have a dedicated Golden Bay correspondent.

We hope everyone also enjoyed the conference. It was great to receive an update on a whole raft of aquaculture related research and to hear from industry members who are innovating and scaling businesses. Highlights included the panel discussion on commercializing good ideas and Pic Picot's (of Pic's Peanut Butter fame) humorous account of the journey from a stall at the Nelson Market to becoming a global force in peanut butter.

I would also like to further congratulate the winners of the MFA awards for 2025. Notably, it was a good night for Aroma Aquaculture, with Merv Whipp receiving the Merit Award and Wayne Hollis named as Outstanding Marine Farmer for 2025. All of the recipients are truly deserving and it's great to highlight their efforts through the awards (details on the awards can be found on page 24). A big thank you as well to Scotty Stevenson for providing the post-award entertainment, he is certainly a gifted storyteller and no stranger to working a crowd.

On the Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) front, we are working to resolve the final appeal matters and close the account on what has been a lengthy ordeal. Some challenges remain in Clova Bay, but the impact is limited to only a handful of farms.

We are currently planning the final spat deployment under the three-year research project funded by Fisheries New Zealand and led by Aquaculture New Zealand. As with the previous two years, a single batch of Te Hiku (Kaitaia) spat will be deployed across 19 locations throughout New Zealand within a 24-hour period, with overall performance through to 20mm monitored along with a range of environmental parameters. The intent of the project is to unpick what makes a good spat site and to develop a model that can support the mussel industry with deciding where to deploy spat. The data collected in previous years are already providing valuable insights and the model development is progressing well.

It's about that time of year when we all start prophesizing about what the summer months will bring. El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions remained neutral throughout August, but La Niña-like patterns are becoming more established in some tropical Pacific regions. Both Earth Sciences New Zealand (the new entity that absorbed NIWA) forecasts and international guidance are now suggesting that La Niña conditions will emerge in the spring and early summer, before returning to neutral mid-2026. While we are now well accustomed to the easterly-dominated conditions and warmer water temperatures, it doesn't mean that they are welcome.

Wishing everyone well for what is always a busy time of year.

Ned.

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Marine Farm Compliance Audit Programme

Declarations are Due

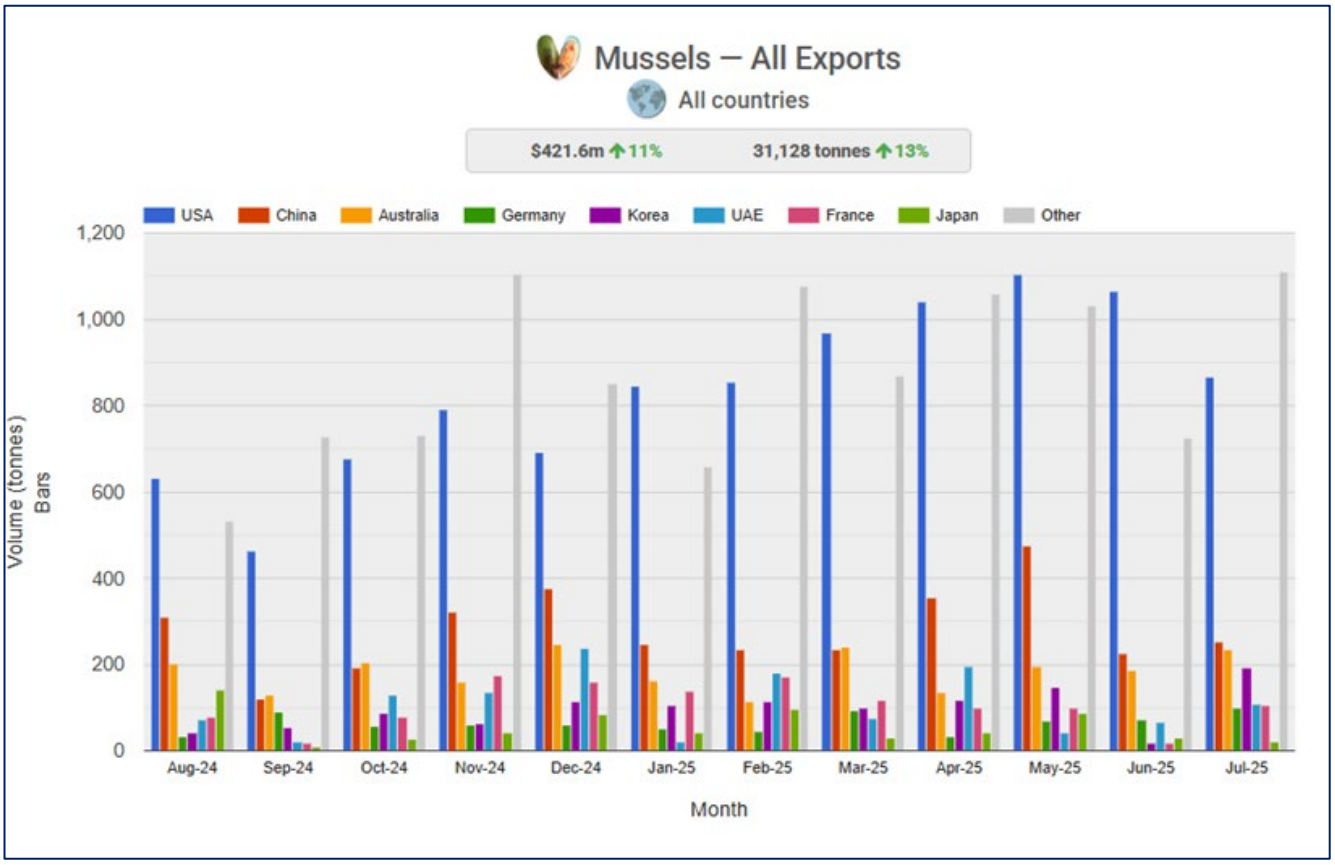
31st October 2025

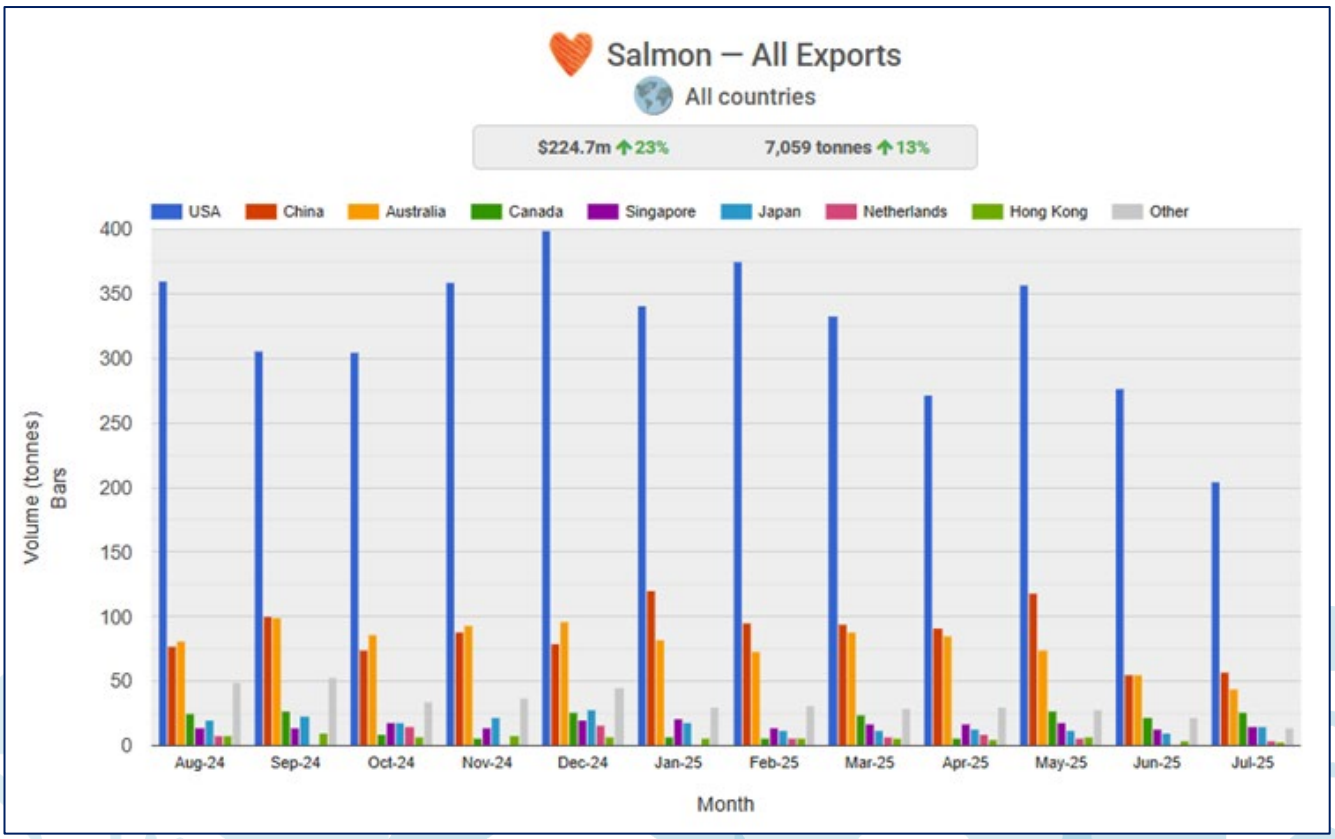
If you have not sent in your declaration for the 4th quarter, please do so as soon as possible

