



Grobest Times

Spring Edition 2007

It's Spring at last, the short cold days are finally over. This last Winter saw some of the coldest Temperatures that Qld and the Northern Territory have recorded in over 100 years and more rain in the Southern Australian states that I can remember. This backs up last years coolest summer in Qld on record. The obvious result of Global Warming? Or something more explainable like the end of the Elnino effect?

In this issue we will cover our hatchery and farm tour of Bali in June, the combined APFA and ABFA conference in July and see where our travels have taken us over the past 4 months.

These past few weeks have seen the value of the Australian dollar surge to a 20 year high, reaching over the 90cent mark for the first time since the 1980's. which has seen a marked deflation of imported products. This is good news for farmers who in recent weeks have also seen a surge in Native fish prices on the Sydney floor, and some live fish prices averaging over the \$13/kg mark. Although there has been an increase in our raw material prices for our feeds, and shipping rates going up 25% due to the Christmas peak period, the weaker US dollar has allowed us to delayed the prospects of a price increase. The result should see an increase in the profitability of farms that have until recently have had to contend with balancing the high fish feed price's against lower market prices. The demand for Fresh fish has also been felt in the barramundi market with demand for fingerlings out weighing supply. This shortfall could also translate into higher market prices for chilled and live barramundi in the coming months.



A west coast surf beach on the Indonesian island of Bali.

Grobest plan to do another farm tour of Bali next year in 2008.



Improving the flavour of farmed Seafood.

Grobest Australia was proud to be involved in the 2007 Ridley Prawn and Barramundi Conference held at the Brisbane Convention Centre at South Bank, Brisbane.

Andrew Bray of Grobest Australia had the pleasure of responding to a much publicised attack on Aqua cultured Seafood from the mainstream media in recent months. The media line was that Aquacultured product in Australia was somewhat inferior in flavour to wild caught seafood. This was met with a somewhat vocal reception from some members of the Audience who disagreed with what Andrew had to say. The information that Andrew presented was later backed up by the **Department Of Primary Industries Food and Innovation Technologies Department** with the results of a recent study on the effect of bromophenols fed to aquacultured barramundi. Bromophenols are a unique enzyme that is only found in marine creatures. Bromophenols are the reason that seafood tastes like it does, the iodine like flavours that differentiates wild shrimp and fish grown in the ocean compared to fish and shrimp grown on farms. Bromophenols are supplied naturally in the wild through the food chain.

The goal of the study was to look for diet based flavour modifications that can be simply applied to the diets of aqua cultured species, both fresh and saltwater. The results were staggering but the DPI are still in the early stages of applying these results to aqua cultured feed.

The DPI also ran experiments on the “prediction of muddy taint in barramundi “ as well as “what do consumers love about prawns?” Each experiment is an interesting read and should be read by all who wish to improve the overall standard and perception of our industry.

At present bromophenols can only be found naturally in ingredients such as fish and shrimp meal, the overwhelming base ingredients found in Grobest feeds. In most country's feed company's are unable to artificially add bromophenols to their diets, which means the only way farmed fish and prawns can consume bromophenols is for them to eat aqua cultured feed that contains high levels of naturally occurring bromophenols which can be found within good quality fish and shrimp meal as well as within certain marine worms. One of which is grown by aquaculture company **Aqua Bait**, on the central coast of NSW. This marine worm may also hold promise as becoming a specialized diet additive as it's naturally high levels of bromophenols and natural attractant properties singles this worm out as one of the best natural sources of bromophenols.

The DPI have suggested that a finishing diet that contains levels of bromophenols that can improve the taste of farmed seafood could be the next generation in feed technology. At present the Department Of Primary Industry's Food technology Department led by Steve Fuller and Sue Poole are conducting tests on the levels of Bromophenols found in Grobest feed, which may already contain sufficient levels of Bromophenols to class Grobest feed as a certified finishing diet. The results of the DPI bromophenol trials can be obtained from DPI's Food Technology Department, Hamilton , Brisbane.



Field trip-Bali

Back in May of this year Andrew and Darren Bray of Grobest Australia landed in Bali for a five day field exercise in the Menjangan region of Northern Bali. This beautiful part of the Indonesian island is home to more than 1000 hatcheries and many hundreds of grow out farms made up of both shrimp and fish.. Predominately vanameii, shrimp production dominates this relatively small area of Bali with the bulk of vanameii leaving Bali for grow out in Country's such as China and Vietnam. There is also an expanding aquarium hatchery industry with Clown fish being the ongoing flavour of the month with the demand from the United States driving a profitable industry that shows no signs of slowing. Milk fish and tilapia are also pumped out at a mind blowing rate, with the United States again driving the demand for these omnivorous fish species. The trip was a unique behind the scene's look at an industry that is going through some what of a boom period. Coral trout and Barramundi Cod production remain steady with demand far exceeding supply. This trip was a real eye opener with the benefits of having access to hatcheries that have previously denied access to westerners looking to improve their knowledge base in an extremely competitive industry. Indonesia remains one of the worlds largest exporters of seafood with frozen shrimp to Japan alone exceeding values of 480 million dollars per year! The relationship's built from this past field trip will hopefully be an indicator to a strong future with these hatcheries and farms in the knowledge base that they have built up over many years. The information they are willing to share especially in regards to feed programs and feed additive technology which can be utilized practically within Australia and New Zealand are areas that we are now focusing on. For any information in regards to this past field trip, please contact us at grobest@grobest.com.au or free call ph 1800 005 434.





