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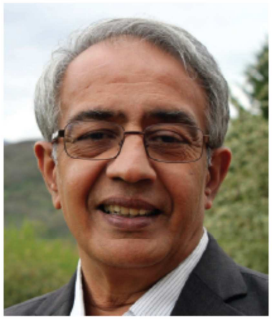

Welcome to Aquaculture Europe 2015 and welcome to Rotterdam!

As you know well, the theme of this year's event is focussing on the role and contribution of aquaculture to the management of natural resources and its importance in society through the provision of high quality, nutritious and healthy food.

These are indeed the main thematic areas that will be addressed during the plenary sessions. We are very pleased to have the thoughts and experience of three excellent plenary speakers, with Chris Ninnes on the ASC view on demonstrating our sustainability credentials; Huw Thomas from UK retailer Morrisons on adapting to consumer preferences and Louise Fresco, the CEO of Wageningen UR on alternative approaches to production.

We are pleased to offer you a diverse and rich conference programme thanks to the outstanding efforts of our Programme Co-chairs Catarina Martins from Marine Harvest, Norway and Aad Smaal from Imares, Wageningen UR here in The Netherlands. The session chairs have also done a great job, with abstracts coming in late and once again, with difficult choices in compiling sessions with a limitation on the number of oral slots.

We are also indebted to our AE2015 sponsors, notably Gold Sponsor Biomar and Silver Sponsor DSM, but also to the grant assistance from Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Province of Zeeland our student group sponsor, Sparos and to our AE2015 session sponsors and media partners.

Once again, and showing that Aquaculture Europe is a true forum for European aquaculture, we have workshops and satellite events taking place before, during and after AE2015 and focussing on diverse elements of the aquaculture sector. We also have a great selection of technical tours in the Netherlands and also in Belgium.

Aquaculture Europe 2015 offers you an opportunity to discuss some of the latest research initiatives, perhaps even before their potential is fully realised, so we urge you to engage in all the planned activities to really get the most out of your time here and I very much hope that this meeting lives up to yours and EAS's high expectations.

I hope that you also have time to visit the Netherlands and discover this vibrant end welcoming city.

Please also note the dates of September 20-23, 2016 for our AE2016 event in Edinburg and plan to join us there.

Sachi Kaushik
EAS President 2014-2016

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PRE-GROWING OF CUPPED OYSTER (*Crassostrea gigas*) IN THE CENTRAL ADRIATIC SEA USING DEVICES IN OPEN SEA

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Introduction

In Adriatic Sea, shellfish aquaculture is almost totally based on mussels rearing in long-lines systems, within 3 miles from the coastline. Even if oysters (*Crassostrea gigas* and *Ostrea edulis*), have to be considered a high value product if compared to mussels, oysters aquaculture practices, which can be successfully achieved in the same systems (Roncarati et al., 2012a, b), is still on a small-scale level for both species.

One of the main bottlenecks is represented by the necessity to start rearing from pre-grown spat (T12) that present high prices (4-5 times the price of T2-T3 spats) and is poorly available on market. The present trial aimed to assess the possibility to perform in open sea conditions the nursery stage from T2-T3 to T10-T12 spats, that is normally performed in land based farm (Flupsy or similar).

Materials and methods

For the trial, 50,000 cupped triploid oysters 0.033 g medium weight and 5 mm medium length, have been grown at two different densities (H, L) from April 07th to July 1st.

Nursery stage has been performed in 2 litres plastic cylinders, placed in Ostriga® lanterns. Two cylinders were put at each level of the lanterns. Cylinders had an external surface of 900 cm^2 with 600 cm^2 open and covered by 1 x 1 mm or 4 x 4 mm mesh depending on spat size.

Every 15 days, oysters were controlled, cleaned and sampled. Grading and division took place on May 22nd (third control). Before and after grading "High density" have been maintained double of "Low density". Starting densities were respectively 2,500 and 5,000 oyster spats.

Sea current in the area where the trial has been performed is quite strong and continuous.

For growth control, medium body weight and total length were registered. Mortality rate and presence of welded oysters were also monitored.

Results and conclusion

With "Low density", final medium weights of small and large spats were respectively 0.66 g (LT 18.6 mm) and 2.82 g (LT 37.6 mm). With "High density", final medium weights of small and large spats were respectively 0.62 g (LT 18.6 mm) and 1.34 g (LT 37.6 mm).

From starting to first grading, mortality increased steadily. Survival rates after grading were 65% with low density and 70% with high density. Mortality after grading was negligible. In both cases, welded oysters did not occur.

Therefore, growth and quality parameters are encouraging. On the contrary, survival was too low if compared to nursery stages performed in land-based farm. Even if current in the area is quite strong, water flow in the cylinders was probably insufficient. Further trials should be made with containers with at least 80% of open surfaces.

Low density is recommended. With low density (higher growth rate), even if it is considered a stress factor to the juveniles, size grading should be carried out with higher frequency to allow smaller individuals to grow better, because the largest specimens are presumably dominant competitors (Qu et al., 2009).

Even if initial control of OsHV-1 was negative, the impact of the herpes virus on mortalities cannot be totally excluded (Dundon et al., 2011).

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