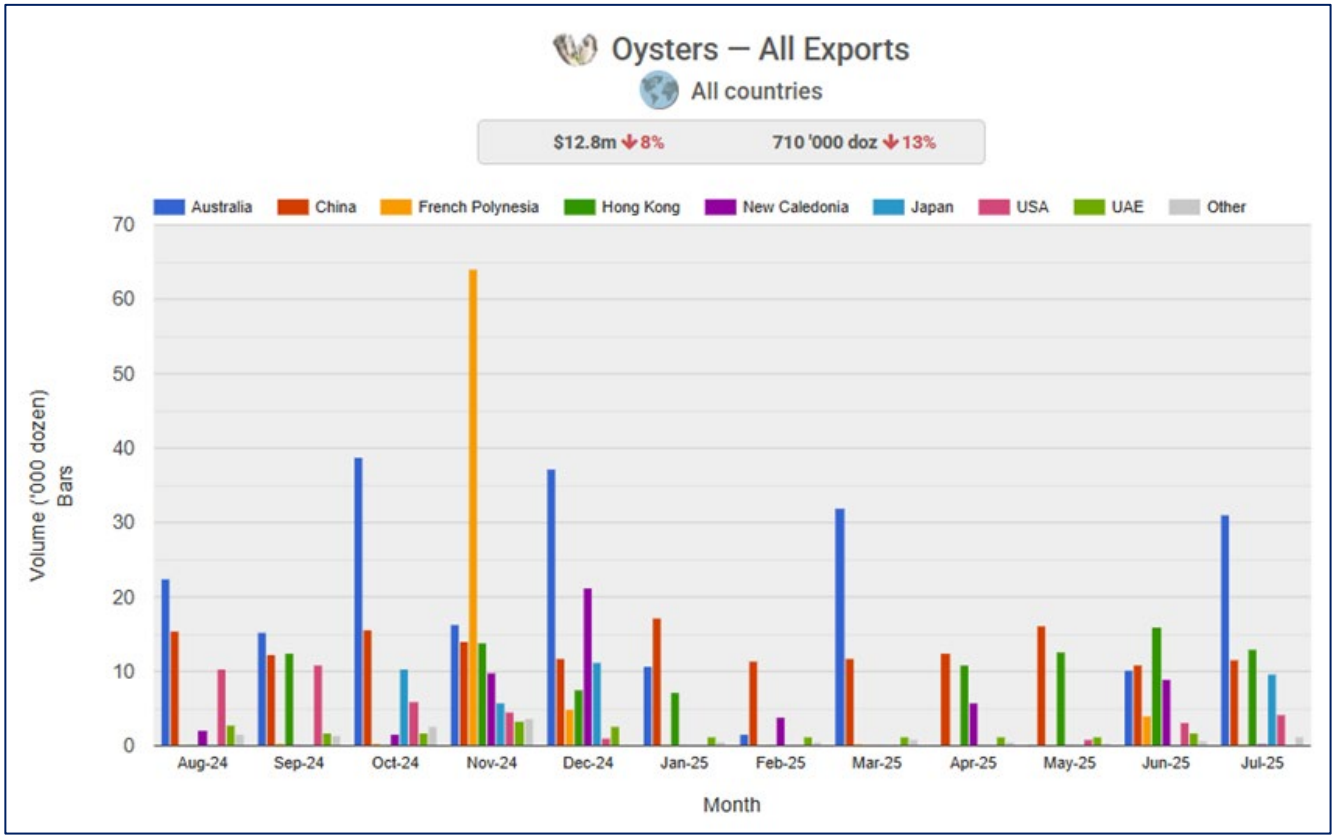
ONE **DECLARATION FORM PER SITE**
DUE BY THE END OF EACH PERIOD

November, December, January	(1)
February, March, April	(2)
May, June, July	(3)
August, September, October	**(4)**

AQNZ Export Data







Collingwood Area School joins mussel restoration field team in Golden Bay-Mohua.

Four students and one teacher, Pip Brake, from Collingwood Area School in Golden Bay-Mohua recently joined the University of Auckland mussel restoration field team to help monitor intertidal mussels.

These mussels were deployed by Clearwater Mussels in July 2024 as part of our ongoing work to understand and test methods for shellfish restoration in Golden Bay-Mohua, with its high wave action and dynamic seabed. Two intertidal sites at Onekaka were seeded with mussels and have been monitored over the past year to track their survival and establishment.

With the help of the Collingwood Area School students, the team found clear patterns. Some plots showed strong mussel establishment, while others had dislodgement and burial issues following the major storm events in February this year.

The plots that remained after one year had a few things in common, they had low levels of juvenile mussel recruitment to the rocks from the onset of the experiment, and they had a high density of surrounding rocks.

These results are encouraging and highlight specific environmental conditions that can help support restored mussel survival and establishment. This knowledge will help guide future restoration work in Golden Bay–Mohua and other areas with higher hydrodyanmic forces.

Partnering with the Collingwood Area School was a great opportunity for the students to gain hands-on experience in marine restoration science, and to act as kaitaki for their community.

Please feel free to get in touch with any questions or if you'd like to get involved;

Emilee Benjamin: emilee.benjamin@auckland.ac.nz;
Ashtyn Smith: ashtynjane@gmail.com

DOC and partners tackle damaging sea urchins at Poor Knights Marine Reserve

More than 130,000 long-spined sea urchins have been removed during a trial operation to protect one of New Zealand's most iconic underwater ecosystems - Tawhiti Rahi/Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve.

DOC, working alongside Te Whānau o Rangiwhakaahu, the University of Auckland, and Northland Regional Council, undertook the trial over two weeks in May 2025. Dive teams spent nearly 290 hours underwater during 440 dives, covering five sites across six hectares, to halt the spread of urchin barrens - barren reefs stripped of life by increasing populations of the native long-spined sea urchin.

Long spined sea urchin at Poor Knights Marine Reserve, credit DOC

Despite being native, the long-spined sea urchin has seen a dramatic population boom - increasing more than elevenfold in the past 25 years. Warmer waters and fewer predators are thought to be key factors, and even in the fully protected marine reserve, where their numbers are now estimated to exceed 1.5 million.

Unlike kina, which have shown signs of natural decline under marine protection, long-spined sea urchins have continued to expand. They graze not just on kelp but on a wide range of marine life, threatening the rich biodiversity and the colourful communities of fixed marine animals—like sponges, corals, and anemones—that cover the vertical reef walls and make the Poor Knights internationally renowned.

"This is the first coordinated removal effort specifically targeting long-spined sea urchins in-a New Zealand marine reserve," says DOC Marine Technical Advisor Dr Monique Ladds.

"The goal is to slow the spread of urchin barrens in the Poor Knights while we continue to investigate long-term solutions. Follow-up

Diver removing long spined sea urchin at Poor Knights Marine Reserve May 2025, credit DOC

surveys in July will help assess the effectiveness of the removal and guide future management decisions."