Farm Profile

South East Queensland Fish: is located along the Beenleigh/ Beaudesert Rd at Luscombe on the outskirts of Brisbane. The site formerly an eel farm is now the location for South East Queensland Fish's hatchery and import quarantine site. Producing both native fingerlings for the grow out market and exotics for the pet industry, the guys at South Queensland Fish are firmly carving themselves out a niche market which to date has seen them grow from a relatively small operation to a highly specialized hatchery/import business. Producing species such as Silver, Jade and Golden Perch, Matt from South Queensland fish has been using Grobest feed for over 12 months and claims a dramatic improvement of water quality and growth, "one thing we have noticed is the growth of fingerlings has improved as well as feed efficiencies. The water quality improvement was noticed immediately as well as virtually no phosphate outputs, which keeps the EPA happy. We ship fish all over the country so health is one thing that we are fanatical about." South East Queensland have also successfully hatched turtles in their incubators which has added a whole new level to their business. Matt also likes to experiment with previously hard to spawn species "the return you can get from some of these exotics makes the hard task of breeding all worthwhile" Matt says, "sometimes you can spend months on a project, but it's so rewarding when it works out" Grobest Australia supplies N1 and N2, P1, P2, P3, P4 feed to South East Qld Fish. S E Q Fish can be contacted on the number on the SEQ FISH advertisement on the next page.





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Tour of Duty

Grobest's recent visit to the Central Qld coast was highlighted by a visit to Dr Richard Tan's fish farm in Biloela. Dr Tan grows a variety of Australian natives including the ever popular Golden Perch. We were treated with what can only be described as a monstrous feast of Golden Perch, Sleepy Cod and Squab, cooked courtesy of the local Chinese Restaurant. Deep fried sweet and sour Golden Perch, steamed whole Sleepy Cod and marinated pigeon which Richard also commercially grows, was just a delight and testament to the versatility and quality of our Australian Natives. Australia provides some of the most unique, high quality aquaculture product that exists on today's market. We just have to tell more people how good it really is.

Bundy-Barra in Bundaberg was another stop over, with David Harrison showing us around his very impressive silver perch farm.

Dr. Richard Tan's black skinned chickens.



Silver perch pond at Bundy-Barra



Vibrant blue colored red claw crayfish, selectively bred at Richard Tan's farm.



Golden Perch Photo Courtesy SEQ FISH

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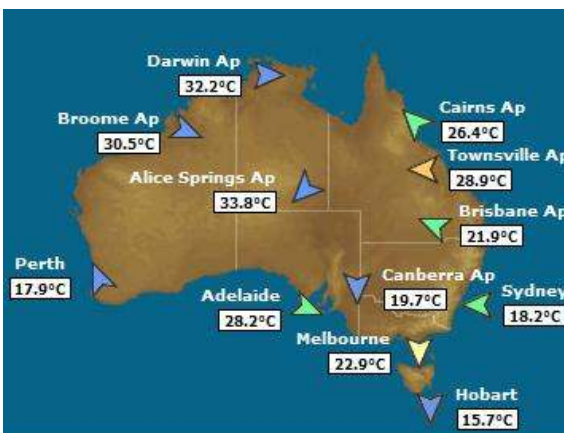
Australia's Weather Outlook

The Wide Bay Area

QLD for 2008 should have an average rain year. Now that's the state overall. But Bundaberg should have only *half* the average, about 460mm expected. Further up Cairns and Townsville should only receive about half also, and further down, Brisbane should have about average. The rain will be further to the south and closer to NSW. Of all the months, April is the wettest month, followed by June. Those two will be the only months wetter than average, all the rest should be drier. Of the drier months, Feb should be the driest, followed by Nov and Dec. As for April, QLD and NSW may be the only states to get the good rain, but in June, NT, QLD, NSW and ACT should all get some higher rain figures.

Far North Queensland

A chance of significant rain about November 8th-9th. A big rain systems either cyclonic or just in larger amounts may also be in the first and last weeks of December, also around 23 January and the first week of February. Mid March and the beginning of April may see more large weather systems affecting the area. April and May may be very wet months for N QLD but after that an extended dry period sets in during the rest of 2008 with no further significantly large rainfalls expected until January 2009.



Adelaide's rain average is about 550mm. This year overall Adelaide and the Western Plains may have a drier than average year and I would guess about 350mm as the bottom figure and maybe more, especially as your January figure has been a healthy 40mm so far out of an average of 20mm. Few months may be wetter than average, with March much drier than it should be. BUT the rest of SA may have a mostly wetter than average year, that's Spencer Gulf, the SE, and the N and NW. As far as the drought goes, I think we are passed the year of the peak of it.

BARRA COD UPDATE

Our barramundi Cod are doing well, with only 2 fatalities. Looking closely, both had mouth deformities and one seemed to be blind, very under weight, unable to find feed.

This photo was taken in late June, where the average weight was up from 2 grams to 12 grams, 120mm from 60mm, since we started the growth trial in March.

More updates coming....

