

Fish Tales Newsletter

West Virginia's Aquaculture Newsletter is produced to help inform, educate, and update those interested in producing quality aquatic products, in a sustainable manner, for the recreational and food fish markets.

Aquaculture America 2006 meets in Las Vegas

If you have a propensity for gambling, then this year's site for the Aquaculture America meeting was a great one. With 2,000+ attendees and hundreds of presentations on dozens of topics, there just wasn't time for gambling (call, and raise \$5).

The opportunity for exchanging ideas with other people may be the best reason to attend, but the variety of entertainment in Vegas helps to draw many people to the oasis in the desert. There is truly an atmosphere of friendliness on the street as many people enjoy meeting others and telling stories about their fortunes and misfortunes.

Researchers at West Virginia University presented a number of papers during the week. **Dr. Tanya Borisova, Aislinn Tierney, Dr. Roger Viadero, Dr. Todd West, and Dr. Ken Semmens** all presented something in their specialty, while the dealer took a break from the table.

With more than one dozen concurrent sessions, it was not easy to attend all of the interesting oral presentations. The posters were in a convenient location, next to the trade show booths in the Exhibit Hall. Next year, the meetings will be held in San Antonio, Texas.



Major producers attend 2006 Aquaculture Forum

The 2006 Aquaculture Forum was held January 21 at WVU Jackson's Mill again this year. Each year, approximately 100 people attend this informative event. This year, **Jonathan Browning** (left), production manager of the Rockhouse Springs Arctic char farm in Logan County attended with **James LeFew** (right), the business manager who markets the **ISIS** brand arctic char that is sold after being processed at the new processing plant in Man, W.Va.

Better known as **West Virginia Aqua, LLC**, this company uses clean and clear water from the mountains (mines) in the southern part of the state to produce nearly a quarter million pounds of char from a relatively small flow of 500 gallons per minute. This would not be possible were it not for the superb design work that was done with the help of the **Freshwater Institute** in the Eastern Panhandle.

The ISIS arctic char products (www.isisarcticchar.com) come in three forms: headed and gutted (H&G), filleted, and as a hickory smoked fillet. Mr. LeFew presented during the morning session and he brought samples of the hickory-smoked product for all attendees to sample during the afternoon break. Rumor has it he has a surprise for next year.

Rainbow Trout Has No Limits – 2006 Advisory

The West Virginia Department of Human Health Resources has updated the Sport Fish Consumption Advisory for 2006. The consumption advisories are reviewed annually to help West Virginia anglers make educated choices about eating the fish they catch (<http://www.wvdhhr.org/fish/print.asp>). The advisory covers only sport fish caught in West Virginia waters.

The General Advisory for all West Virginia waters lists black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted), brown trout, flathead catfish, channel catfish, saugeye, walleye, white bass, hybrid striped bass, all suckers, and rainbow trout. A separate column indicates which contaminate (mercury, PCBs, or dioxin) caused the advisory for the species. Rainbow trout was the only species with no limit in the consumption advisory column.

An information table at the WV 2006 Aquaculture Forum provided information about mercury (Hg) and PCBs in our food supply.

Ken Stewart, the director of the analytical lab at WVU, was present to answer any questions. His lab did the analysis for most of the fish tissue samples that were checked for these ubiquitous toxins.



In a related story just across the Maryland boarder, more than 50 % of brown bullheads sampled from the South River had skin tumors. The skin tumor rate of brown bullhead catfish from the South River matched that of brown bullheads taken from the Great Lakes, which had the nation's highest rate. Twenty percent of the South River bullheads also had liver cancer, second only to the rate found in the Anacostia River in 2001, where nearly 70 percent had liver tumors, according to a recent study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"The fish are clearly exposed to cancer-causing agents, and at this point, we really don't know what chemicals are responsible," **Fred Pinkney**, the Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who conducted the study, told *The Washington Post*. "We suspect it's from (polluted) runoff." *Note to self: if you catch a fish with a tumor hanging off of it, don't use it for sashimi, not even with extra wasabi.*

Did YOU KNOW?

Lincoln County is finishing construction of a comprehensive high school / vocational tech. center. This new building has a 650-square-foot aquaculture production lab where students will learn by raising warm-water as well as cool-water species as part of their education.



This spring, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will apply more than 5,500 tons of limestone sand to 43 sites affected by acid precipitation. This will result in the restoration of more than 200 miles of streams and 60 acres of high-elevation lakes. It is estimated that 80 percent of these restored streams support naturally reproducing native brook trout.

While we are on the subject of brook trout: Brookies are the only native trout in West Virginia. They usually spawn in the headwaters of streams during October. Brook trout can be sexually mature when only 4 inches in length, at the end of their second year.



West Virginia University has been conducting research on growing large brook trout (> 3 pounds) for marketing in the recreational area. Triploid (3 sets of chromosomes) brook trout growth and survival has been compared to regular brook trout and the results are...triploids grow and survive better.