The removal work follows successful but smaller trials in 2023 which showed rapid recovery of the kelp and wall communities. "This is not a long-term fix," says Monique. "Although removals may help buy time in some areas, we know they are not a sustainable strategy for managing the scale of the problem. We're continuing to work with iwi, scientists, and partners to explore future options for protecting these ecosystems at the Poor Knights and elsewhere. This trial is one way we're testing what's possible. When we take action, nature *can* bounce back."

Marine reserves managed by DOC are protected areas, and removing or harming marine life without a permit is illegal.

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Small bodies, big appetites - early feeding strategies for octopus larvae

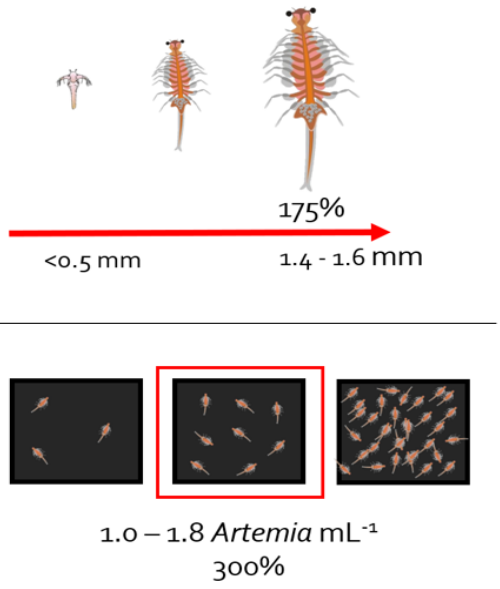
New Zealand's aquaculture products are highly regarded and sought after with Pacific oysters, green-lipped mussels and king salmon leading the industry currently. Efforts are being made to diversify and strengthen the sector with promising species, including the native rock oyster, yellowtail kingfish, snapper and many more being currently considered and explored. One species that has received little attention in New Zealand are octopuses, despite their exceptional fast growth, high fecundity and short life-cycle.

Globally, octopus demand has continuously increased, reaching over 400,000 t being landed in 2017 for human consumption. As a result there is strong interest in developing octopus aquaculture, with Spain, Mexico, Japan and China being heavily invested into researching various aspects of their biology. Unfortunately, the further development of octopus aquaculture is still hindered by the absence of effective commercial hatchery methods

In 2017 we embarked on a journey with one of New Zealand's endemic octopus species, the gloomy octopus or *Octopus tetricus*, to explore their potential as a new aquaculture species. This native species is almost indistinguishable from the most valuable and widely traded and consumed octopus species in the world, the common octopus.

Initial experiments showed that, gloomy octopus are similar to other octopus species and have high fecundity (~250,000-500,000 eggs per female), grow rapidly (~ doubling their weight every four weeks), and have a short life-cycle of up to two years. Moreover, we were able to develop an artificial egg rearing system that greatly improved egg husbandry and reduced required space and maintenance, while achieving an embryonic survival above 95%. However, larval survival was rather low in our initial experiments and most larvae perished within eight days post hatching. We were fortunate to receive funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment in 2022 to continue our research.

Over the past three years our research focused on identifying ideal prey characteristics (size and density), optimizing lighting conditions (intensity



Simplified overview of preferred prey size (top) and prey density (bottom) for early gloomy octopus larvae.

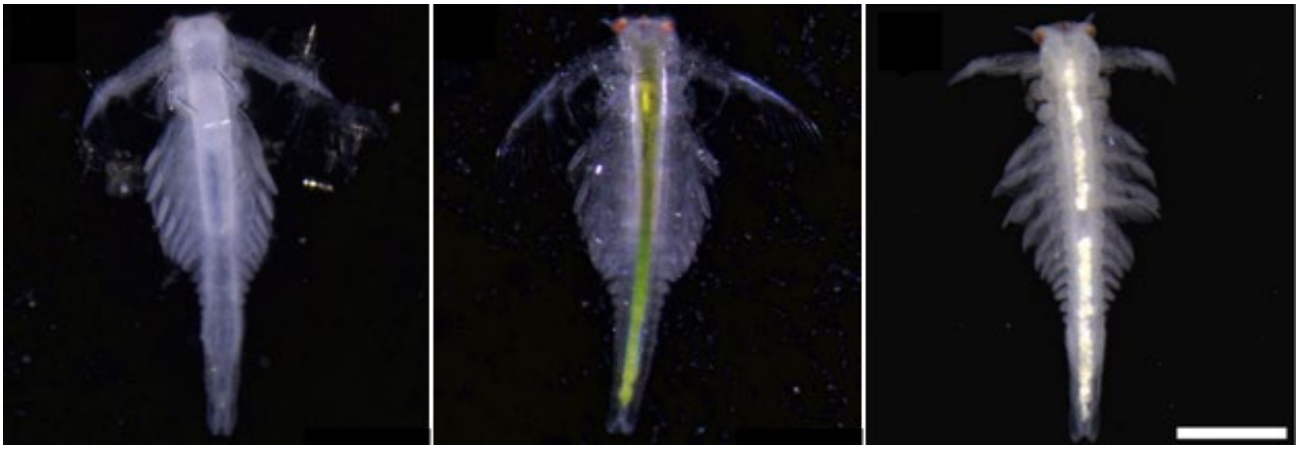
and angle), improving nutrient delivery via live-prey (brine shrimps, *Artemia*) and working on the development of an artificial feed for larval octopus.

One of the most commonly used live-prey for predatory larvae in aquaculture hatcheries is *Artemia* (brine shrimps). *Artemia* have also been tested for various octopus species by different research groups, which resulted in a multitude of different prey sizes and densities being used.

As a first step to optimize our larval culture, we identified ideal prey densities and prey sizes for our octopus species. We observed that using adult *Artemia* of 1.4-1.6 mm led to a 175% increase in capture success compared to small *Artemia* (<0.5 mm). Likewise, using a prey density of 1.0-1.8 *Artemia* per ml, instead of lower or higher concentrations led to a 300% increase in prey capture.

While conducting these feeding studies we observed that octopus larvae sometimes attacked small air bubbles that were in the observation system. Intrigued by this observation we fed *Artemia* with white-metallic food colouring to mimic the reflective surface of the air bubbles.

To determine the potential effect of these white *Artemia* on feeding success of larval octopus we conducted a food choice experiment where larval octopus were supplied with white, dark (*Artemia* fed with algae) and pale (*Artemia* not receiving food) *Artemia*.



Pale (left), dark (middle) and white (right) Artemia *used in the food choice experiment with octopus larvae.*
The white bar in the right picture represents 0.5 mm.

The experiment showed that larval octopus have a clear preference for the white *Artemia* over the dark and pale *Artemia* with white *Artemia* being caught 125 % and 91% more often than dark and pale *Artemia*, respectively.

Using our newly gained insights into ideal prey size and density, combined with observations made from light intensity studies and the food choice experiment we conducted multiple larval growth experiments. The outcomes were astonishing with

multiple growth experiments achieving larval survival for at least 20 days post hatch for the first time in this species. However, the best performing larvae were fed with *Artemia* that were enriched with white-metallic food colouring and S. Presso, a commercially available product from INVE to improve the quality of *Artemia*.

With this combination we obtained larval octopus survival of up to 44% at 20 days post hatch and larvae doubling their weight during this time.

Our next steps are to improve the current culture system to enhance larval survival and optimise the feeding frequency and feed quality to further improve larval survival and growth. We are hopeful to reach the next critical stage, the settlement stage where larval octopus transition from free swimming to a benthic life-style, in the near future.

Gloomy octopus larvae aged 20 days post hatch. The white bar represents 2 mm.

By Jeffrey Good (jgoo855@aucklanduni.ac.nz) & Stefan Spreitzenbarth (stefan.spreitzenbarth@auckland.ac.nz)
University of Auckland

Queen Charlotte College aquaculture wet lab brings industry together through innovation

The Queen Charlotte College wet lab has been a collaborative effort between educators and the aquaculture industry for around 20 years.

In July, representatives from industry and the Marlborough community gathered at the College to celebrate the success and recent rejuvenation of the wet lab project, and the innovation that has helped hundreds of students connect with the industry.

Around 68 students from NCEA Level 1 to Level 3 are currently part of Queen Charlotte College's aquaculture programme, where they have opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in mussel, paua, oyster, and salmon farming.

Queen Charlotte College hosted representatives from across the aquaculture industry and Marlborough community at an event celebrating the wet lab in July.

