Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) and Aquaculture
What is the Sustainable Farming Fund?

Ministry for Primary Industries
Invests in farmers, growers and foresters
Funds projects that deliver benefits to NZ primary industries
  economic
  environmental
  social

Opened up to aquaculture sector in 2011
  economic and environmental benefits
  marine and land-based aquaculture
Who does MPI fund?

“Grassroots”

Benefit spread across a sector

Projects led by the farming community

supported by:

  industry organisations
  agribusiness
  researchers/consultants

Co-contribution – high % of co-funding and/or in-kind support

<$25K (excl. GST) for the total project

$25K - $200K (excl. GST) per annum (pay up to 80% of total project costs)
What do they fund?

Applied research
Demonstration projects
Information/Knowledge/Technology transfer
Improving decision support
Adding value and exploring market opportunities
Improving use and allocation of water
Improving land use and management

Climate change:
mitigation, adaptation & business opportunities
What they won’t fund…

Projects involving unsustainable practices
Projects benefiting an individual or one entity
Conservation, mining or wild fisheries projects
Applicants from outside New Zealand
Projects not directly involved with primary production
What are projects assessed against?

1. Contribution to sustainability or climate change objectives
2. Significance of the problem or opportunity
3. Community of interest commitment.
4. Ability to deliver
5. Adoption and Extension
7. Value for money
For a first go…

Aquaculture did very well.
SFF this year funded 61 projects, $8million over 3 years
3-4 x oversubscribed

4 aquaculture projects funded
a) Blue mussel over-settlement (MFA) $282K
b) Kaitaia spat working group (MFA) $25K
c) Oyster industry modernisation (NZOIA/AQNZ) $407K
d) Eco-certification (AQNZ) $510K
Total $1.224 million – just over 15% of SFF budget (3rd)
1st Dairy - $1.632 million
2nd Sheep & Beef - $1.340 million
Blue mussel over-settlement project

Greenshell™ mussel - $170 million/year in exports to Marlborough region

Over-settlement of blue mussels – detrimental to GSM Project – better understanding blue mussel behaviour

Increase in the sampling areas for blue mussels

advantage of proven technique

increased investment \(\rightarrow\) much increased benefit

establishment of a productive model
Blue mussel over-settlement project

Outputs:

Practical tool – abundance of blue mussel spat in water column → temporary adjustment in farming technique

Baseline data enhanced – trends vs environment?

Additional GSM spat collection areas may be identified

Better understanding of blue mussel spat distribution, abundance and farming implications
Blue mussel over-settlement project

Benefits:

• Avoid seeding Greenshell™ mussels at peak blue mussel spawning times;
• Sink spat and growing lines to avoid blue mussel settlement
• Reduce on-vessel & factory grading out → less waste to land-fill
• Trial methods to manage over-settlement
• Increased Greenshell™ mussel production in same area
• Reduce vessel use
• Increase knowledge of blue mussel behaviour
Kaitaia spat working group

Greenshell™ mussel spat sources

- 60% Ninety Mile Beach, 40% Golden & Tasman Bays

Hatchery

Ninety Mile Beach critical to the industry

Spat quality highly important

SFF project conceived:

- Cost of failed spat significant for farmers
- Further understanding of spat viability and mortality of benefit
- Continuous improvement throughout spat pathway – collection, packaging, transportation and seeding
Kaitaia spat working group

Objectives:

• Develop testing regime to assess spat viability
  • before it leaves Kaitaia
  • when it reaches the marine farmer
  • when it is seeded out

• Develop a Code of Practice for handling beach gathered spat
Kaitaia spat working group

Benefits:

• Ensure Ninety Mile Beach spat is healthy and in good condition
• Reduce waste and cost through decreased reworking of failed spat
• Demonstrate that spat collection is carried out in a responsible and sustainable manner
• Better understanding of the variables around collection and transport of spat
• Improved profitability for spat catchers and mussel farmers
Oyster Industry Modernisation

OsHV-1 µ-var

Significant production losses
In 2009 – worth >$30 million
Goal - $100 million by 2025

- Help the NZ oyster industry overcome OsHV-1
- Facilitate investment in breeding and farming technologies

Continues on from the FY 2011/12 initiation phase supported by MPI
Oyster Industry Modernisation

SFF: $407K over 3 years

Significant co-contribution

Cawthron Institute – cultured shellfish programme

Oyster industry

cash

significant in-kind >$532K over 3 years

AQNZ assistance

Collaborative approach with Australia
Oyster Industry Modernisation

Work focused on 4 main areas:

1. Selective breeding for OsHV-1 resilience
   - Family lines and wild survivors
   - 1st round already carried out
   - Challenged in the field – encouraging results

2. Virus challenge model
   - Laboratory based
   - Consistent challenge
   - As early as possible
   - Tool for further work on the virus
Oyster Industry Modernisation

3. Management techniques
   - growing height
   - surface floating vs non-floating
   - density
   - size

4. Remote setting
Eco-certification

New Zealand aquaculture has a long-standing reputation for its ‘clean green’ sustainability. Just recently though our international customers have started asking for independent ‘proof’ of this, and our global competitors are responding to these demands by signing up to varying eco-certification programmes:

It is timely now for us to promote our own uniquely green credentials so they stand alongside, or even in front of, the world’s best…
Eco-certification

So AQNZ is using MPI funding ($510k over 3 years) to develop eco-certification for New Zealand aquaculture

A STOP/GO point after Year 1 will allow industry to make a fully informed assessment of the costs and benefits before committing further funding to Years 2 and 3

The programme has the following elements:

- Market research to ensure the greatest effect in-market
- Benchmarking against global standards
- Benchmarking against current industry practices
- Adoption of practical, measurable standards
- Development of a unique New Zealand ‘brand’ proposition
- Development of an online reporting tool
Eco-certification

The key points for the programme’s success will be
pragmatic and measurable
wide industry consultation/involvement
buy-in from ‘green’ groups and regulators
cost effective
strong market message

Industry can be directly involved by volunteering for the species
specific ‘grower committees’ or signing up for information
and updates

Broader stakeholder involvement is welcome too

Contact: Rebecca Clarkson – rebecca@aquaculture.org.nz