Seafood Industry Roundtable Planned

“Persistence - nothing in the world can take its place, not talent, not genius and not education. The world is full of unsuccessful men (and women) with talent, unrewarded geniuses and educated derelicts. PERSISTENCE and DETERMINATION alone are omnipotent.”

-President Calvin Coolidge (1923-29)

How does persistence and determination relate to the North Carolina seafood industry? Anyone who is still in the business probably understands very well. And for those of us not in the industry, we are simply confused about the issues. In order to unravel some of this confusion, the NCSU Seafood Laboratory and NC Sea Grant will host, in cooperation with the NC Fisheries Association, a NC Seafood Industry Roundtable.

The purpose is to engage industry, state and federal agencies, who work around the issues of seafood safety and quality, processing technologies and markets, in discussion about the current issues affecting the seafood industry. Issues such as surveillance testing for drug residues on imported seafood and the new 4th Edition of the FDA's Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Control Guide are just some topics to be discussed. The roundtable will also be an opportunity for a number of North Carolina business owners to pose questions to the state and federal public health agencies.

As the market is changing from the import and export of seafood from around the world, concerns for the safety, availability and affordability of seafood are tantamount. The hope for this event is that by bringing industry and government together to discuss the issues at hand, discussion will begin towards solutions for some of these issues and keeping fresh, North Carolina seafood available for all of us to enjoy.

Please join us to discuss the issues and begin the important dialogue on sustainable seafood in North Carolina. Consumers are demanding it and the industry needs it. We hope you will take the time to participate and contribute to this event. It will be held in New Bern on May 1 at the Sheraton New Bern Hotel and Marina. Contact Jill Fournier at 252.222.6334 for further information.

David Green
NC Cooperative Extension Specialist (Seafood)
NCSU Seafood Laboratory

Current Events

February 12-14
Basic Seafood HACCP Workshop
Association of Food and Drug Officials, (AFDO) Certified
Morehead City, NC

February 24-26
International Seafood Show
(NCDA-Sponsored NC Seafood Pavilion)
Boston, MA

May 1
Seafood Industry Roundtable
Sponsored by Seafood Laboratory
New Bern, NC

October 12-14
8th Joint Meeting of SST and AFT
1st NC Marine Biotechnology Symposium

New Department Name
As of January 1, 2008, the NCSU Department of Food Science is sporting a new name - the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences. The name was requested to reflect the growing diversity of research and studies encompassed by the department. Food Science continues to branch into more technical and health-related areas as society and consumers demand more from the foods being grown and developed throughout North Carolina and the world.
Sensory Assessment for Aquaculture Producers

Even the chill of a rainy, January day didn’t stop their quest for knowledge. Over 25 participants of the 20th Annual NC Aquaculture Development Conference, held at Atlantic Beach, January 17-19, 2008, attended a pre-conference tour and hands-on sensory assessment workshop - the last event of the day after self-guided tours of aquaculture farms in Eastern North Carolina.

David Green, Director of the Laboratory, presented a mini-workshop titled “Making the Grade: Sensory Assessment of Fish Quality in the Marketplace.” Green explained the work being done at the lab with Hybrid-Striped Bass in conjunction with the local White Rock Fish Farm in Vanceboro. He noted that this research is being conducted with funding from two Sea Grant Fisheries Resource Grants - one which funds the development of processes for farmers to consistently produce a premium quality Hybrid Striped Bass to serve a year-round market and another grant to develop a total quality system (TQS) for the grading, traceability and marketing of North Carolina seafood.

Overviews of the science of fish quality began the workshop. Explanations of sensory and non-sensory assessments were given. The participants also learned the process involved in predicting shelf-life of farm-raised fish by utilizing the talents of trained sensory panelists. Green also made argument for the use of quality assessments on fish - that the farmer and customers will speak the same “language”; a quality control program could be established; fish could be marketed with a measurable quality parameter (“best use-by date”); and trust would be built between the producer and consumer as a consistent, premium quality product is provided.

Green further explained the development of FreshNet™ - a web-based traceability and Quality Index Method (QIM) grading tool currently in early testing with Hybrid Striped Bass farmers through the Laboratory. Farmers will be trained in grading their harvests using a mobile, cellular phone with internet access. As a harvest is graded, information is sent to an internet server via the phone where stakeholders can identify a particular lot of fish and track its shipment and grading history. This technology will aid farmers in meeting consumers needs and market expectations.