New Zealand King Salmon has been a proud supporter of the project since the early days of the Aquaculture Academy at Queen Charlotte College. The company was first approached to support the wet lab when the school was looking to extend its second-year aquaculture programme to include salmon farming.

Today, the College's Aquaculture programme, led by Michael Garbes, aims to provide students with a complete "egg to plate" salmon farming experience, allowing students to see the eggs hatch and grow to a commercial size. It is hoped that students will then have the opportunity to create a meal using the salmon at the end of the year.

Students are given practical, hands-on opportunities to care for and feed salmon, monitor and maintain water temperature and quality, and learn how salmon farms interact with the ecology around them.

New Zealand King Salmon Chief Executive Carl Carrington says the company aims to partner on initiatives that help to strengthen the aquaculture sector and future-proof it for growth.

"As a proud Te Tauihu-based company, we aim to support initiatives that offer students real-world experiences in aquaculture and connect them to the industry expertise that will nurture the industry leaders of the future," says Carl.

"It's a privilege to partner with Queen Charlotte College to support the aspirations they have for their aquaculture programme in the Marlborough region."

Over the years, Queen Charlotte College has worked with New Zealand King Salmon and many others across industry and the local community in Marlborough to upgrade the facility, ensuring the wet lab is innovative, fit for purpose, and reflective of the latest infrastructure and technology to support students' learning.

Zealand King Salmon CEO Carl Carrington speaks with Queen Charlotte College pupils including Alice Pitt (L) and Willa Stichbury (R).

"The wet lab was created to provide students with real-world, hands-on learning in marine biology, aquaculture, environmental science and sustainability," says Queen Charlotte College Principal Brendan Carroll.

"This space represents not only innovation in education, but also the strength of our partnerships and our deep connection to the environment around us.

"Queen Charlotte College would like to extend our sincere thanks to the incredible sponsors who make the Aquaculture Academy possible. Alongside New Zealand King Salmon, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) has provided ongoing support, advice, and expertise in design. NMIT also generously gifted a drum filter, enhancing our operational capability.

"Port Marlborough has supported us with a berth for our barge, ensuring our students can access hands-on learning in the Sounds. Sanford continues to contribute both financially and through valuable workplace experience for our students.

"The Schwass Family Trust has provided financial backing, along with a passion and wealth of knowledge that inspires our team.

"The Marine Farming Association (MFA) shares their expertise and ongoing support, while Marine Farm Management assists with administration and workplace experience opportunities. Together, these partners are helping grow the next generation of aquaculture leaders."

New Zealand King Salmon has been able to repurpose equipment to support recent upgrades, including recycled tanks from the company's Tākaka hatchery and repurposed feeders - as well as providing eggs and smolt to support students' learning, in addition to a recent cash injection of $10,000.

Recent innovations to technology and infrastructure include a small-scale Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS), which was designed and built thanks to the expertise and support of Mark Burdass from NMIT. The system utilises different types of filters and recirculates the water, removing waste and minimising water replacement. The new system assists students' understanding of sustainable aquaculture, fish health, and water quality.

New Zealand King Salmon CEO Carl Carrington (L) with Queen Charlotte College Principal Brendan Carroll and Marlborough Mayor Nadine Taylor.

As technology and infrastructure within the aquaculture industry evolves, so too do the aspirations of Queen Charlotte College.

"We are currently exploring how we can share this facility and the learning opportunities it offers with students from other schools – not only across New Zealand but internationally as well," says Brendan.

"Our vision is to create a hub for environmental and marine education that connects young people from different backgrounds and parts of the world, united by a shared purpose: to understand and protect our oceans."

Recent upgrades to the wet lab include a small-scale Recirculating Aquaculture System or 'RAS'

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An energy drink for flagging mussel spat?

Wild spat from Kaitaia – Te Hiku are frequently in poor nutritional condition, most likely because they struggle to feed whilst being violently tumbled in the massive surf zone of Ninety Mile Beach before washing ashore where they are harvested.

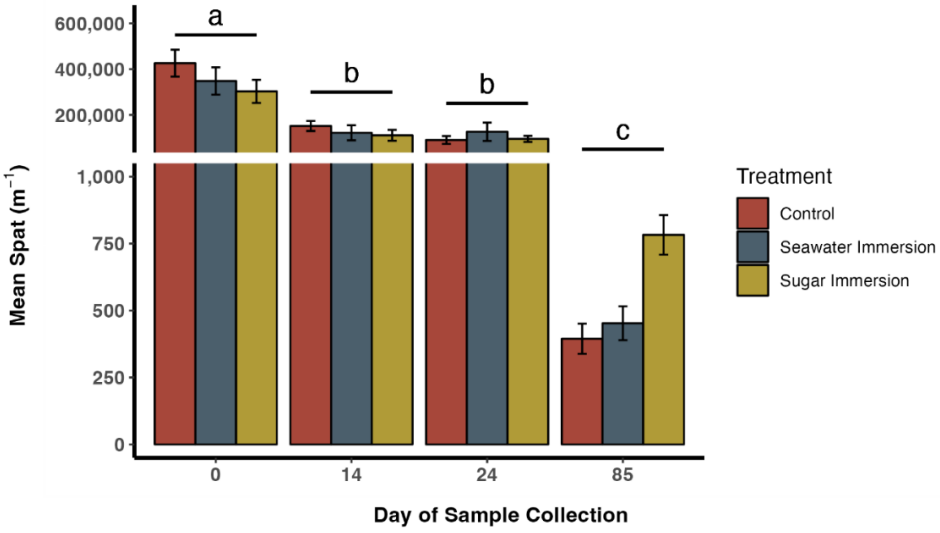
We know that spat in poor nutritional condition don't do very well once seeded onto coastal mussel farms, which is an important contributor to the massive losses of spat from mussel farms experienced every year. If it was possible to give the spat a shot of food prior to seeding out it might help to improve the performance of poorer quality spat.

Recently, we discovered that spat are very good at taking advantage of sugar dissolved in seawater – they can quickly take it up and use it as a potent extra source of energy. So we thought we would see if we could provide a sugar boost to Kaitaia spat prior to seeding to see if it would improve their performance once seeded onto a farm.

We took three bags of Kaitaia spat treated them in different ways over the four hours immediately before seeding out – one lot remained in the shipping bag, the second lot was put in seawater, and the third lot in seawater with dissolved sugar, aiming to give them an energy boost. The spat were all seeded out onto a farm near Coromandel by commercial seeding operators.

The spat were sampled regularly over the following 85 days which found that submerging spat in the sugar seawater did not improve their retention, growth, or nutritional condition. However, there was a trend toward spat having higher sugar content after 4 hours in the sugar solution and higher retention on the lines after 85 days.

These intriguing results suggest that the period of exposure to the sugar solution may not have been long enough to provide a sufficiently large enough energy boost to the spat – something that is worth us trying out next or we would be happy to work with any mussel farmers wanting to test it for themselves.



Graph showing the numbers of mussel spat on grow ropes over 85 days from seeding out at day 0 for three different lots of spat treated in different ways over the four hours immediately prior to seeding out onto a coastal mussel farm near Coromandel, i.e., being left in ambient conditions (control), immersion in seawater alone, or immersion in seawater with dissolved sugar.

By Andy Jordan, Brad Skelton Maria Mugica, and Andrew Jeffs – University of Auckland

'Eyeometer' to AI

With a vision to increase yields and returns, Harvest Hub provides accurate, consistent pre-harvest assessments for mussel and oyster growers using AI.

A start-up from the Nelson AI Institute (NAI.org.nz), and a partner in the MBIE SSIF-funded research programme Data Science for Aquaculture, Harvest Hub was born out of in-depth discussions with Aotearoa New Zealand's aquaculture industry, with a vision to expand globally.

Currently, farmers determine the optimal time to harvest shellfish using subjective "by eye" assessments from experienced staff, which can lead to significant variation in meat yield and profit. Harvest Hub's platform transforms this process with AI-driven accuracy, helping to ensure better yields and stronger returns.

Partnering with industry leader MacLab, Harvest Hub's development is supported by funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries' Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures fund (SFF Futures). Their collaboration brings cutting-edge AI to a critical part of shellfish production: the decision to harvest.