Ken's Corner

Aquaculture is agriculture..... but it hasn't been that way for long. Terrestrial animals (cows, pigs, chickens, etc.) have been domesticated for centuries. Our laws reflect this fact. Today, many forms of aquatic life are being grown as farm products and have begun the process of domestication. The legal code is slowly evolving to accommodate the emerging aquaculture industry. One example is House Bill 4678. It is designed to change the legal status of fish manure from industrial waste to an agricultural waste. Once this is done, land application of fish manure should become much more economical and less bureaucratic—particularly for W.Va. trout farms. If you wish to view the bill and its progress, check the following Web site: http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Text_HTML/2006_SESSIONS/RS/BillInformation.cfm?input=4678 As of today (3.7.06), it has passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill is not controversial and has been supported by W.Va. Department of Agriculture, DEP, and DNR. By the time you read this, we hope it has been passed by the Senate and will become law. If not, then the West Virginia Aquaculture Association and producers around the state need to consider voicing their support early and often to get it passed next year. Question..... if aquaculture is agriculture, then why do you suppose fish farmers are required to purchase a permit from the Division of Natural Resources before they can legally sell their fish? When considering how the legal code accommodates aquaculture, there are many questions like this. If you have one, I am making a collection. Please send it to me at Ken.Semmens@mail.wvu.edu or call 293-6131 x 4211.

New Aquaculture Instructor at Bluefield State College

Late last year, G.K.U. Kumar joined New River Community Technical College (NRCTC) as visiting instructor of aquaculture. He teaches commercial aquaculture courses at the Bluefield, W.Va. campus. As an associate professor of zoology, Kumar taught various branches of animal sciences at a four-year college in India for 18 years. He was adjunct faculty for Southwest Virginia Community College, where he taught biology for 12 years.

During the same period, he developed a career in the field of healthcare management and served in various management capacities including his three-year tenure as CEO of Lee County Community Hospital in Pennington Gap, Va. Mr. Kumar has a master of science degree in zoology, from Karnatak University, India, and MBA from Bristol (Tenn.) University.

The two-year aquaculture program, offered by the NRCTC, prepares individuals for careers in commercial aquaculture. An integral part of the aquaculture program is work sessions (practicum) on active aquaculture farms. These work sessions occur at various times throughout the growing cycle of the fish and require student to work alongside the farm workers. For additional information, you may contact Mr. Kumar at (304) 327-4209.

Organic Aquaculture Recommendations

For those interested in the development of national organic standards in aquaculture, on January 13 the national aquaculture working group submitted its interim final report to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). The NOSB is seeking public comment on this report until April 10. If anyone wishes to read this report, it can be found on the Web at: www.ams.usda.gov/nop/TaskForces/AATFInterimaFinalReportPubComnt.pdf

Public comments can be faxed to (202) 205-7808 or e-mailed to NOSB.Livestock@usda.gov or mailed to NOSB c/o Valeria Frances, Room 4008 – South Bldg. 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, DC 20250-0001

Free classified ads will be a new addition to *Fish Tales Newsletter's* next edition.

Locals interested in advertising the sale of fingerlings, fish, or any other aquaculture-related items, you can contact us before the deadline (see bottom of back page) and we will do our best to publish your advertising for FREE. We ask that you include a contact phone number or e-mail address in the ad.

This is the first issue where we have featured classified ads and announcements. The objective is to provide useful information to growers, suppliers, and their customers, and is not intended as an endorsement of the organizations listed. We invite your comments regarding this service, and will develop a more complete policy for future issues.

West Virginia-Based Fish Farms and Processing Plant Available

WV JIT offers for lease or sale the aquaculture facilities that were previously operated as Minaqua/ High Appalachian. The farms are located at Lillybrook and McAlpin on leased land. The water source for both facilities is very high quality mine water. The processing plant is located near Sophia, with frontage on the new Coalfields Expressway. All facilities are in Raleigh County and may be obtained individually or as a package at favorable terms. Please contact Richard Ross or Matt Wender at 304-345-6200.

Fish for ponds, Bass- .90 ea.; bluegill- .60 ea.; catfish-.50ea.; 9-13 inch grasscarp-14.75 ea.; koi carp-3.00 ea.; goldfish- 1.00 ea.; volume discounts, Fred Hays PO Box 241 Elkview, WV 25071 Phone: 548-7117

Ohio State University is holding a Perch School training course on Saturday, April 8, at the OSU Piketon Center. Registrations (deadline is March 20) can be made by calling Mrs. Charity Crabtree at 740-289-2071, ext. 110. Cost: \$100

Pond stocker fish for sale: large mouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, channel cats, and yellow perch. Hocking College – Lake Snowden Fish hatchery near Albany, Ohio. Phone: 740-698-1925

We are encouraging contributions to Fishtales newsletter by W.Va. residents. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Dan Miller at dmille31@wvu.edu or call 304-293-4832, ext. 4465. The deadline for the next issue of Fishtales is June 15, 2006.

This publication is available in a printable format, on the Web at:
<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/newsletter.htm>

Programs and activities offered by West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension Service, West Virginia University.