

Industry Groups

Edible Oysters – Other

Hatchery production and value

In New South Wales, trial commercial farming of flat oysters commenced in 1998 when NSW Fisheries produced the state's first hatchery generated batch of seed. Standard hatchery regimes for feeding and all other elements of husbandry are identical in most respects to those developed for hatchery rearing of Sydney Rock Oysters.

Markets and opportunities

Most marketing of flat oysters in New South Wales is either direct retail or supply to restaurants on the south coast, and in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Prices range from \$3.50 to \$12 a dozen (average around \$7.50), approximately twice that of Sydney Rock Oysters (\$3.60 a dozen).

Outlook and risks

In New South Wales, although development to date of the flat oyster has been confined to the south coast, rapid early growth performance in trial farming in the north of the state, together with the oyster's resistance to QX disease, may lead to significant production on the north coast in the next few years.

Production on the south coast is expected to rise in 2002-03 as existing south coast flat oyster growers continue to gain experience with flat oysters and to move away from the production of Sydney Rock Oysters.

The speed and magnitude with which the flat oyster industry expands within the existing rock oyster industry will depend largely on development of high price export markets for fresh, chilled and frozen flesh products (Heasman 2002). While production is limited by available growing areas, there is potential for expansion in the cultivation of these indigenous oysters and possible future export opportunities to the large European flat oyster market.

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Although flat oysters will need to compete against locally produced and imported rock oysters, flat oysters have a competitive edge in appearance and apparent greater potential for export. Priorities for the industry are for growers to collectively develop and market flat oysters that are safe for consumers, are of standard size and uniform good flesh quality, and are marketed under a single recognised name. The adoption of long shelf life packing and chilled storage methods is also a priority.

Industry associations

There are industry associations in each state where edible oysters are grown. State associations include the Oysters Farmers' Association of NSW Ltd, the Oyster Section of the NSW Farmers Association, the Queensland Oyster Growers Association, and the South Australian Oyster Growers Association. In Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aquaculture Council (TAC) is the peak body representing marine farming member organisations and members' interests. The Shellfish Executive Council, which comprises representatives of regional grower groups and includes oyster, mussel and scallop growers, is one of the TAC's member organisations.

[\(REF. Australian Aquaculture. Industry profiles for selected species\)](#)