Using Harvest Hub, anyone can photograph mussels or oysters with a phone, and AI models instantly analyse the images to provide accurate data on meat yield, size, and counts. Multiple shellfish can be assessed at once, generating large datasets and increasing confidence in harvest decisions.

"Our goal is to take the guesswork out of harvest assessments," says the team at Harvest Hub. "Accurate, objective data means farmers can plan harvests with more certainty, processors can schedule staff and resources more effectively, and assessments can be standardised across the industry."

Early comparative testing during the 2024–25 harvest season has shown positive results. In one trial across eight mussel lines, the Harvest Hub app produced more accurate assessments than human checks in seven cases. In four of those, the difference was remarkable, with the AI correctly identifying mussels in very good condition that experienced staff had rated as only average.

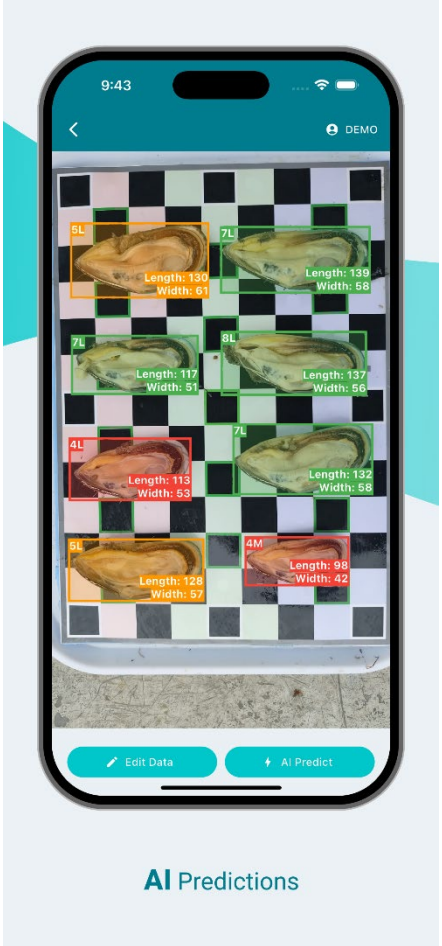
"We were sourcing and struggling to find anything harvestable… the AI told us otherwise, and the mussels did really well in the factory. I was really impressed." Said Mark Burnaby,

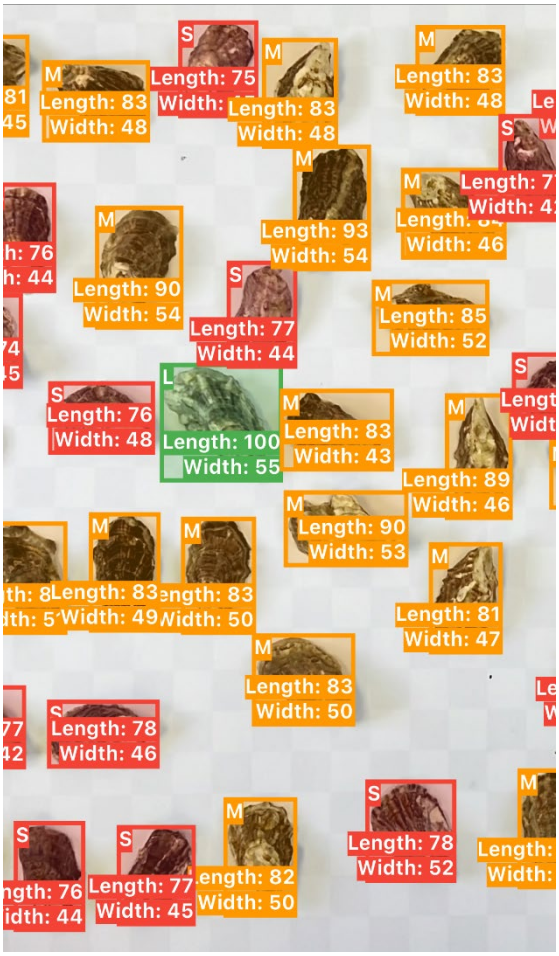
Aquaculture Manager, MacLab

Processors also note that the app streamlines planning, especially for the half-shell market where grading size and condition are critical to value. By combining yield and size grading, the app simplifies logistics and improves efficiency in scheduling and processing.

This provides a powerful tool for aquaculture businesses of all sizes, allowing anyone to collect real-time, consistent data for better decision-making and stronger returns.

For more information, visit www.harvesthub.co.nz





MFA Newsletter Stories

Do you have a story you would like to see published in our newsletter?
For consideration, please forward it to:
office@marinefarming.co.nz

Our newsletter is released quarterly – March, June, September, and December

AGM and Conference returns to Nelson

What a treat it was to host MFA's 52nd Annual General Meeting in beautiful Nelson. It was the first time back over the hill in 6 years, and to much delight of Rob Pooley, Golden and Tasman Bay crews.

We were blessed with a gorgeous sunny day on the perfect waterfront location, the Nelson Yacht Club. Proceedings began with a heartfelt Karakia from Reverend Harvey Ruru before we moved into the formalities with the MSQP and MFA AGMs. As always, Bruce Hearn did his best to stir the crowd into action when it came to finding movers, alas no singing this year!

The conference event followed next and was packed full of knowledge sharing with 15 speakers across a wide range of fields. Their presentations gave insight into the work and study that has been going on in the industry often behind the scenes. This included scientific presentations from Auckland University, Cawthron and MSQP. Updates from New Zealand King Salmon's Blue Endeavour project and some talks from those in the forefront of the industry like First Mate and SeaWeave.

A real crowd favourite came after lunch when local legend Pic Picot took to the stage. He had the crowd engaged and laughing within minutes with his no nonsense outlook on life and business. His story of building Pic's Peanut Butter from scratch was inspiring, proving that even the simplest ideas can grow into something extraordinary and that it's never too late to make it big.

Pic stayed on stage to join this years' panel discussion, alongside Aaron Pannell (Flip Farms), Paul Miller (Kernohan Engineering), and MFA's Jonathan Large who took the facilitators seat. Their discussion on turning great ideas into a commercial success was candid and educational, sharing both wins and failures. The takeaway was clear: dream big, know your market and be prepared to roll your sleeves up.

Another highlight was hearing from two of last years' MFA contestable award recipients Alistair Simmons (Waimana Marine Ltd) and Julian Goulding (Channel Marine). Both shared how their funded projects had been put into practice and how they were progressing. It was great to see farmers and operators taking the stage and sharing great ideas that have benefited from the MFA contestable fund.

No MFA conference would be complete without an evening celebration, and we were delighted to bring back the Awards Dinner this year, sponsored by Kernohan Engineering. Starting in style with oysters and mussels generously provided by Marlborough Oysters and Talley's, accompanied by a few drinks before the awards ceremony kicked off.

The entertainment that followed was unforgettable. Guest speaker Scotty Stevenson had the crowd roaring with laughter from the moment he stepped up. A long-time friend of MFA's environmental leader Darren Clarke and his wife Jackie, Scotty's energy and sharp wit quickly won the room. His stories—drawn from both personal and professional life—took the audience through moments of humour, reflection,

and surprise. With his trademark quick-fire delivery, he kept the mood light, peppering the evening with punchlines and even calling out familiar faces by name.

By the end, it truly felt as if Scotty had been part of the marine farming family for years.

The night rounded out perfectly with dessert platters and plenty of catching up with friends and colleagues.

A big thank you to everyone who played a part in making this year's AGM and Conference such a success. From our speakers who gave their time and insights, to the attendees who brought the energy, and of course our loyal sponsors - we couldn't do it without you.

Darren and Jackie Clarke with long-time friend and guest speaker Scotty 'Sumo' Stevenson

The 2025 MFA awards

The MFA Awards are all about recognising the people whose hard work, leadership, and dedication keep our industry thriving. Here are the winners for 2025:

Recent Entrant Award – ALISTAIR SIMMONS, Waimana Marine Limited

This award recognises an individual who, in their first few years in the industry, has demonstrated exceptional passion, commitment, and achievement.

Alistair has made a real impression since stepping into a role that was new territory for him. He's quickly built a strong understanding of mussel farming and leads with a

values-based management style that has earned him the full trust and respect of his crew, and the companies' clients.

Described as environmentally conscious, committed, and someone who genuinely cares about the wellbeing of his team, he leads by example—making sure they have the skills, support, and conditions they need to do their jobs well. His crew say they couldn't be happier working under his leadership.