At the end of the lecture, lab staff provided six fish samples at various levels of quality for participants to grade based on what they had just learned. Most commented their grading was “tougher” than the actual grade determined by the lab. All agreed that they learned a great deal on what is an acceptable level of quality and length of shelf life in order for these fish to be sold at market.

For more information on the QIM grading and traceability program contact David Green at dpg@ncsu.edu.

Seafood Marketing Workshops Held

Think - like a consumer; Diversify - your marketing; Grow - your business... is the theme of the NC Seafood Marketing Workshops presented by the NC State Seafood Laboratory and North Carolina Sea Grant.

Demand for fresh, local seafood is increasing in North Carolina and across the nation. To grow a local seafood business, owners must first identify their primary customers and learn about their preferences and purchasing habits.

In response to repeated requests from commercial fishermen and processors on direct market strategies, the NC State Seafood Laboratory and North Carolina Sea Grant developed a one-day training program that highlights consumer research and explores branding and promotion strategies.

The first of four planned workshops was held January 29 at the UNC Wilmington Center for Marine Science. Attendees included 15 fishermen and dealers and two university extension agents from South Carolina and Georgia. Participants were introduced to the latest trends affecting the seafood market, how to use the Internet to conduct simple consumer research, how to brand products and develop promotional brochures, and how to evaluate the financial impact of new business ventures. Jim Swartenberg, owner of J&B AquaFood, discussed his marketing program and how it has expanded his customer base over time.

A second workshop is scheduled for mid-March on Ocracoke Island. For more information about the session, including date and time, contact Barry Nash at barry_nash@ncsu.edu or 252-222-6337.

The Wilmington workshop agenda, along with additional seafood marketing references and resources, are available online at: www.ncseagrant.org/seafoodworkshops
New FDA Food Protection Plan in Place

Despite this country having one of the safest food supplies in the world, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued a new Food Protection Plan in an effort to keep ahead of a changing world and potentially unsafe foods making their way to the US marketplace. “This Food Protection Plan will implement a strategy of prevention, intervention and response to build safety into every step of the food supply chain,” says Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services, US Department of Health and Human Services.

The Food Protection Plan, announced in November 2007, includes integrated strategies that: focus on risks over a product’s life cycle from production to consumption; target resources to achieve maximum risk reduction; address both unintentional and deliberate contamination acts; and use science and modern technology systems.

The FDA has identified three core elements of protection for our nations food supply: prevention, intervention and response. Core element 1 is to Prevent Foodborne Contamination by building in safety from the start of the food chain. The FDA will work with the private sector to build on the actions of the food industry to ensure product safety. Core element 2 is Intervention at critical points in the food supply chain. The FDA will have an increased focus on inspections and sampling based on assessed risk, enhance their risk-based surveillance; and improve the detection of food system “signal” that indicate contamination. Core element 3 is to Respond rapidly to minimize harm. The Plan includes ways for the FDA to improve immediate response to a contamination and to improve it’s risk communications to the public, industry and other stakeholders.

Implementation of all these core elements will begin immediately, be phased in over time and be integrated with the FDAs Import Safety Action Plan already in place. The FDA will continue to work with Congress on additional legislative actions needed to fully implement parts of the plan and strengthen its ability to protect the nation’s food supply.

A copy of the report is available online at the Food and Drug Administration web site: www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/advance/food.html. Here you can find additional information about food safety and protection.

Atlantic Fisheries Technology Conference (AFTC) November 2007 • Portland, Maine

Here are a few of the highlights presented at the AFTC:

- Karen Bruno, University of Aarhus, Denmark presented “Consumer perceptions of seafood: What’s the Trend?” She noted that in Europe “growth is all aquaculture - 45 million tons; wild caught is stable at 85 MT with about 9 MT of inland capture; of this 140 MT, 105 MT are food fish.”
- Ross Butler of Cooke Aquaculture of Newfoundland and Labrador presented “Quality Assurance in Farmed Salmon - a vertical integration model.” Currently they are located at the south end of Newfoundland with salmon and raising greater than 45 MT; are branching out looking to develop cod; hoping to produce 1 million pounds of mussels in 2008.
- Barry Nash, NCSU Seafood Laboratory moderated Roundtable Discussion of New Product Commercialization. Lively discussion was held among industry producers and marketing experts about what the consumers are seeking in the market, value added products and new technologies.
- Ken Gall, NY Sea Grant, was awarded the annual Earl P. McFee Award, which recognizes excellence in fishery technology involving all aspects of seafood science and technology including administration of research and development and active research.