When we told Milo who he was presenting this award to, the response was, "Absolutely exceptional! Alistair had completed our SRL course last year just so he could better understand what their employees do".

What a great example of his dedication to his team. Congratulations Alistair.

Milo Coldren, on behalf of sponsor Skipper Training NZ, presenting the award to Rob Pooley. Rob received the award for Alistair Simmons, who was unable to attend.

Environment Award – JORDY TAYLOR, Talley's

The Environment Award is presented to an individual or organisation that has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the environment—through advocacy, leadership, best practice, or simply by getting out there and doing the work.

Jordy is someone who consistently goes above and beyond. Rain or shine, calm or rough seas—he doesn't hesitate to stop what he's doing to pick up rubbish or retrieve stray floats. He's not just keeping an eye out—he's making a real difference.

From stepping off the boat to clean up beaches, to supporting Better Beaches sponsor cleans, to targeting consistent hot spots throughout the Sounds—his efforts are regular, thorough, and determined. He's open to feedback, willing to share ideas, and never afraid to get into the tough spots.

Jordy is passionate about the environment and the future of our industry, and this award was well deserved. Congratulations Jordy.

Rob Pooley, on behalf of sponsor Waimana Marine, presenting the award to Jordy Taylor.

Community Award – THE CREW OF VANGUARD, MacLab Tasman

The Community Award is presented each year to an individual who acts as an ambassador for our industry within the communities where we operate.

This year, we did things a little differently - recognising not just one person, but an entire crew whose involvement in community engagement has been truly outstanding.

They've gone above and beyond to support schools, promote aquaculture careers, and connect with the public. Whether it's volunteering to attend careers expos, school visits, or staring in social media campaigns, they always bring positivity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to share what life in our industry is really like.

But they don't just talk about the job—they invite others to experience it. By welcoming students on board for work experience, they've offered a hands-on introduction to life on the water. It's not always easy, but they do it with generosity, patience, and genuine interest in inspiring the next generation of marine farmers.

Their impact is clear. Teachers and event organisers have told us how students have lit up after meeting them—how they've shifted perspectives and opened doors for young people who didn't think they had a place in this industry.

Stoney and Callan were on hand to accept the award on behalf of the team, and both delivered a short sharp heartfelt thank you! Congratulations to Stoney, Callan and the crew.

Ned Wells, on behalf of sponsor Aquaculture Direct Limited, presenting the award to Stoney and Callan for the crew of the Vanguard.

Ivan Godsiff Award – MICHAEL WALLACE, Sanford

The Ivan Godsiff Memorial Award is presented to a skipper who shows outstanding seamanship, cares for their team and vessel, and has a strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

Michael first started in the factory—but only lasted six months before heading out onto the water. Once he stepped aboard his vessel, he never left. He's been on the same boat for his entire career, and it's a special connection that makes this award even more fitting—because his very first skipper was none other than Ivan Godsiff himself.

That vessel was built back in the 1980s and is now nearly 40 years old, but she's still in top condition. That's no accident—it's the direct result of the care, attention, and maintenance this skipper has put in over the decades. He applies that same care to looking after his crew, creating a safe and well-run workplace.

Over the years, he's become one of his company's longest serving and most reliable employees, bringing in around 400,000 bags in more than three decades of harvesting.

Our Environmental Mentor, Darren Clarke, says his standards on the water are second to none, especially when it comes to harvesting, and that his "no tie left behind" approach has become a bit of a trademark.

It's also a family affair, with both of his sons now skippers on the same vessel, carrying on that tradition of doing the job right.

Congratulations Michael.

Stoney Bourke, on behalf of sponsor Maclab Tasman, presenting the award to Brian Godsif. Brian received the award for Michael Wallace, who was unable to attend.

Outstanding Martine Framer Award – WAYNE HOLLIS, Aroma Aquaculture

The Outstanding Marine Farmer Award goes to a farmer or organisation that's made a real difference to the industry here in the Top of the South. It's about recognising those who not only do their own job well but also contribute to the industry as a whole.

Wayne started on fishing boats, before deciding to come closer to shore and join the Marlborough Mussel Company and then, Sanford. He started as a deckhand on a seeding vessel, but it wasn't long before he proved himself and added more strings to his bow - working on farm development and farm maintenance and later moving to a harvest boat.

From there, he took the helm of the *Enterprise*. He's always been a hard worker and expected the same from the crew around him. That meant anyone not willing to pull their weight didn't last long, but those who stayed became a solid, hard-working team who knew how to get the job done.

He worked closely with the SpatNZ team from early on and became their go-to guy on the water, helping with on-water trials, spat checking and assessments on his days off.

A few years later, he joined Aroma Aquaculture. Being part of a small company meant wearing a lot of hats - jobs that in a bigger operation might be split between three different managers.

Whether it was running farms, overseeing harvests, or getting stuck into projects, he was across it all. In fact, he was straight out on the Kakara, covering for the skipper who was off on ACC – always ready to just step in and get the job done.

On top of the day-to-day work, he's always given his time to the bigger picture, serving as a valued member of the MFA Environment Committee and the MFA Board. He's one of those people who's not just part of the industry - he's helped shape it and continues to do so. Congratulations Wayne

Mark Burnaby, on behalf of sponsor Donaghys, presenting the award to Ben Armstrong. Ben received the award for Wayne who was unable to attend.

Merit Award- MERVE WHIPP, formerly Aroma Aquaculture

The Merit Award is presented to an individual or organisation that has made a significant and beneficial difference to our industry over a sustained period of time.

This year's recipient, Merv Whipp, has been a constant presence in New Zealand's seafood sector for more than five decades—a career that began at just 16 years old in a Stewart Island factory, processing crayfish, paua, and blue cod. In those early days, he worked long hours in the factory by day and fished well into the evenings to supplement his income. He was there when New Zealand's first experimental salmon farm was launched in Big Glory Bay, helping run shift transport to and from the site—and eventually, stepping fully into aquaculture.

Since then, he's worked across nearly every part of the industry—wild catch, salmon, mussels—on farms, in factories, and in boardrooms. His career has taken him from Rakiura to the outer Pelorus Sound, and later to Blenheim and Banks Peninsula. He's built deep-water farms, led multiple factory builds and expansions, and turned around aquaculture operations that others had written off.

Over the years, Merve's been there at the start of many now-established ventures—helping companies grow from small beginnings into highly productive, well-run operations. And through it all, he's remained grounded, hands-on, and focused on getting the job done. Much of his learning came not from the classroom but from experience—figuring it out, fixing problems, and finding practical solutions.

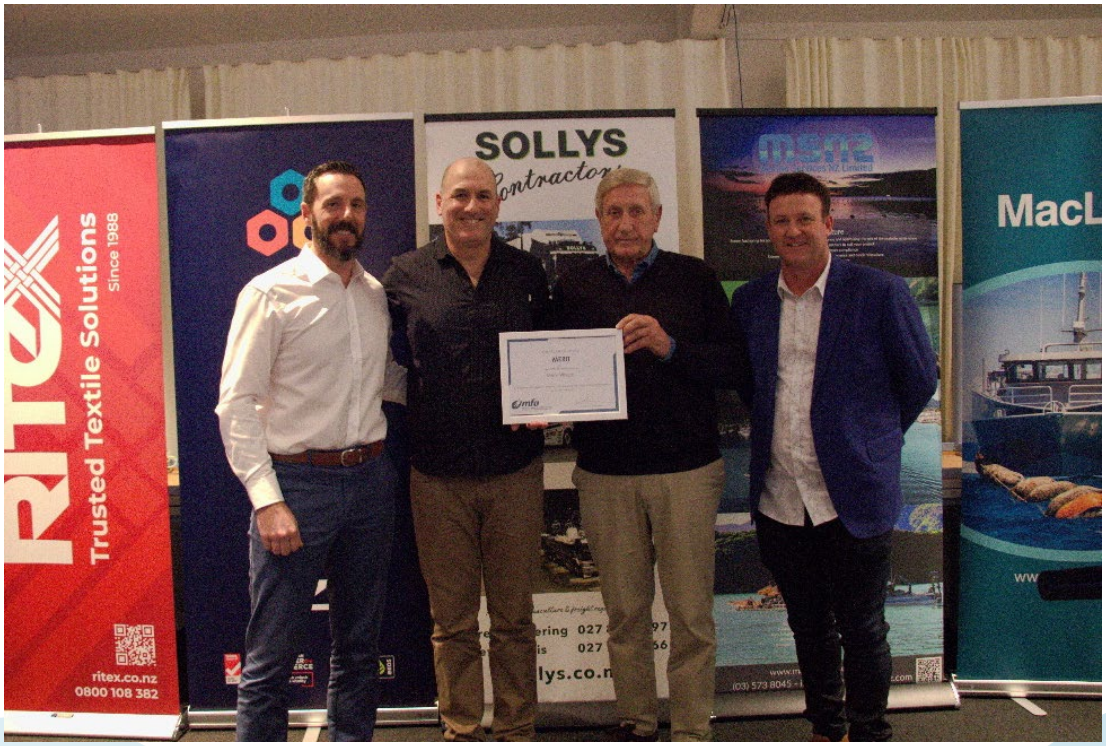
In his most recent role, he helped grow a mussel company from processing 800 tonnes to over 8,000 tonnes annually. He oversaw the design and launch of two purpose-built vessels—including the *Rotterdam*, designed specifically for the challenging conditions of Banks Peninsula—and introduced an industry-first spat recovery system that could change the way we think about sustainability and efficiency during harvest.

But beyond the job titles and projects, Merve is incredibly well-known—and well-liked—throughout the industry. He's earned a reputation for being calm, thoughtful, and quietly influential. Over the years, he's built not just farms and factories, but friendships—many of them decades long. He's supported others' careers, mentored countless people, and opened doors for those coming through the ranks.

People trust him. They listen when he speaks. And they're better for having worked alongside him.

Even now, after more than 55 years in seafood, he hasn't fully stepped away. He's still involved in special projects and still keeping time—like the rhythm guitar he plays in his spare moments, keeping the beat steady while others carry the melody.

It's a fitting metaphor for someone who has helped hold so much of this industry together through his work, his leadership, and his character. All the best on your "retirement" and big congratulations Merve.



Ned Wells and Jonathan Large from MFA presenting the Merit award to Ben Winter Snr and Ben Armstrong. They received the award on behalf of Merv who was unable to attend the ceremony.

A huge THANK YOU to our 2025 Sponsors for their support

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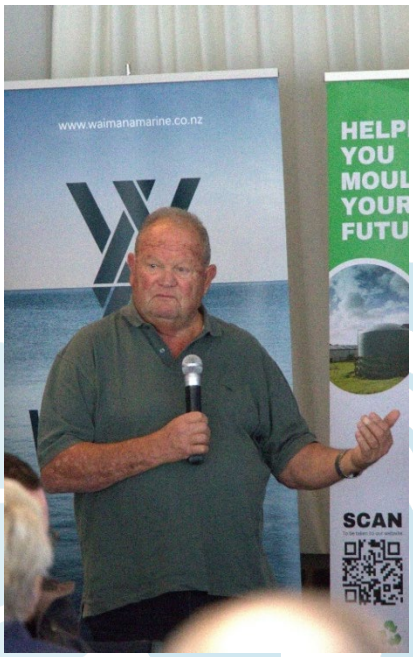
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Now under new ownership by Aroma (NZ) Ltd, Industrial Marine 2025 Ltd in Blenheim continues to supply high-quality, New Zealand-made equipment designed specifically for the mussel farming industry.

Built tough for New Zealand marine conditions, our products are locally manufactured, field-tested, and trusted by farmers nationwide.

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Environmental Workshops Back in Action

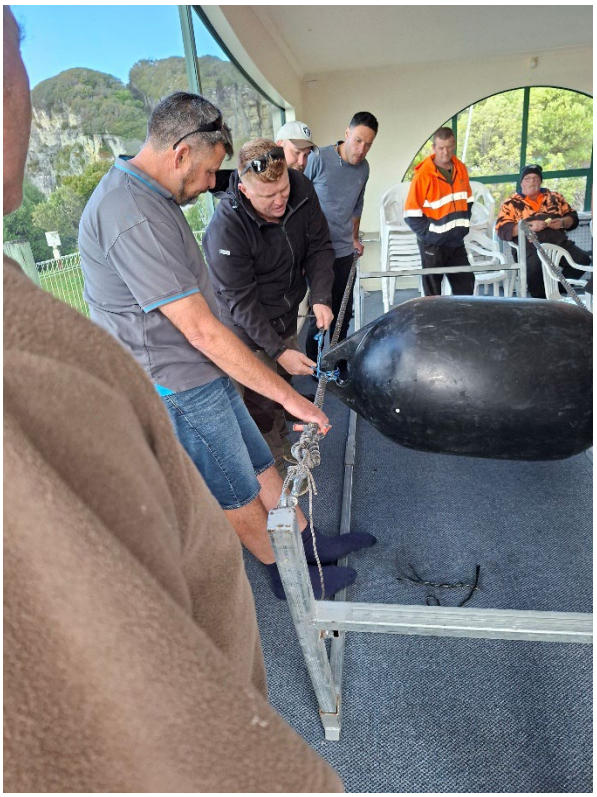
MFA's Environmental Workshops have kicked off again — starting with a strong turnout at the Pohara Boat Club in Golden Bay. The first session was led by MFA Environmental Mentor Darren Clarke alongside Golden Bay farmer Brian Godsiff. With four workshops scheduled throughout September, the focus this year is on strengthening the industry's standard operating procedures and ensuring consistent environmental practices across all vessels and companies.

Reintroducing these sessions gives both new and experienced crew the chance to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, while reinforcing the importance of environmental stewardship at every level of the industry.

The workshops covered a wide range of topics, from practical day-to-day best practice to broader discussions about how the industry can continue to raise the bar. Crews also looked closely at ways to reduce waste, prevent debris loss, and protect the health of the marine environment that underpins their work. The atmosphere was open and constructive, with crews able to talk through the challenges they face on the water and share solutions that work in practice. Darren emphasised that the real value comes from having everyone in the room — crews learning from each other and moving forward together with a clear, consistent approach.

With full attendance and enthusiastic engagement, the workshops underline the industry's commitment to continuous improvement and to caring for the marine environment that supports our communities.

If you are interested in attending a future workshop please contact: admin@marinefarming.co.nz



Become a Mentor

Have you ever thought about sharing the knowledge and experience you've built throughout your career in aquaculture?

Mentorship and Coaching is a powerful way to support someone in their journey—whether that's through technical expertise, team management, or developing confidence in communication.
At the same time, mentoring also helps you grow your own leadership and coaching skills for the future.

If you're interested in learning more or applying to become a mentor,
we'd love to hear from you:
Use the following link https://forms.office.com/r/V2Cs9X8NN6

Or if you have further questions please
contact Kirsten.norfield@aquaculture.org.nz for more details.
Help shape the future of our industry—while developing your own.
Support Growth, Grow Together

Aquaculture New Zealand

From Deckhand to Leader: Meg's Journey

Meg didn't step into the industry with a grand plan, but she's come up through the hawsepipe the right way. From her first role cleaning cabins straight out of uni to now managing the safety, maintenance, and day-to-day operations of Skipper Training NZ's vessels, she's done the hard yards — and it shows.

She's not someone who landed in a leadership role overnight. Her journey started on the lower decks, mopping floors and polishing stainless. Over time, she worked her way up through persistence and hands-on experience.

By the time she was Bosun on 50-metre vessels, she was managing deck operations and serving as the right hand to the Chief Officer. Her responsibilities ranged from overseeing daily maintenance schedules and leading deck crew to managing refit projects during shipyard periods and implementing large-scale operational plans. She was the one making sure what the officers planned actually got done — on time, to standard, and with the crew working to extremely high standards under her guidance.

Meg at the helm, putting her years of hands-on experience into action.

That progression from entry-level to senior crew has given her a depth of experience that's hard-earned and impossible to shortcut.

As Bosun here at Skipper Training NZ, Meg's responsible for the gear, the people, and the platform they operate on. She oversees the maintenance of all our vessels, from general wear and tear to scheduled servicing. Whether it's swapping out filters, sorting hydraulic leaks, greasing bearings, or just knowing when something "doesn't sound right," she's across it. She also manages our engineering trailer, yard, and new facilities — keeping everything stocked, serviced, and running smoothly.