Seafood Science and Technology Society (SST) November 2007 • Dominican Republic

The joint meeting of the 31st Annual Meeting of SST and the 60th Annual Meeting of GCFI had several items of international interest on their week-long agenda, including:

- “Spiny Lobster School: Responsible Use of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster Resource: Integrating Biology, Management, Marketing, Processing and Trade”
- “Fish Species Identification Methods and Programs” presented by a variety of speakers from industry and government which ran concurrently with a special commercial forum held by the National Fisheries Institute (NFI).
- David Green presented a paper on research conducted at the Seafood Laboratory on “Isolation and Identification of Histamine-Producing Bacteria in Yellowfin Tuna and Mahi-Mahi from North Carolina and Hawaiian Waters” during the GCFI Session on Controlling Histamine Levels in Potential Scombrotoxic Fishes.
It’s all about

Clams!

Seafood Tips*

Clams are available year-round in North Carolina. They may be bought in the shell or shucked. When purchasing clams, remember the following:

- the shells should be heavy and tightly closed, or close when tapped lightly
- clams should have a pleasant, briny odor
- don’t choose clams with broken or open shells
- clam meat is translucent with color ranging from ivory to golden brown with a clear or slightly opaque liquid
- smaller clams (littleneck or small cherrystone) cook quickly and are ideal to steam, broil, bake, grill, use in clambakes or other cooked dishes
- larger clams are less tender and take longer to cook and are better used chopped for chowders, fritters or stuffed clams
- watch the amount of salt you add to clam dishes - many clams taste salty naturally and adding salt may be too much for the recipe

* from “Mariner’s Menu – 30 Years of Fresh Seafood Ideas” by Joyce Taylor

Seafood Tastes

Now that the winter months are upon us, a favorite way to stave off the cold is by digging in to the warm and blended flavors that only soups, stews or chowders can bring. Try these two chowders: Hearty Clam Chowder and Old Fashioned Clam Chowder (a “Down East” style with a broth base) developed in the Seafood Lab test kitchen.

Old-Fashioned Clam Chowder

2 cups coarsely chopped chowder clams
4 slices bacon
2 cups water
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 cups diced potatoes
1/2 cup instant potato flakes to thicken (optional)

In a large saucepan, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside. Add clams, water, onion, salt and pepper to pan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and cook slowly until clams are tender, about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Add potatoes and cook until done, about 20 minutes. If desired, add potato flakes and simmer until thickened, about five minutes. Crumble bacon and sprinkle over chowder. Serves 8 to 10.

Hearty Clam Chowder

2 cups shucked littleneck clams, liquid reserved
4 slices bacon, diced
1/3 cup thinly sliced green onion, including tops
2 cups peeled and diced potatoes
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
2/3 cup thinly sliced carrot
1/2 teaspoon pressed garlic
clam liquid plus enough water to make 2 cups
1/2 - 1 teaspoon salt (according to taste)
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
2 cups light cream

In a large, deep pan, cook bacon over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp. Remove bacon and reserve. Add onion, potatoes, celery, carrot, garlic, liquid, salt, pepper, Worcestershire, and Tabasco to pan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer gently until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Add clams and cook until done, about five minutes.


Online Seafood Resources

The internet offers a bounty of sites with information about seafood - anything from recipes to marketing to producing seafood products. Below is a sampling of sites that you might find helpful.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Regulatory agency for North Carolina fishing industry - commercial and recreational. Wealth of information on NC fish, maps, types of fish, fishing regulations, commercial fishing information and much more. http://www.ncfisheries.net/

North Carolina Fisheries Association
A non-profit trade association created by commercial fishermen in 1952, to facilitate the promotion of North Carolina families, heritage and seafood through accessible data about the ever-changing commercial fishing industry. Tons of info about commercial fishing in NC, including resources for teachers/parents. http://www.ncfish.org/

National Fisheries Institute
The National Fisheries Institute (NFI) is the nation’s leading advocacy organization for the seafood industry. Its member companies represent every element of the industry from the fishing vessels at sea to the national seafood restaurant chains. Site offers variety of seafood/fishing related info from nutrition to industry issues to resources for children. http://www.aboutseafood.com/