Meg owns the safety space. She's in charge of all safety equipment: lifejackets, lifebuoys, extinguishers, EPIRBs, survival suits — you name it, she ensures it's checked, certified, and logged. She also manages the building and vessels' H&S systems, writes procedures, and keeps documentation up to spec across the board.

Meg's responsible for making sure everyone knows their role, their gear, and what to do when things go sideways. She builds systems that are easy to follow and hard to ignore.

"There's a rhythm to it," she says, "but no two days are the same." Meg might start her morning checking over the lifeboat, running through the logbook, or repacking the trailer for a job offsite. Later, she might be on deck with a grease gun, checking bilge alarms, or starting some paint touch-ups. She adapts easily to whatever the role throws at her — because she's been in those roles before. That's the thing about coming up through the hawsepipe: you don't just understand the job, you understand the people doing it.

What sets Meg apart is her no-nonsense, solutions-focused approach. She's all about getting stuck in, finding the fix, and making sure it stays fixed. That attitude has earned her respect from crews and captains alike.

Meg's work speaks for itself. She's come up through the ranks, knows her gear inside and out, and leads with calm, capability, and clarity. And we couldn't be more stoked to have her running the deck at Skipper Training NZ.

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"For me, learning the theory, then going out on the boat to practice it - that's what made it make sense, even for someone like me, where the theory usually goes in one ear and out the other."

- Jo, 2023 SRL Graduate

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* Courses approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority under section 439 of the Education and Training Act 2020, and Skipper Training NZ Ltd is accredited to provide these under section 441 of the Education and Training Act.

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Women of Aquaculture Aotearoa awards

We are very proud to announce two new WoAA awards sponsored by Aquaculture New Zealand to be given at the upcoming Aquaculture NZ conference in October.

The 'Outstanding Service' Award recognises some of the truly critical work being done by women and leaders across our sector that so often stays under the radar. We all know women in our sector running successful businesses, driving positive change, and acting as cornerstones of progress and growth. Those women we all know that we would be lost without.

The 'Excellence' Award recognises more recent achievements and efforts, be it from young up-and-coming stars, or people who put their heads down and did the excellent mahi this year.

Nominations will be reviewed by our incredible panel of leaders and advocates, including Teena Hale Pennington (CE - Aquaculture New Zealand), Jenny Marcroft (Parliamentary Under-Secretary - Oceans and Fisheries), Karen Olver (Director - Women in Seafood Australasia), and Julia Jones (General Manager - Agri-Women's Development Trust).

Nominations are open for the two awards but only for a few weeks, so get your nominations in quickly at: https://www.woaaotearoa.org/awards

Boost Your Career with an Aquaculture and Fisheries Sector Industry Scholarship

Women & Leadership New Zealand is offering scholarships to support women to access world-class leadership and workplace skill development programs. Professional development designed for you:

- Balance Life & Learning: Flexible part-time delivery fits your busy schedule.
- Essential Work Skills: Combine cutting-edge theory with practical application.
- Targeted Growth: Choose from 4 leadership and workplace skill development courses.

Partial scholarships ranging from $700 to $3,000 are available to support women at all levels, from entry-level to senior executives.

Don't miss out on this opportunity! Apply by Friday 24 October 2025 places are limited.

Learn more & apply: https://www.womenandleadership.co.nz/industry/aquaculture

Aotearoa New Zealand Seaweed Association

The ANZSA Seaweed Summit 2025 will gather bright minds from around the world who are passionate about all things seaweed at the Rutherford Hotel, Nelson, on 10 October 2025.

Proudly sponsored by industry leaders: the Marine Bioproducts Cooperative Research Centre (MBCRC) as Gold Sponsor, with CH4 Global and Greenwave Aotearoa as Silver Sponsors. The Summit is an important annual event for New Zealand's fast-growing seaweed sector, spotlighting commercially scalable innovations, science-driven sustainability, and economic transformation and delivering on the National Seaweed Sector Strategy developed by the Sustainable Seas Science Challenge and many ANZSA members.

With the Aquaculture New Zealand (AQNZ) Conference running back-to-back, visitors in Whakatū/Nelson can be immersed in a great week of networking, insights, and opportunity.

Under the theme "From Niche to Noticed", the Summit will explore the development of an integrated value chain for seaweed that harnesses opportunities from cultivation through to product innovation and market development.

The program features a diverse lineup including being opened by the Parliamentary Undersecretary for Oceans and Fisheries, researchers from Australia and New Zealand, industry pioneers, and Māori kaitiaki. Each addressing critical topics such as supply chain resilience, regulatory frameworks, global market trends, research and development innovations, ocean health, climate mitigation, and indigenous partnerships.

Featured Speaker: Daniel Abrahams

The MBCRC leads the way in advancing sustainable marine bioproducts across Australasia, pioneering research, commercialisation, and industry scale-up initiatives in marine-derived functional foods, materials, and pharmaceuticals. As the Gold Sponsor, MBCRC demonstrates its commitment to forging Trans-Tasman links and accelerating sector growth.

MBCRC, Daniel Abrahams

Daniel Abrahams, CEO of MBCRC, brings a wealth of experience from scaling start-ups across APAC and leading listed companies in finance and infrastructure. A Fellow of CPA Australia and a champion of business innovation, Daniel's presentation will focus on supporting the growth of Australia's seaweed industry and in particular the collaborative efforts underway to unlock value through research, investment, and entrepreneurial leadership. His presentation will share MBCRC's learnings on incubating marine ventures, building research-industry alliances, and developing commercial pathways for novel seaweed applications.

Featured Speaker: Dr Octavio Perez-Garcia

CH4 Global is a leader in methane mitigation for agriculture, developing large-scale Asparagopsis aquaculture and processing solutions for climate-friendly livestock

supplements. At the Summit, CH4 Global's support places sustainable biotechnologies at the forefront of industry transformation in both Australia and New Zealand.

CH4 Global, Dr Octavio Perez-Garcia

Dr Octavio Perez-Garcia, Asset and Planning Manager at CH4 Global, will deliver insights into building the value chain for Asparagopsis, sharing expertise in aquaculture infrastructure, market development, and industry partnerships. With a history of advancing commercial aquaculture projects, Octavio will chart the company's journey in scaling methane-busting seaweed technologies from research to farm to market, describing real-world challenges and the requirements for robust industry growth.

Featured Speaker: Hamish Howard
Greenwave Aotearoa is championing regenerative ocean farming in New Zealand by adapting proven global models for local conditions and championing scalable, native seaweed supply chains. Their collaborative approach brings together impact investors, iwi partnerships, academic research, and technology innovators, focusing primarily on the native brown seaweed Ecklonia radiata. This work supports climate action, ecosystem restoration, job creation, and regional prosperity.

Greenwave Aotearoa, Hamish Howard

Hamish Howard, Greenwave Aotearoa Commercial lead is helping to build a nationally coordinated seaweed value chain, linking strain selection and hatchery through on-water cultivation, harvesting, and processing to market applications in biostimulants, animal health, human nutrition, and personal care. He drives market strategy, partnerships, and capital planning to convert R&D into viable products and ventures. Hamish's background spans across commercial fishing, operations, and business management. He has contributed to both microalgae and macroalgae ventures and brings a pragmatic, market-led approach to category creation and scale-up. He is committed to growing a commercially viable, globally relevant blue economy and seaweed industry that delivers meaningful social and ecological outcomes for the people and environment of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Summit also brings together top voices in regulation, biosecurity, restoration, bioproduct innovation, and Māori leadership. Discussions will include panels on blue carbon, infrastructure, economic barriers, and public-private partnerships, with opportunities for networking, student poster sessions, and lightning talks by next-generation seaweed scientists.

Join the ANZSA Summit in Nelson

Don't miss the chance to be part of New Zealand's thriving seaweed movement and connect with industry leaders, innovators, and researchers.

The ANZSA Seaweed Summit is the place to be to access the latest science, commercial strategies, and partnership models shaping the future of seaweed production and the many subsequent uses of seaweeds. Following the Aquaculture New Zealand Conference, it's a double-feature of inspiration and learning in sunny Whakatū Nelson.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND SEAWEED ASSOCIATION
ANZSA

Register now for the ANZSA Summit and secure your place.